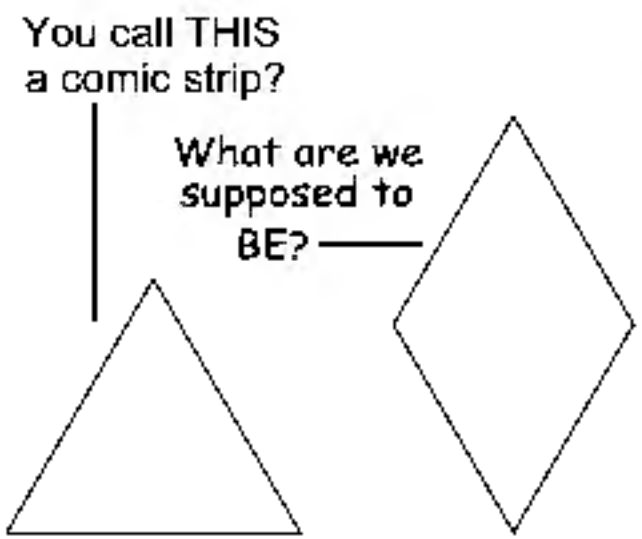
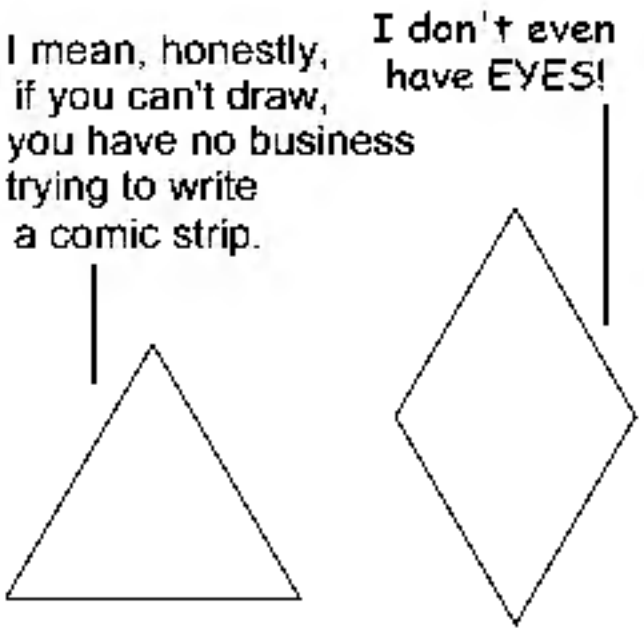
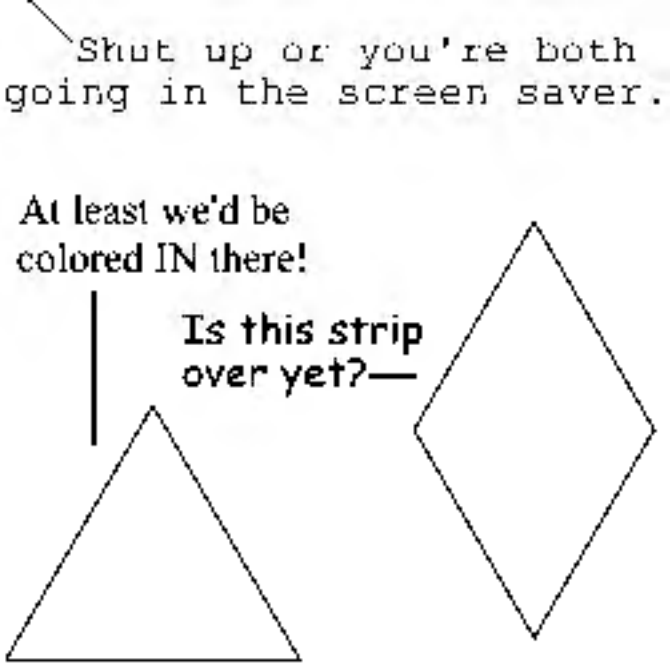
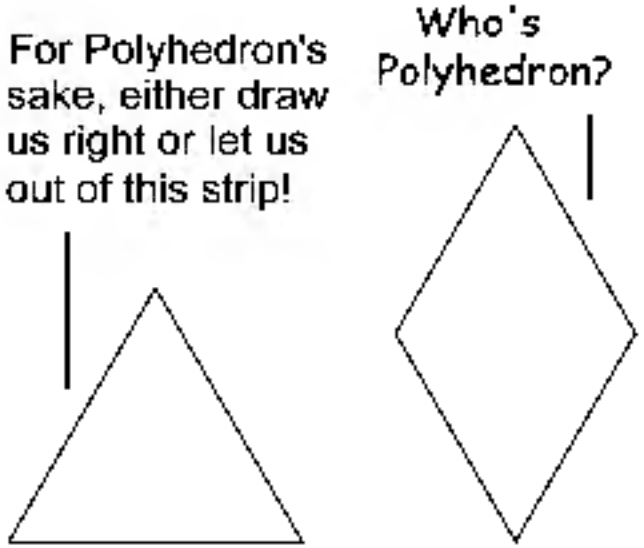
Triangle and Robert

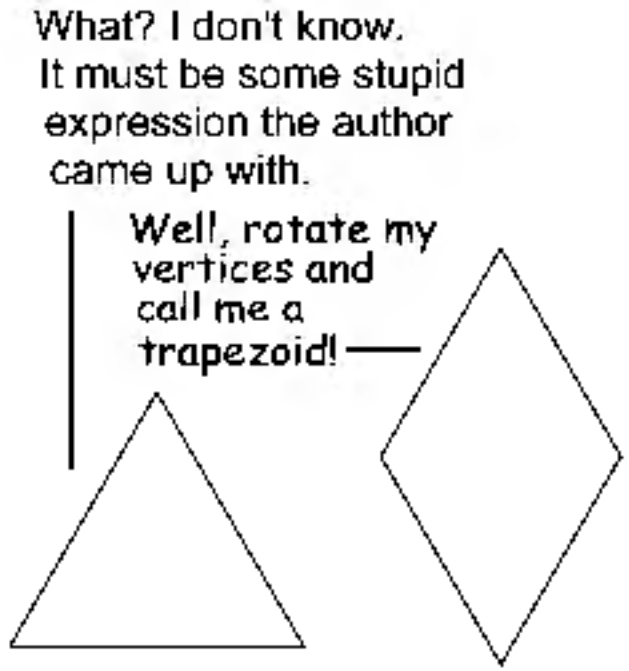


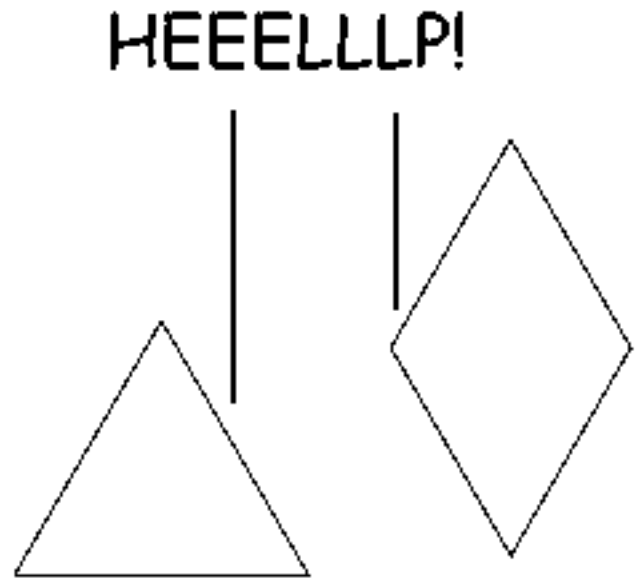




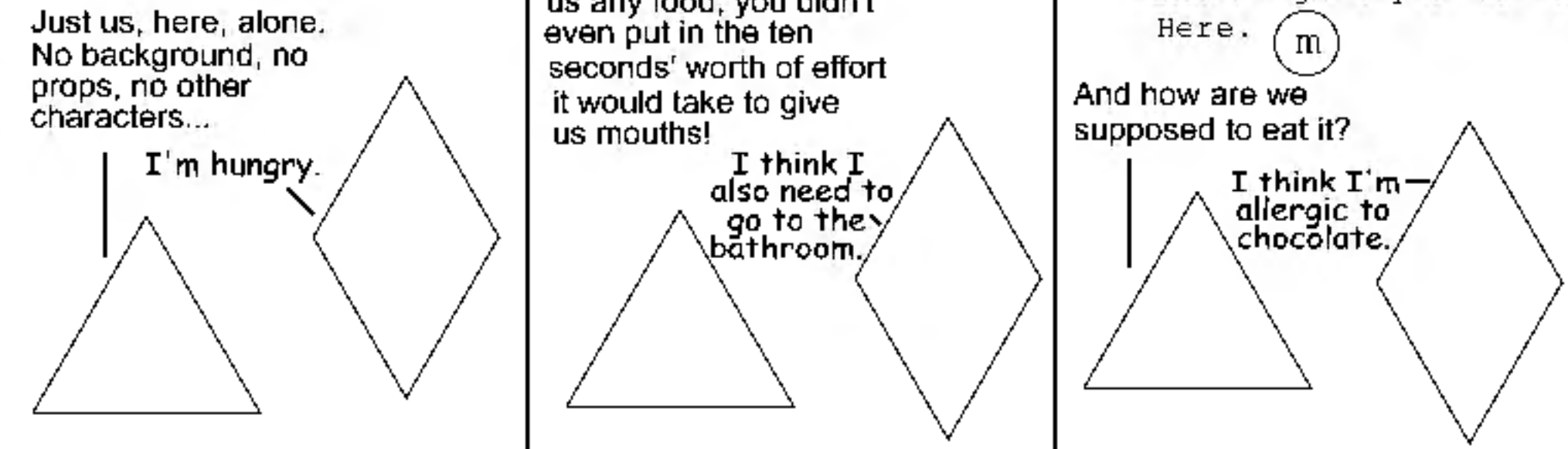
Triangle and Robert



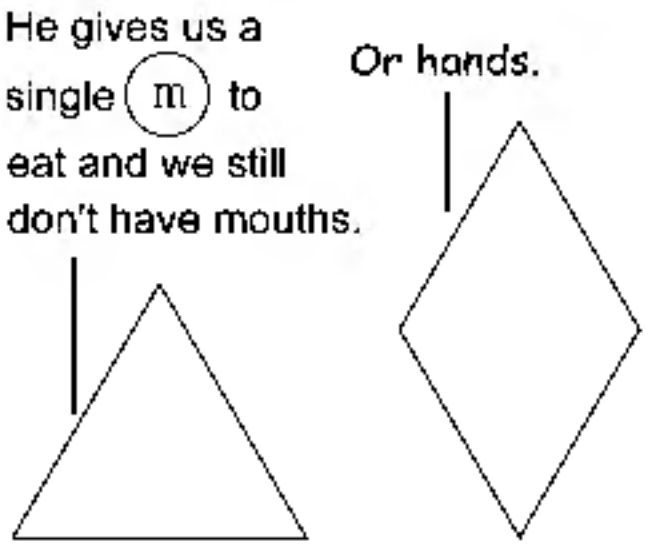


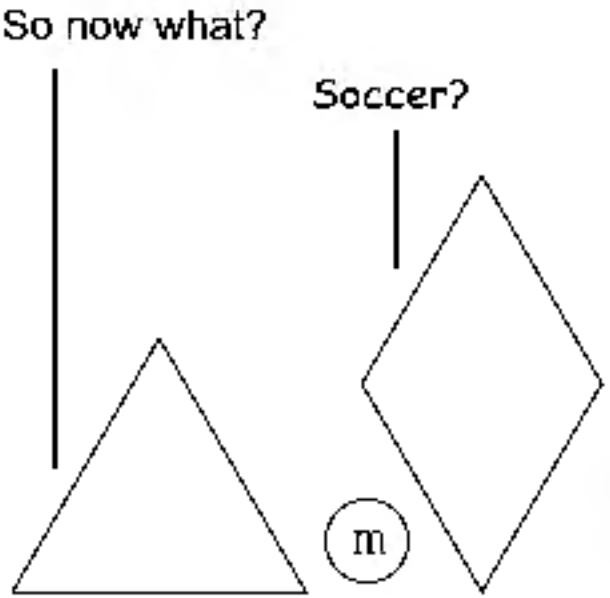


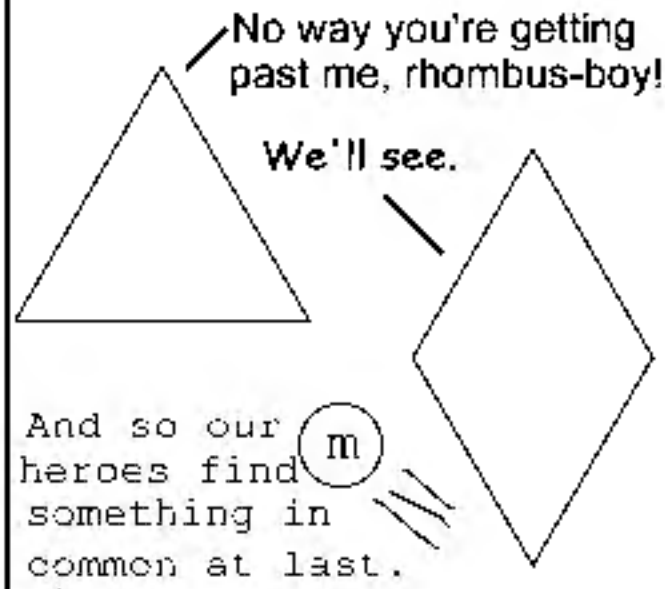
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



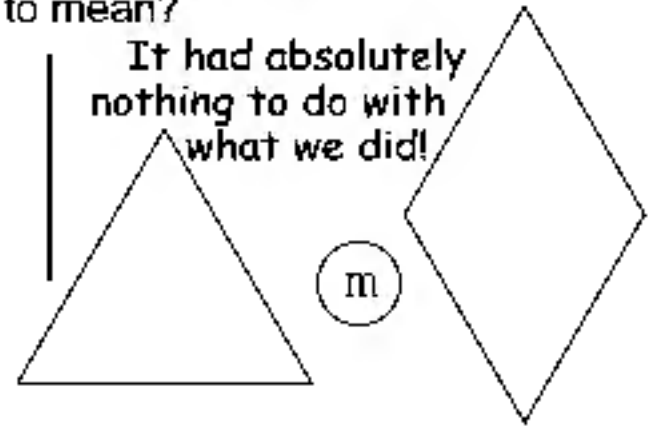




Triangle and Robert

What the toroid was that last narration supposed to mean?

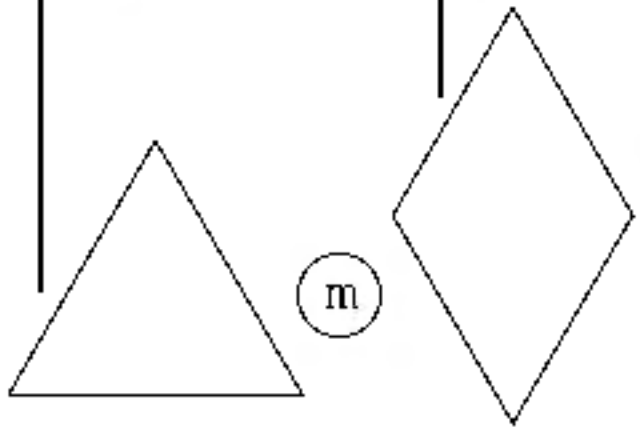
It had absolutely nothing to do with what we did!



I needed to say **something**.

No you didn't.

This is your first comic strip, isn't it.

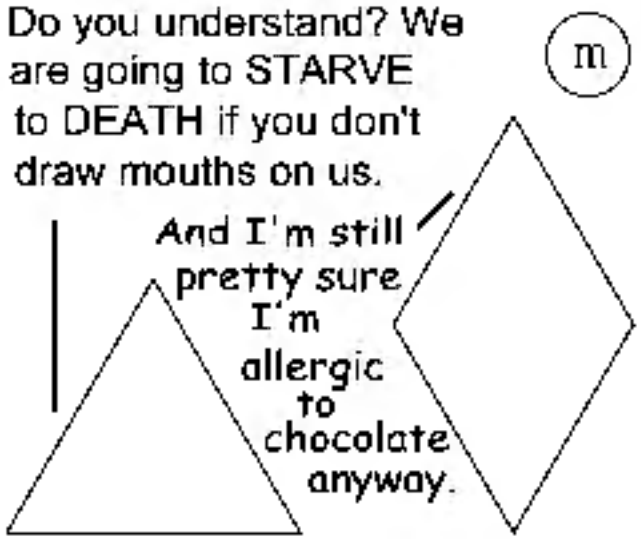


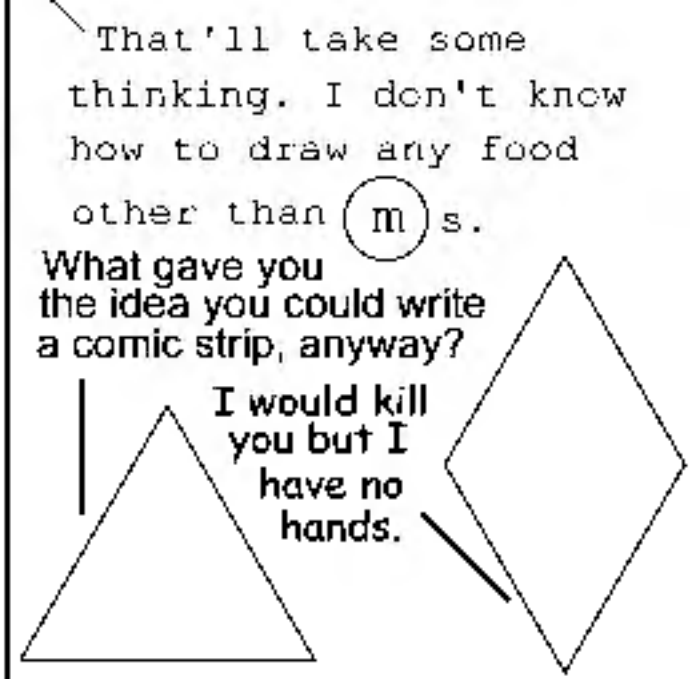
Well, duh.

Hey! Idiot! We're down here!

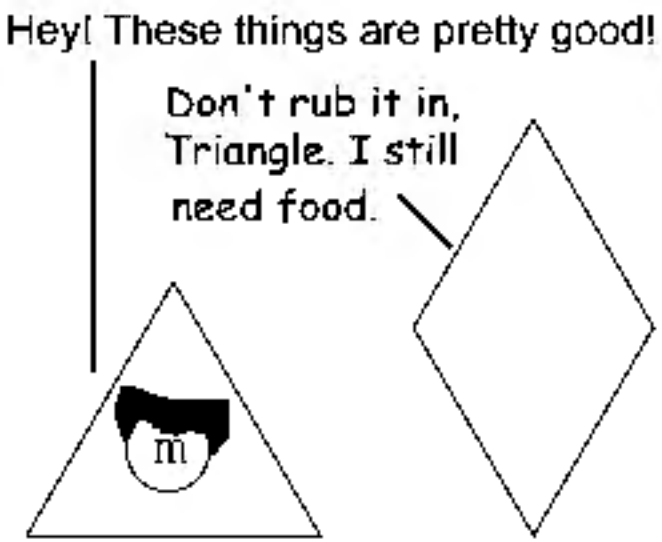
Why can't I live a normal life like any other rhombus?

Triangle and Robert

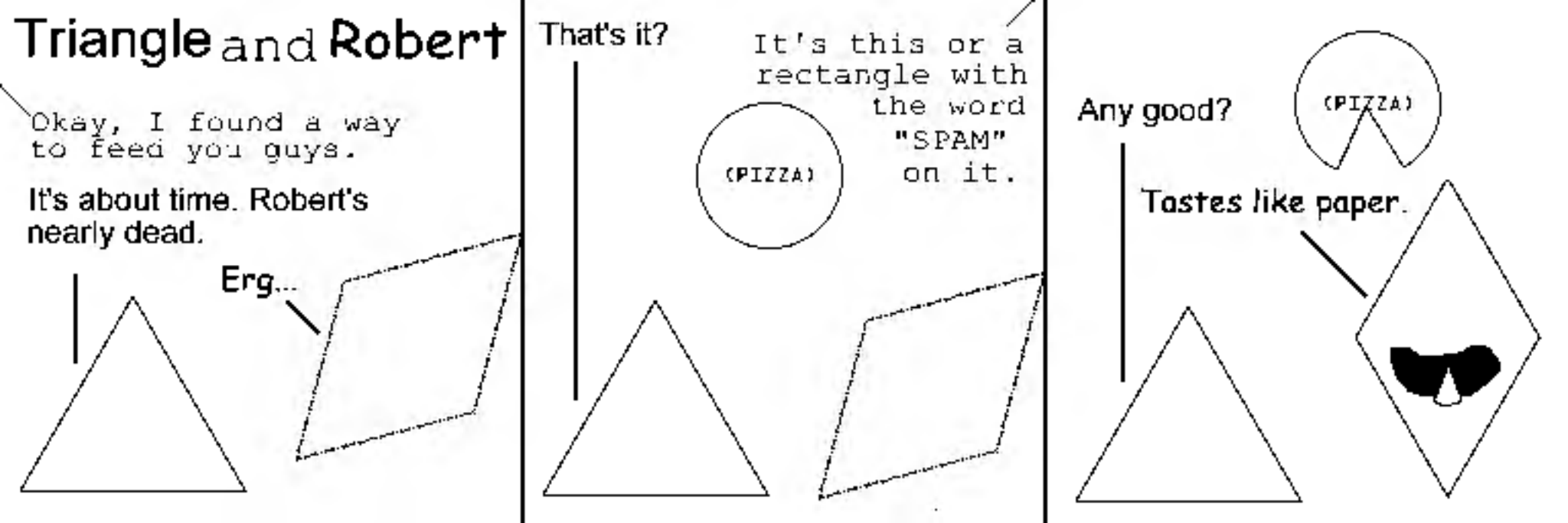




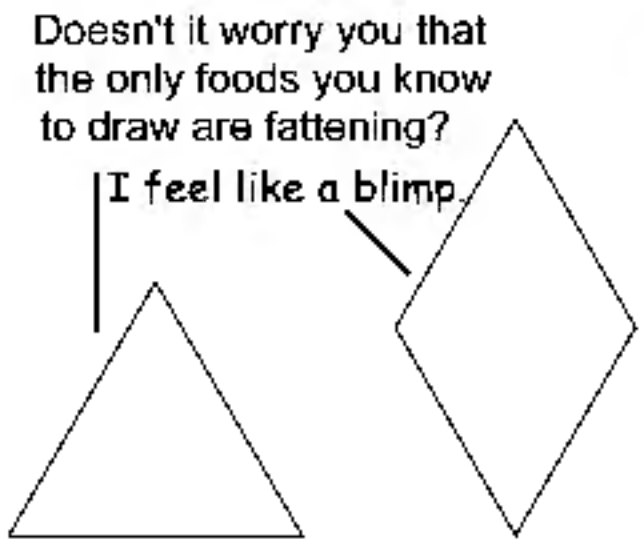
Triangle and Robert

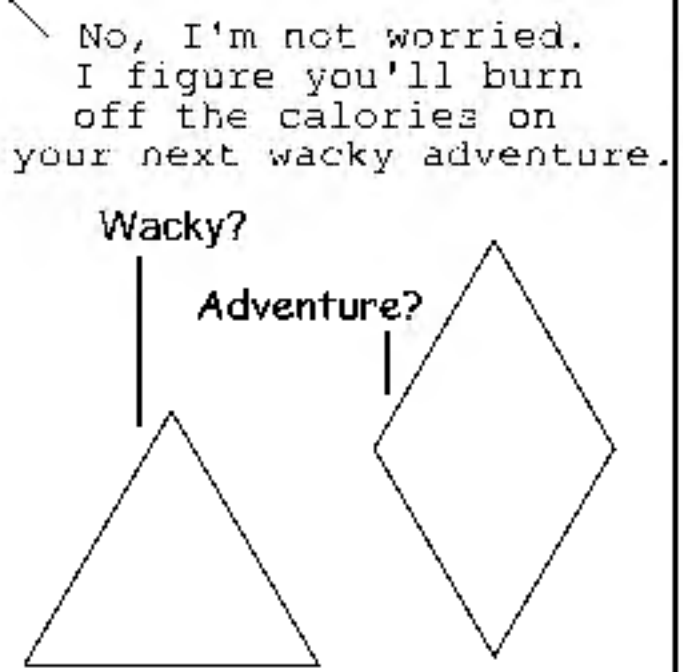


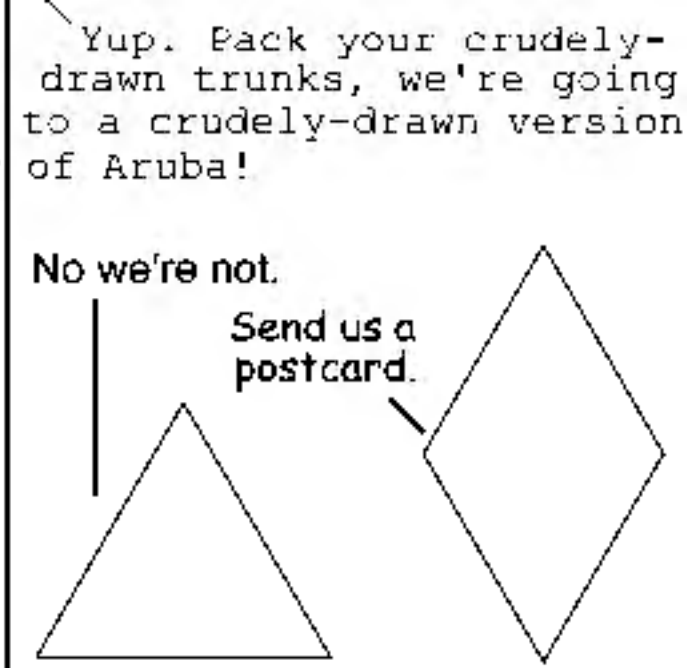
Triangle and Robert



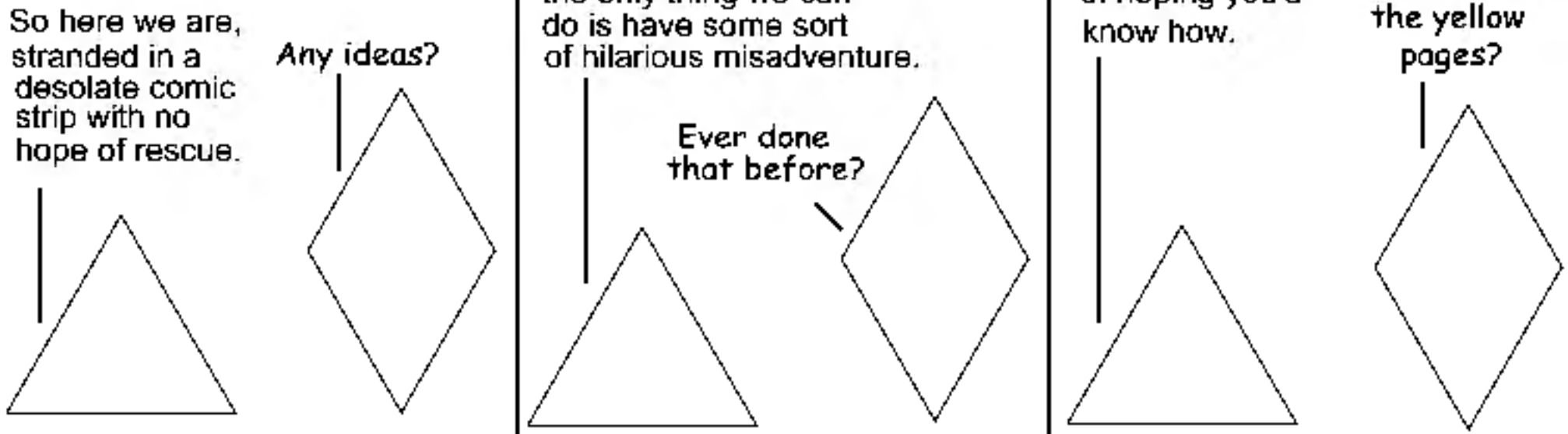
Triangle and Robert



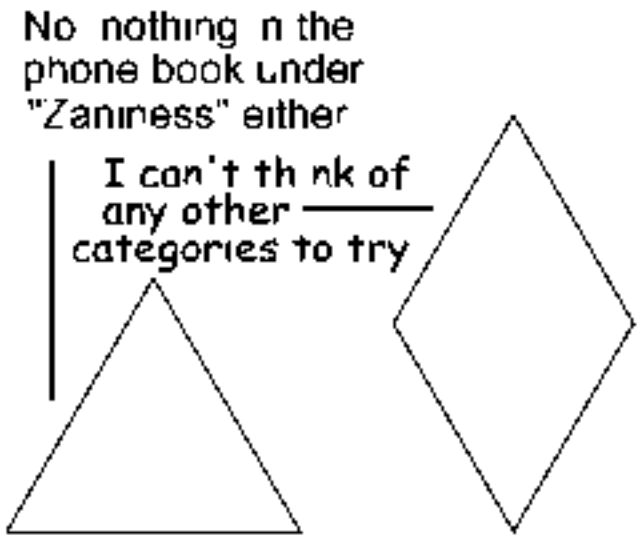


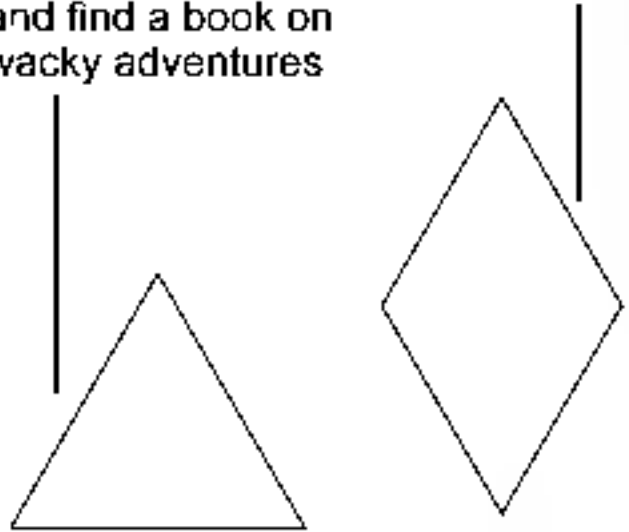


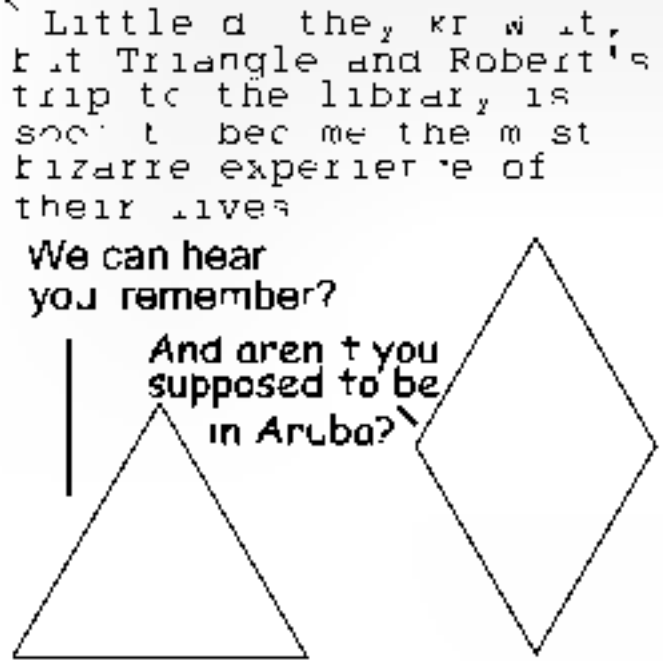
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



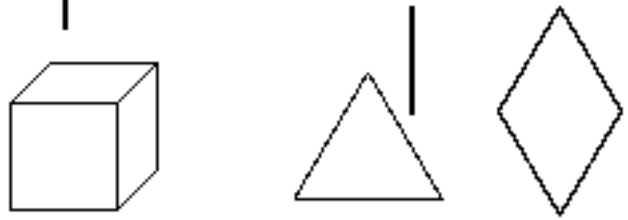




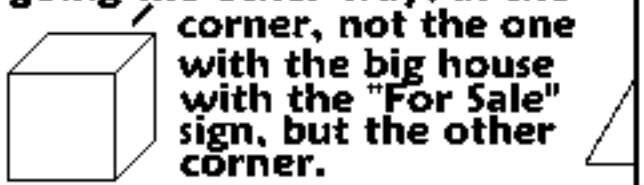
Triangle and Robert

Howdy, new neighbors! Name's Cube. If you ever need anything, anything at all, don't hesitate to ask.

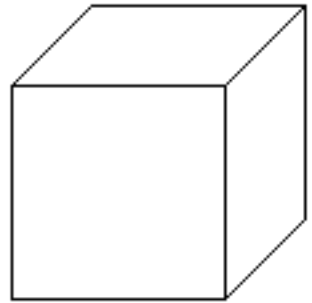
Could you tell us how to get to the library?



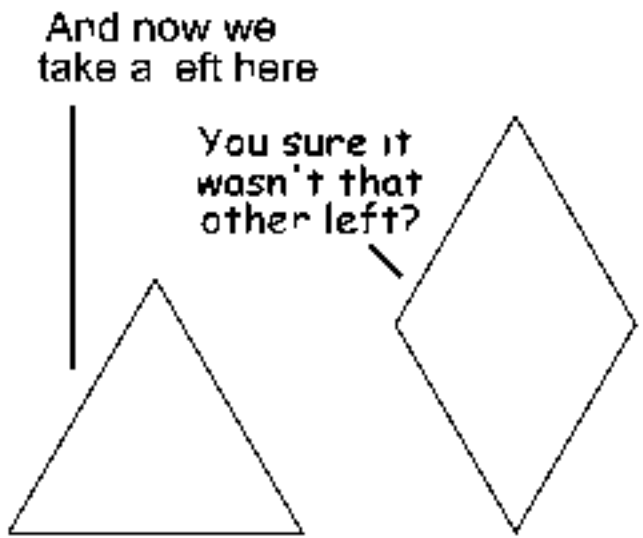
Why sure, I'd be happy as a parabola to. Go down the way you're headed, take a left at the third stop sign, then go 'til you see a big cylinder on your left. That'll mean you've gone too far, so you want to turn around, you see, and take a right, only now it's a left because you're going the other way, at the corner, not the one with the big house with the "For Sale" sign, but the other corner.

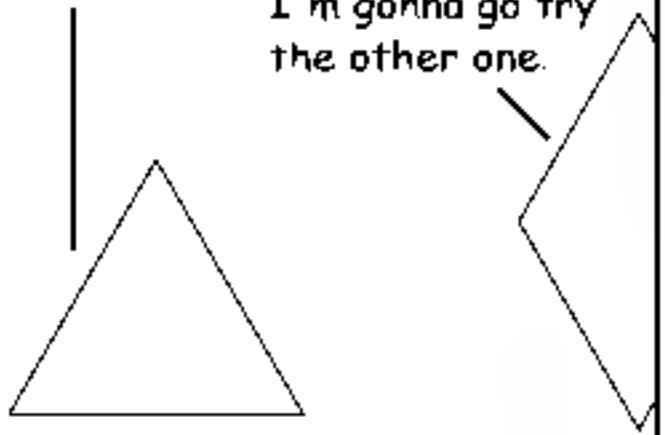


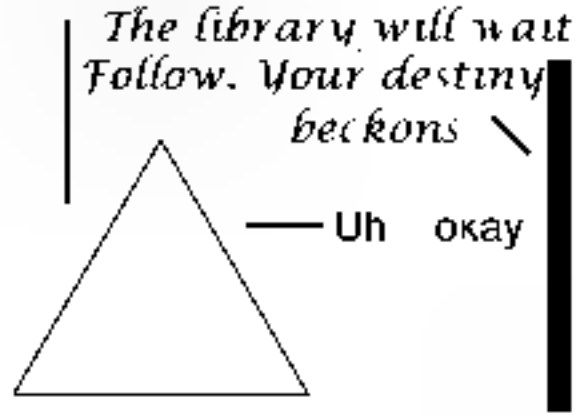
Hey! Where'd you go? I'm not done yet. After that, you go... aw heck, I haven't been to the library in so long I think I just might have forgotten what to do next.



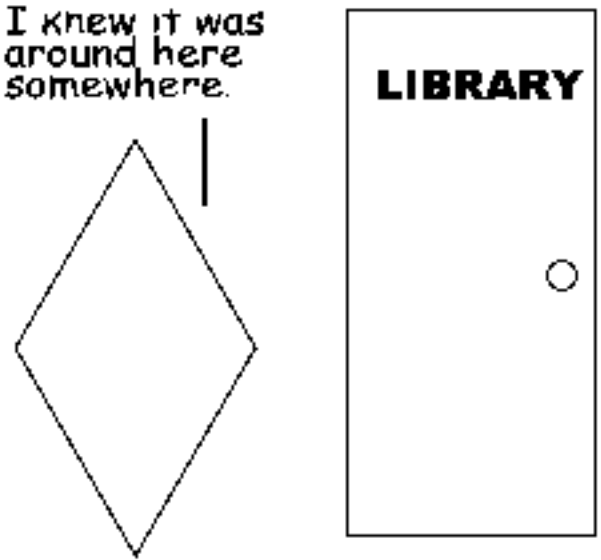
Triangle and Robert

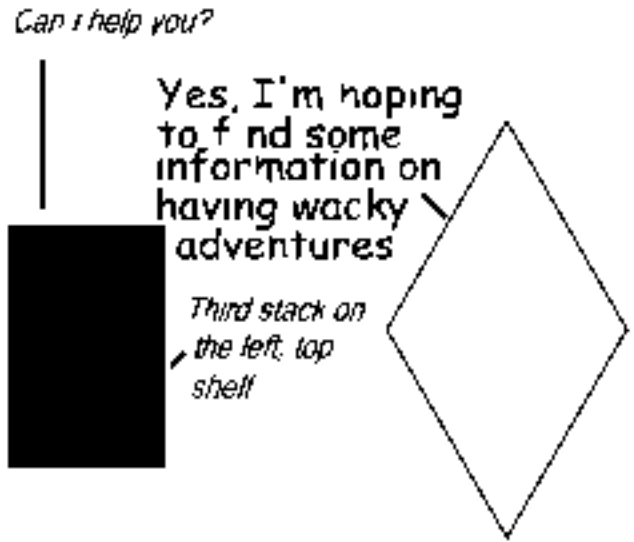


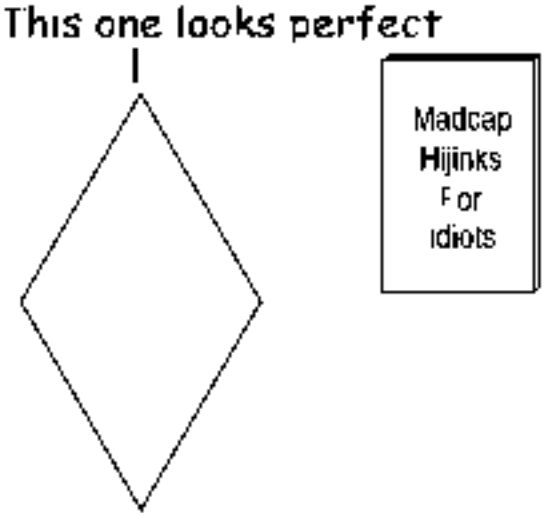




Triangle and Robert

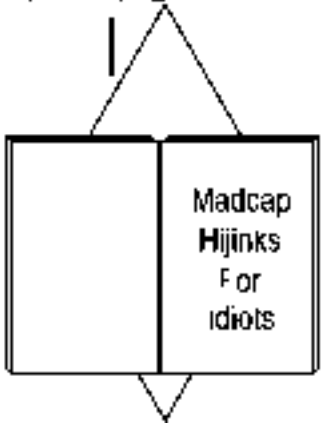




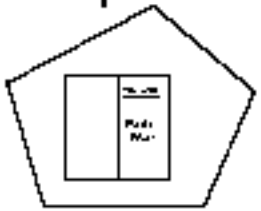


Triangle and Robert

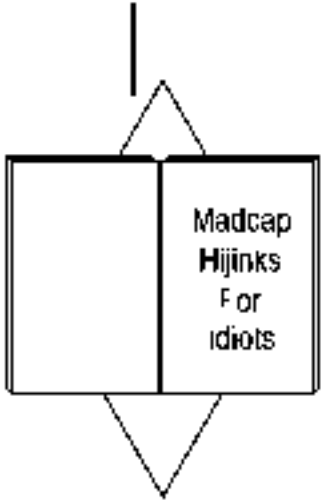
Hmm th s looks useful
Bakeries assembly lines
Got it animal costumes
quirky girlfriend

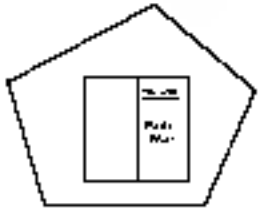


Excuse me, sir. Could you please read more quietly?

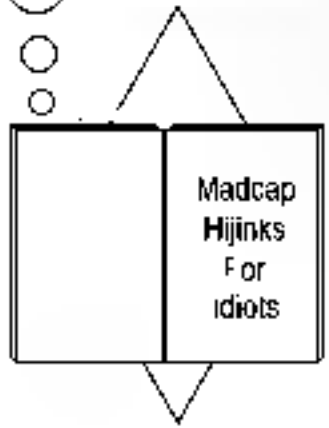


Oh Sorry

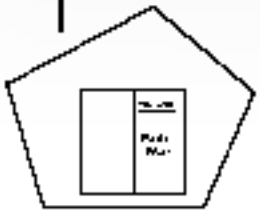




Electr cal outlets
Fear of heights
I think I'm getting this!

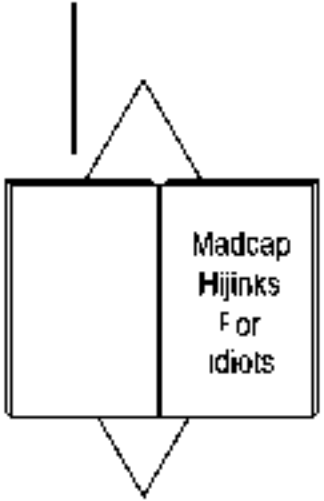


Sir your thought bubble could you turn it down just half a notch?

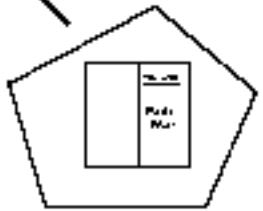


Triangle and Robert

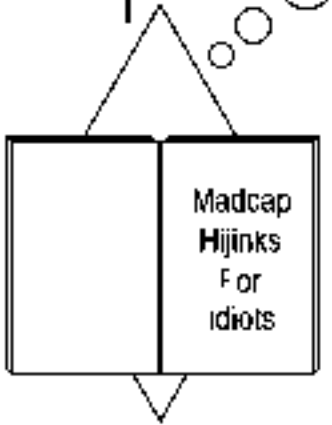
Turn down my thought bubble?



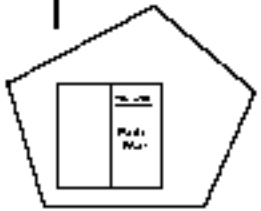
You were thinking much too loudly. This is a library, you know.



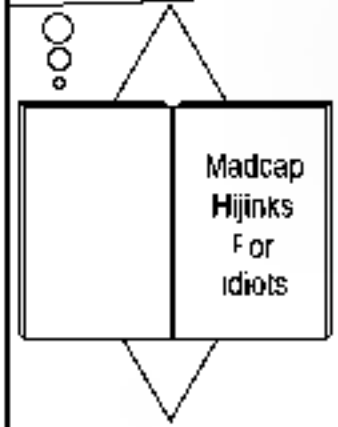
Oh Sorry



Thank you. That's much better.

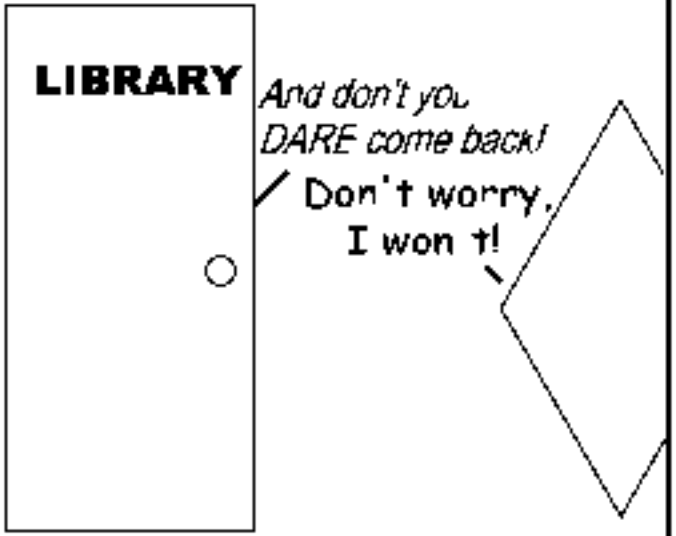


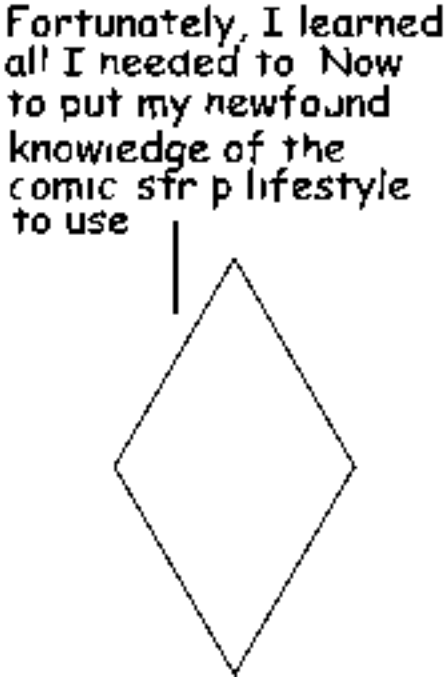
BETTER? I can't hear myself think now!

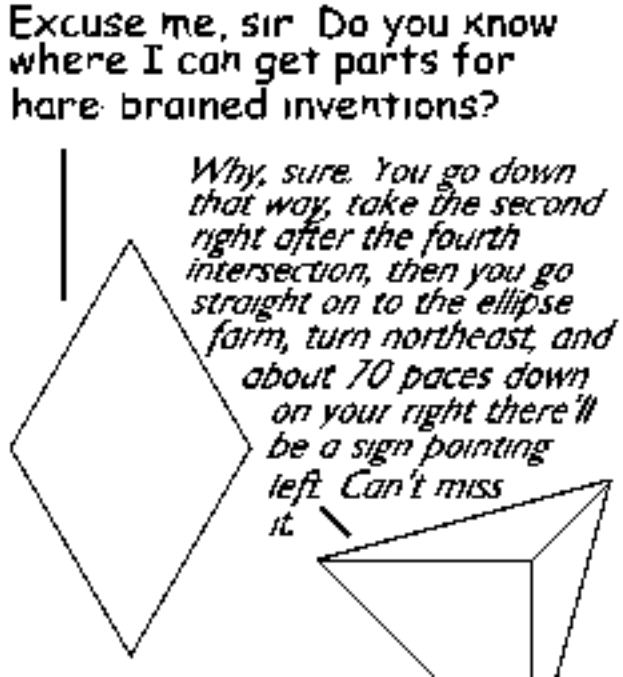


I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

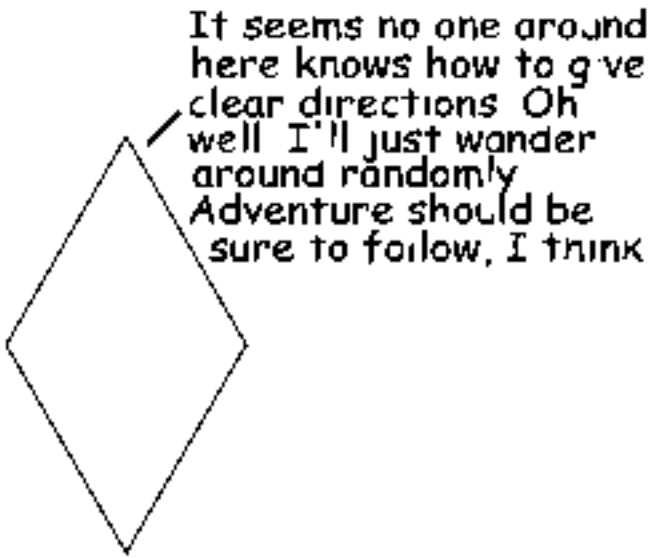
Triangle and Robert

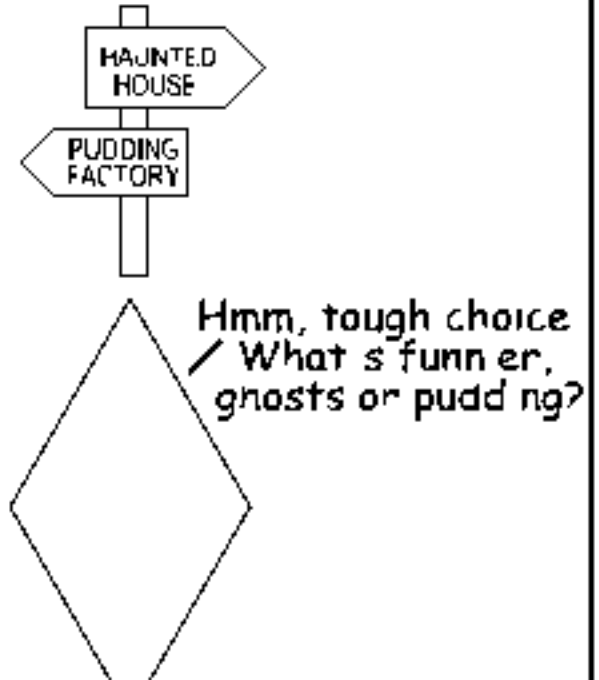


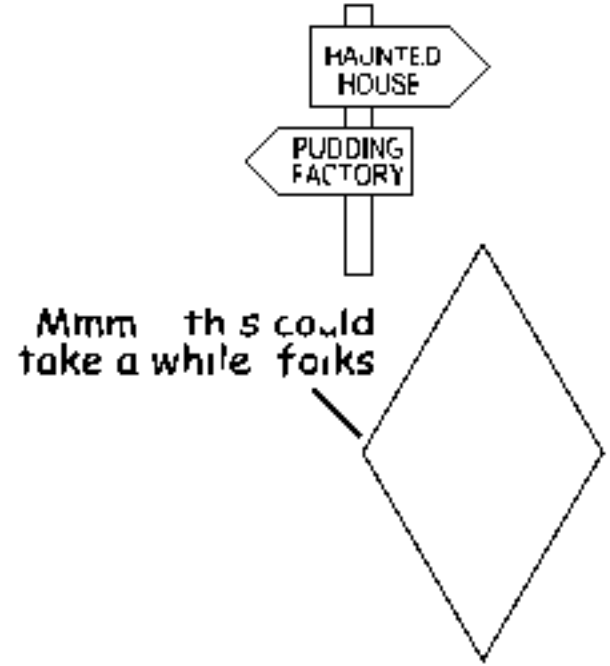




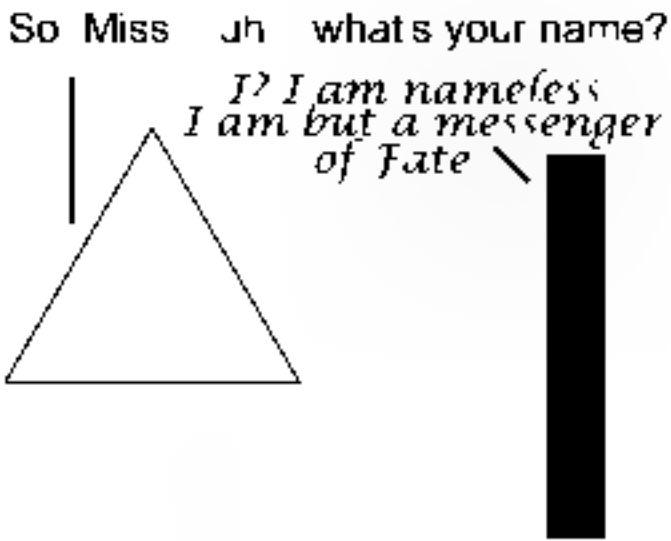
Triangle and Robert

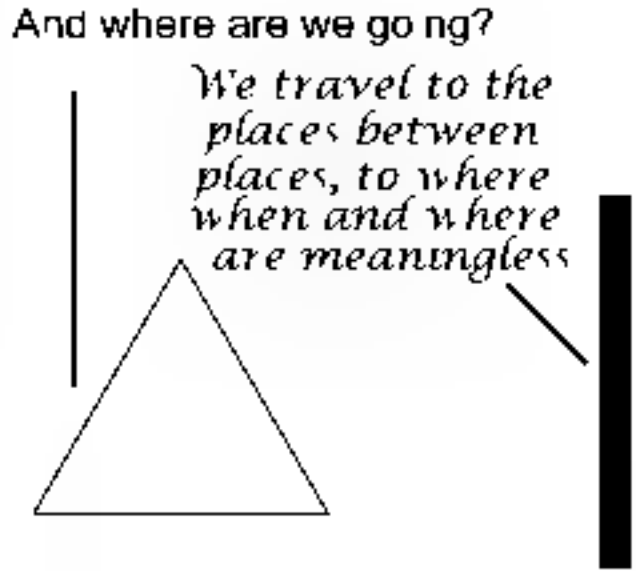


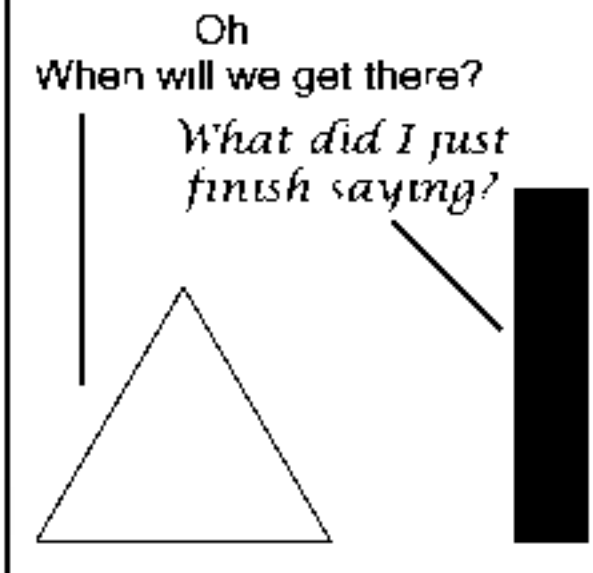




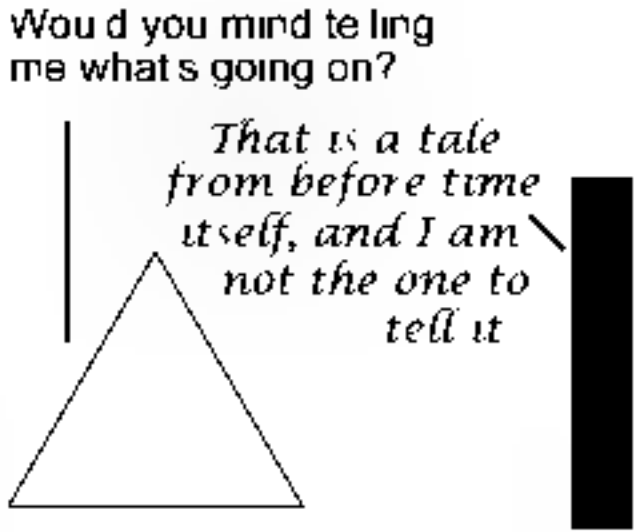
Triangle and Robert

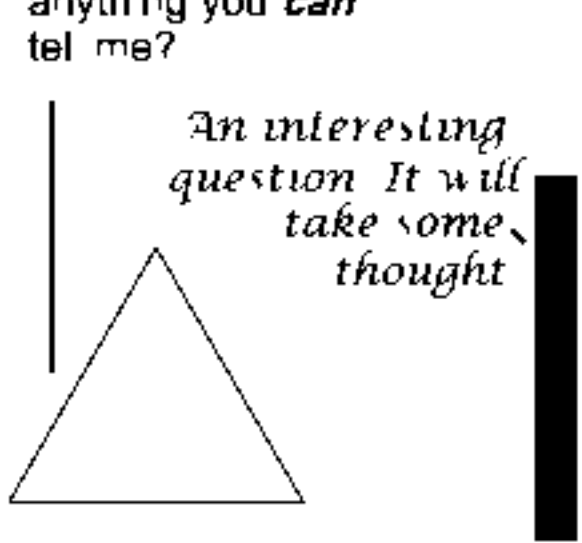


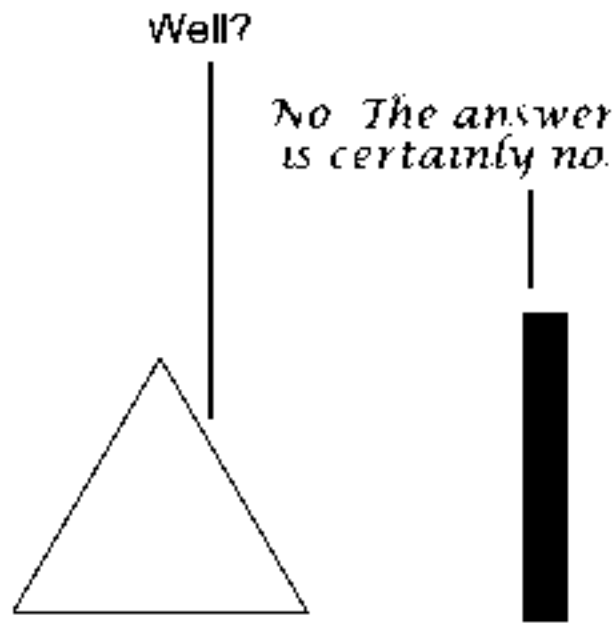




Triangle and Robert







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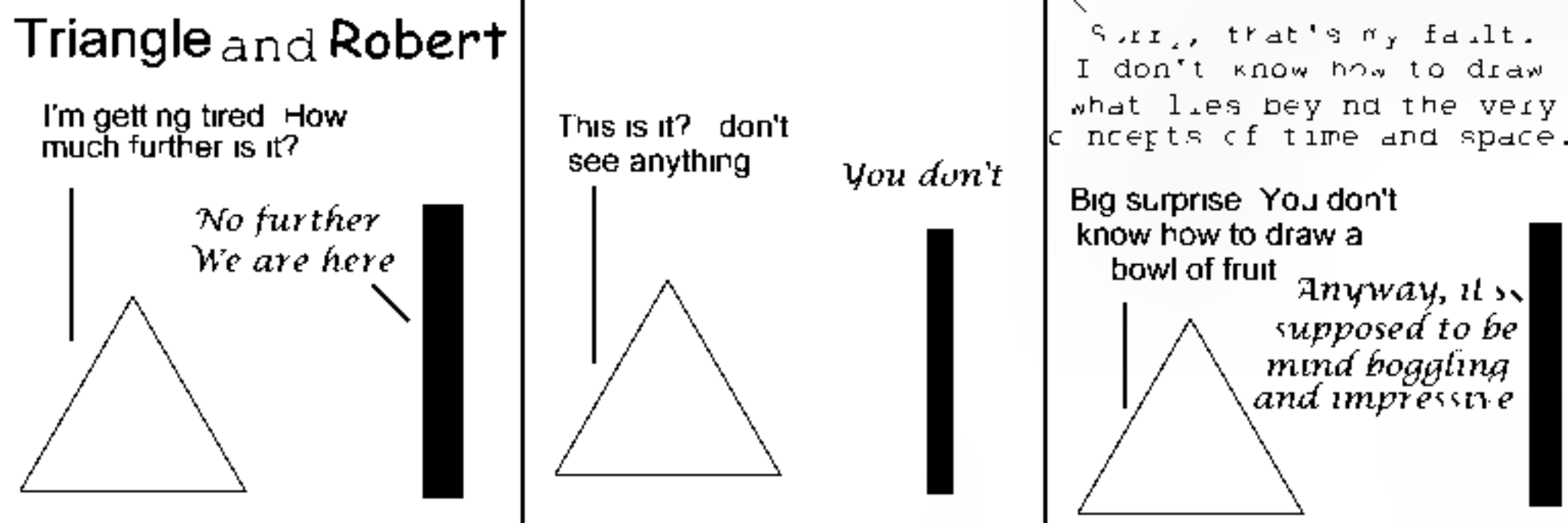

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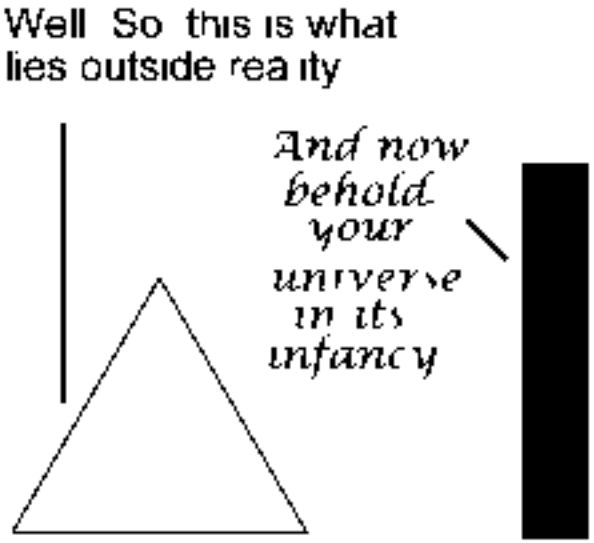

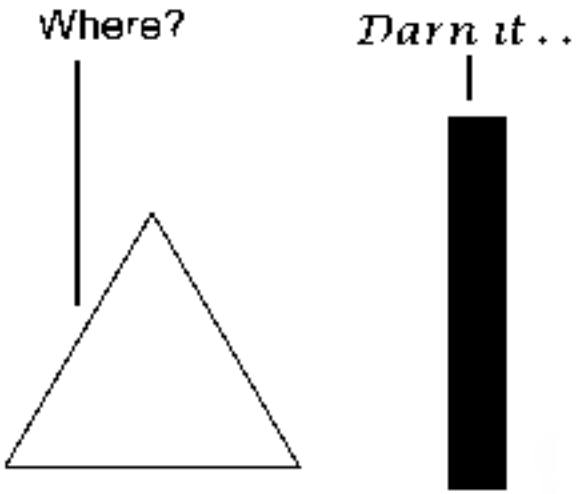

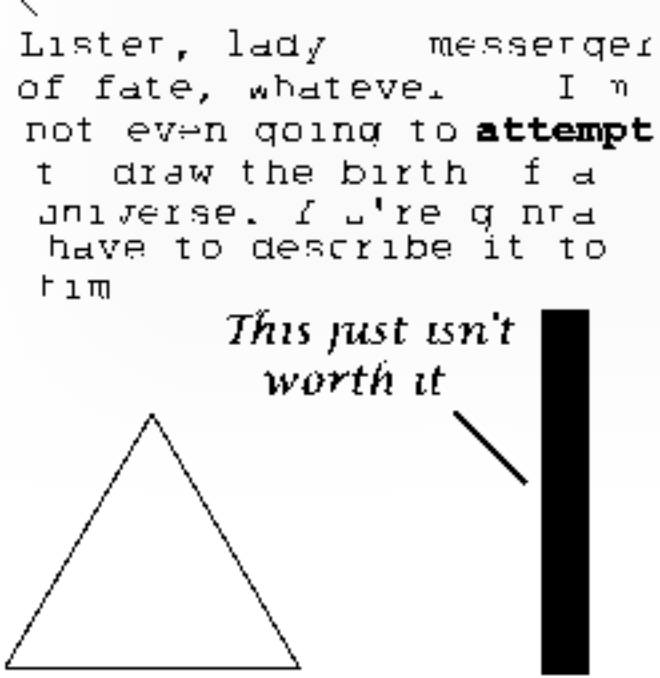

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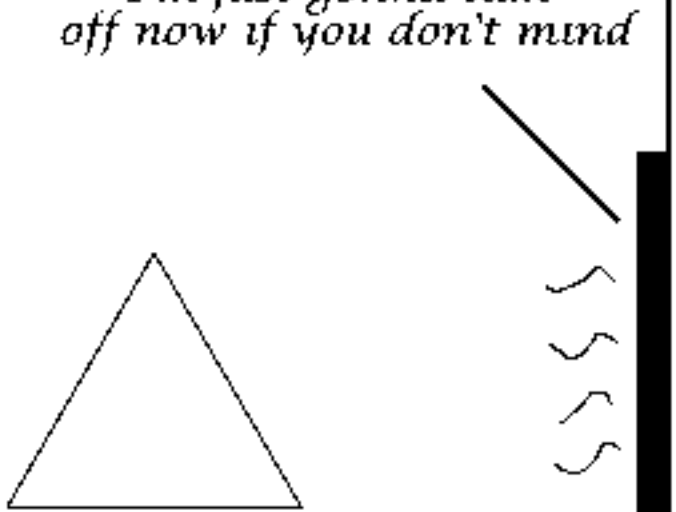

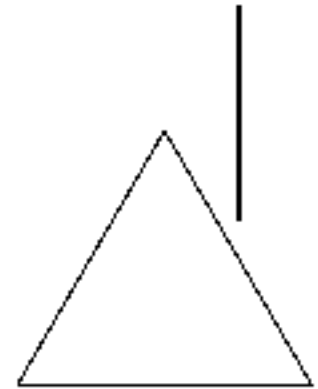

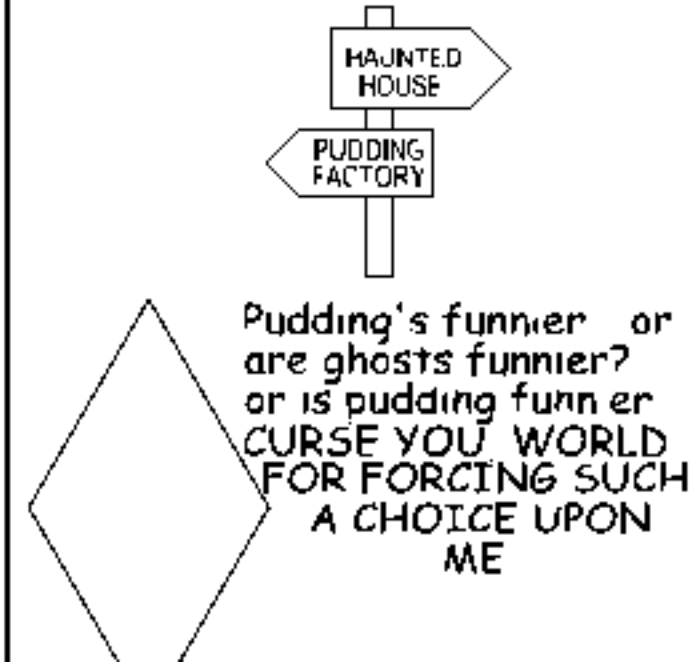

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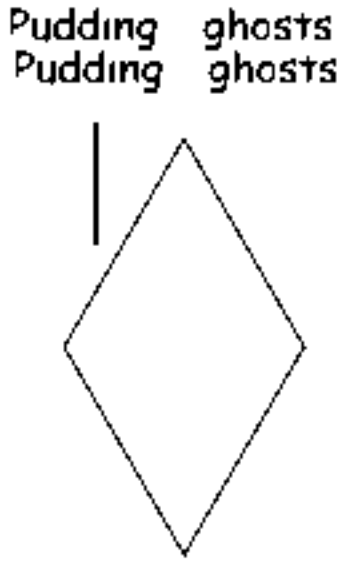

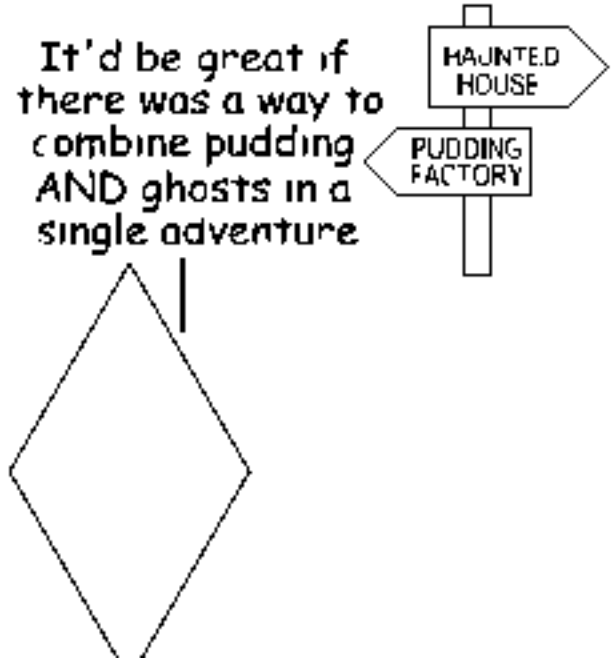

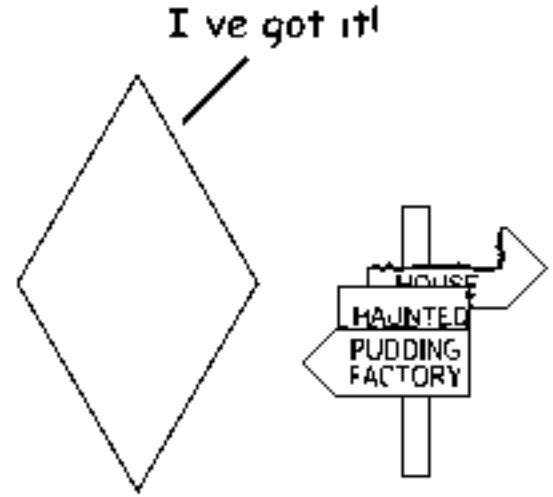

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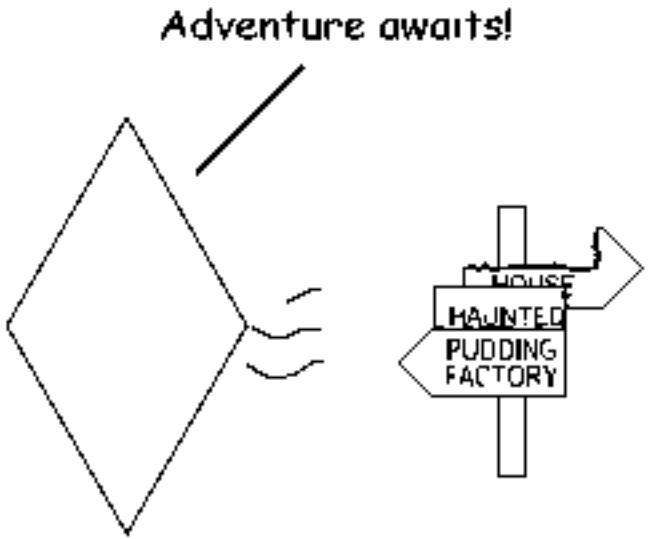

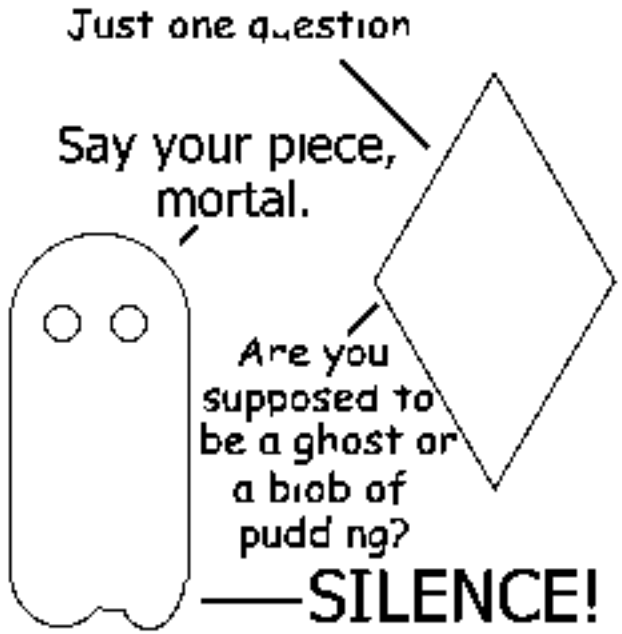

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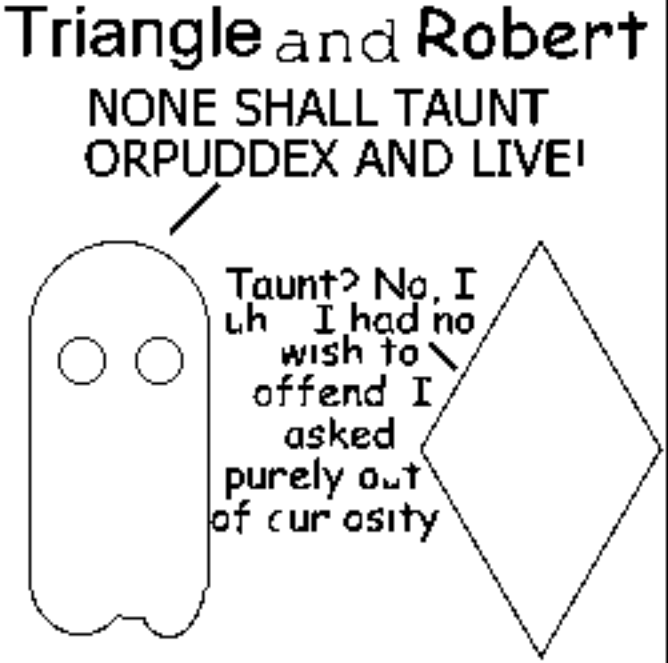

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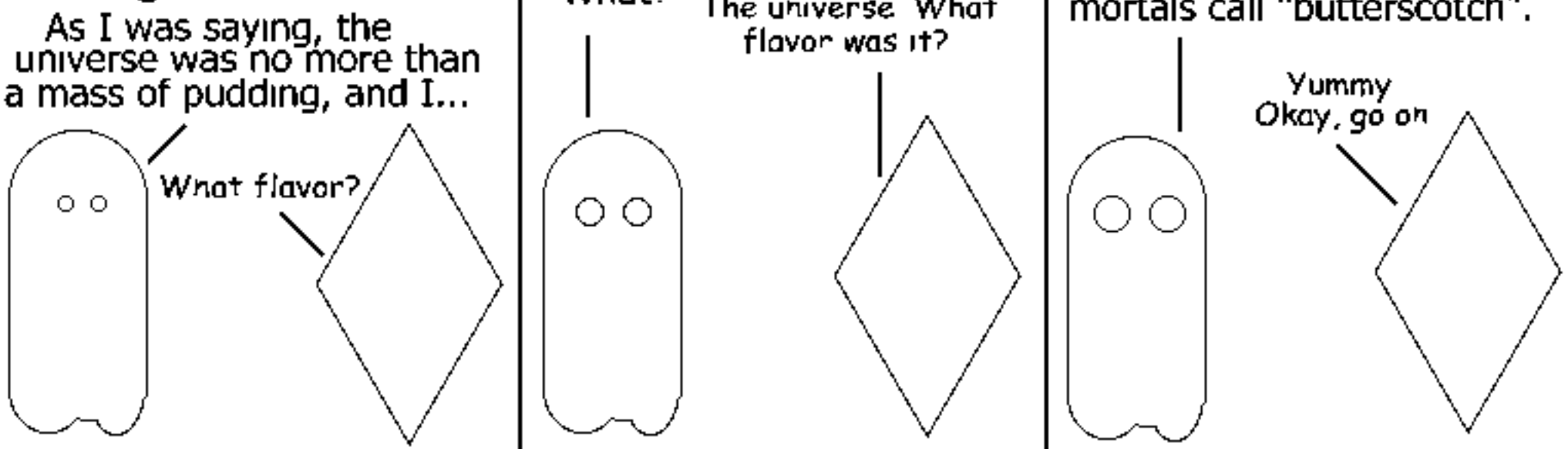
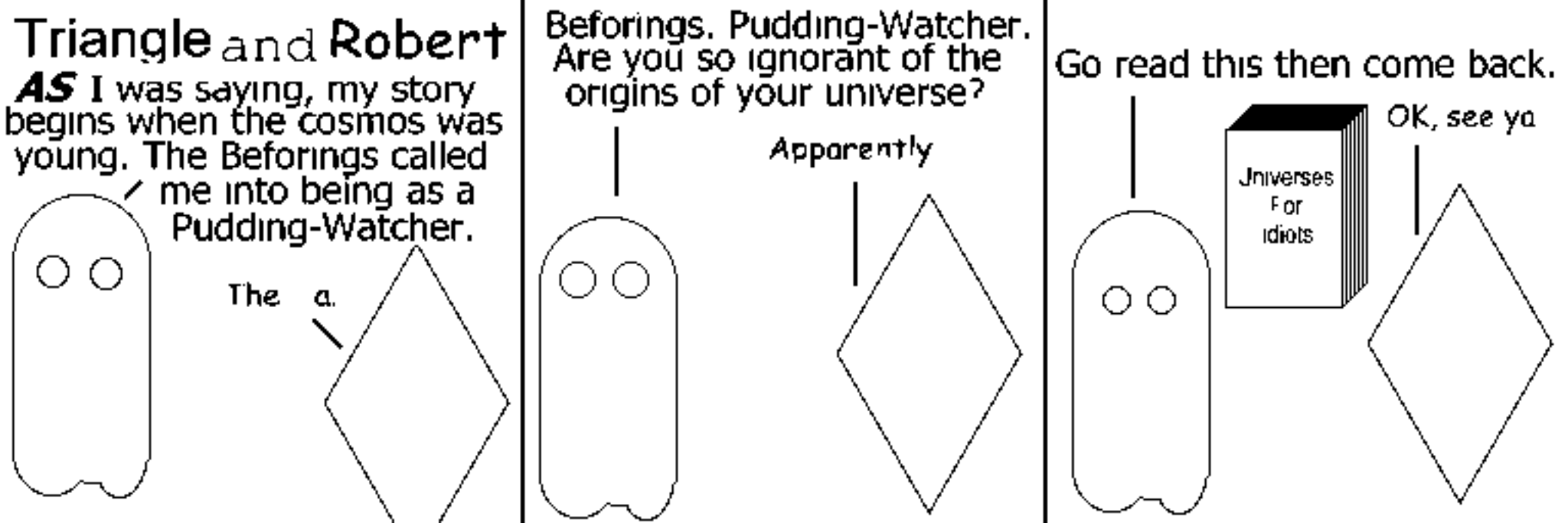
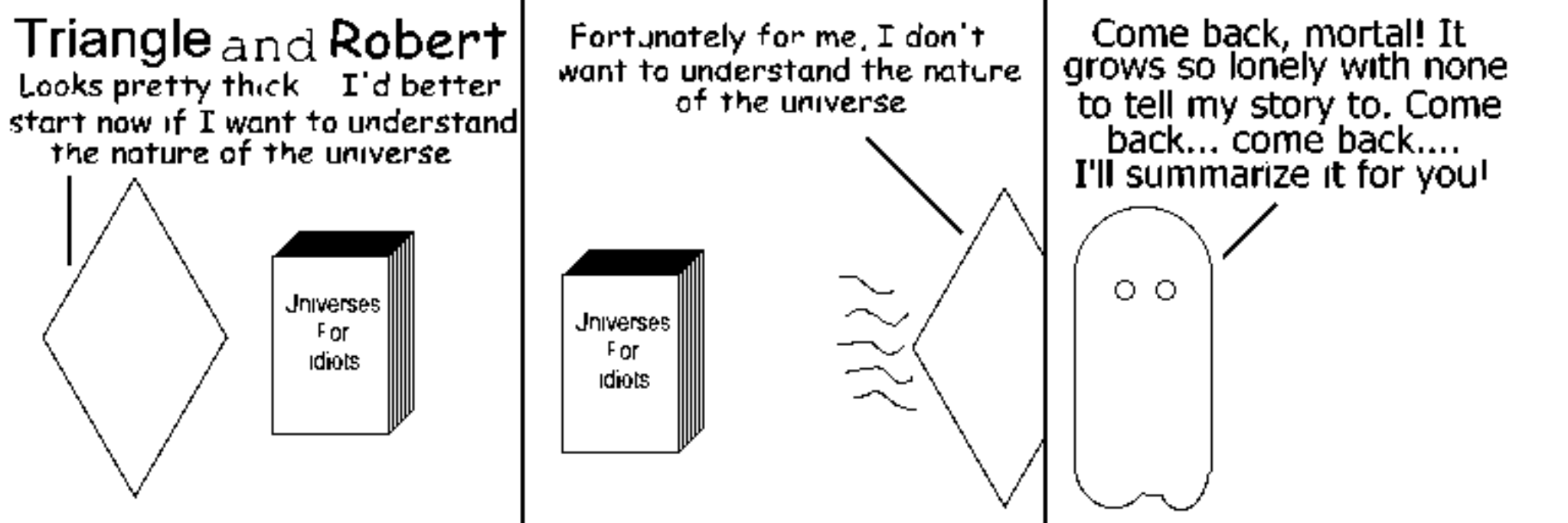
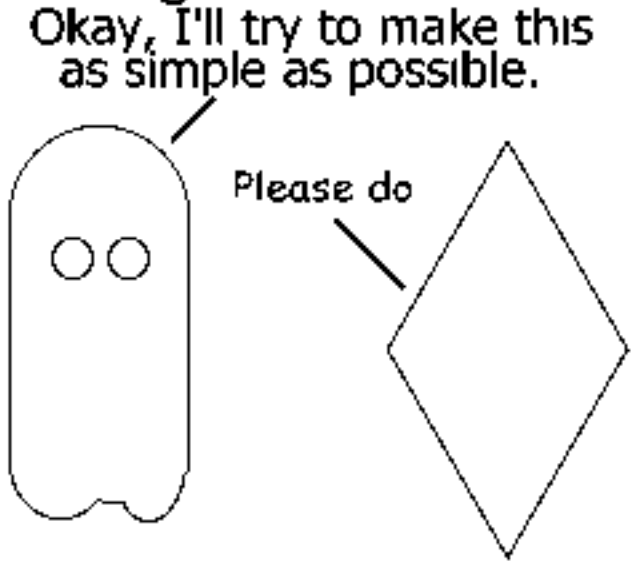
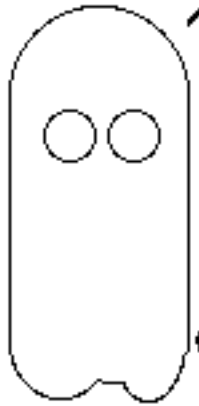


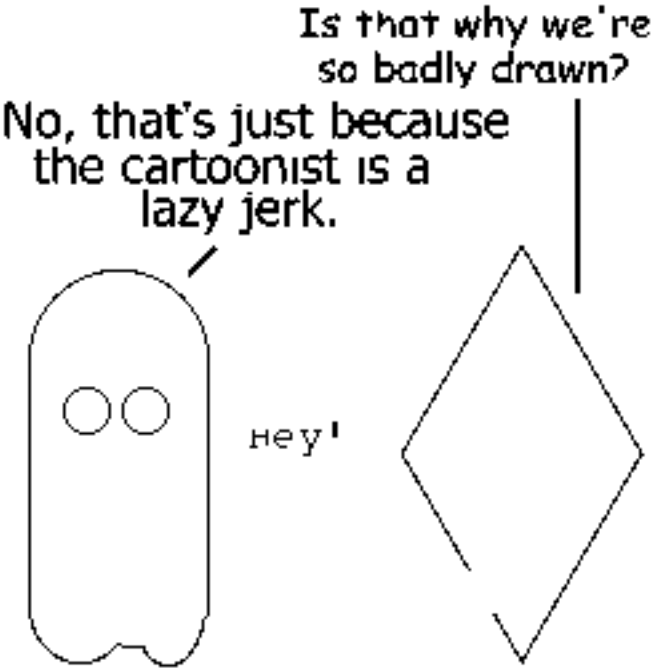

Triangle and Robert
AS I was saying, my story begins when the cosmos was young. The Beforings called me into being as a Pudding-Watcher.
The a.
Beforings. Pudding-Watcher. Are you so ignorant of the origins of your universe?
Apparently
Go read this then come back.
Jniverses For Idiots
OK, see ya


Triangle and Robert
Looks pretty thick I'd better start now if I want to understand the nature of the universe
Universes For Idiots
Fortunately for me, I don't want to understand the nature of the universe
Universes For Idiots
Come back, mortal! It grows so lonely with none to tell my story to. Come back... come back.... I'll summarize it for you!

Triangle and Robert







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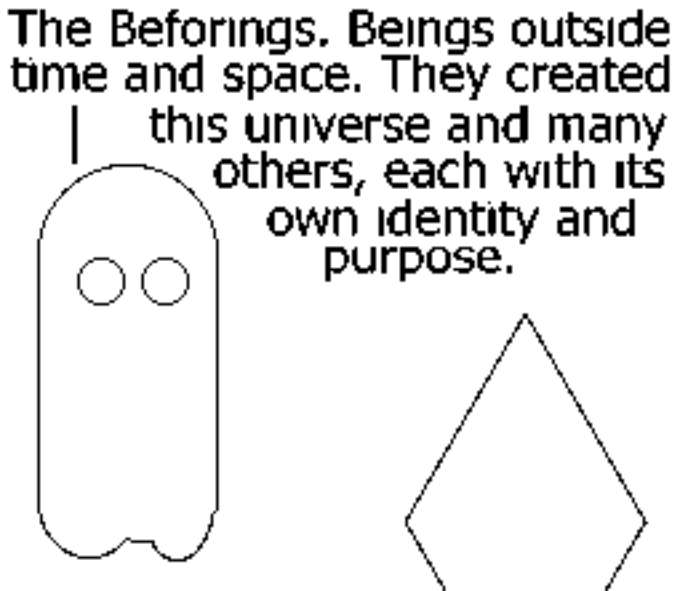
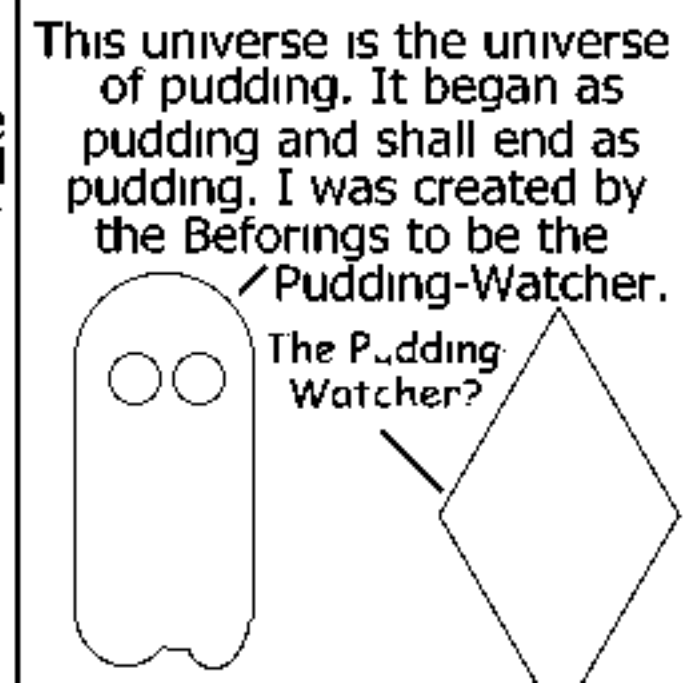
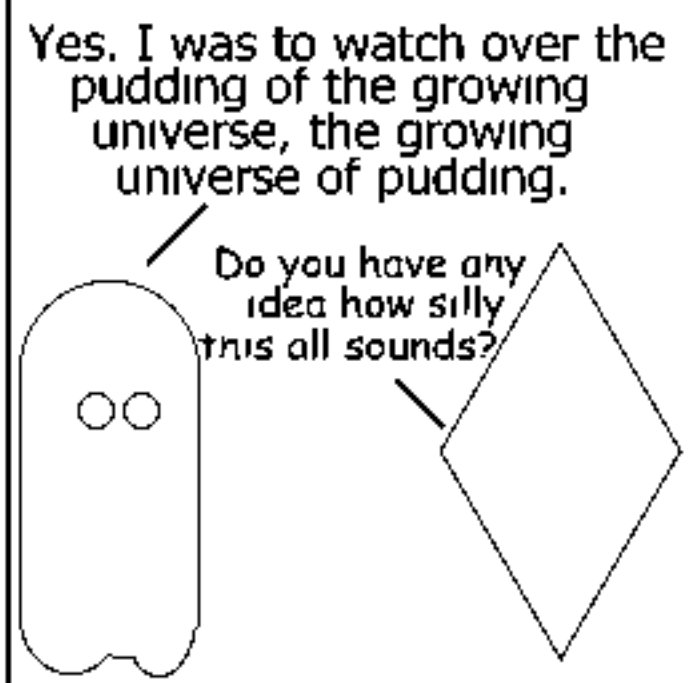
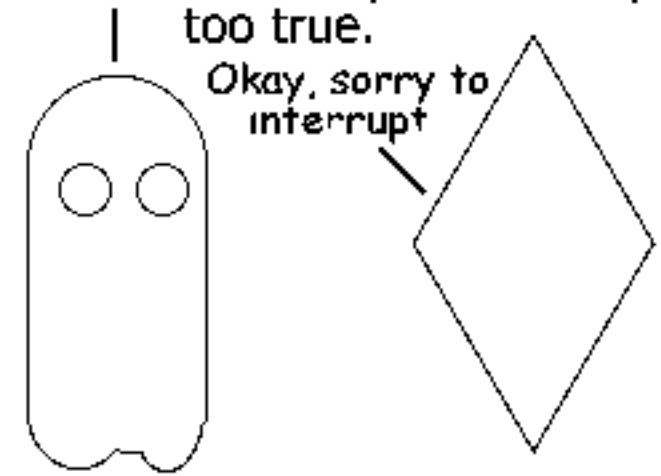






Triangle and Robert



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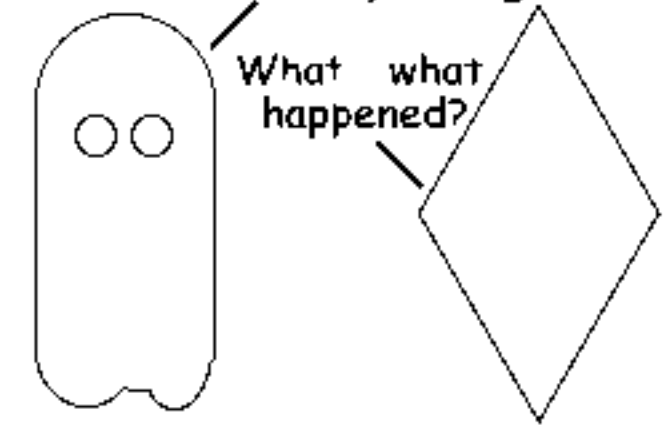

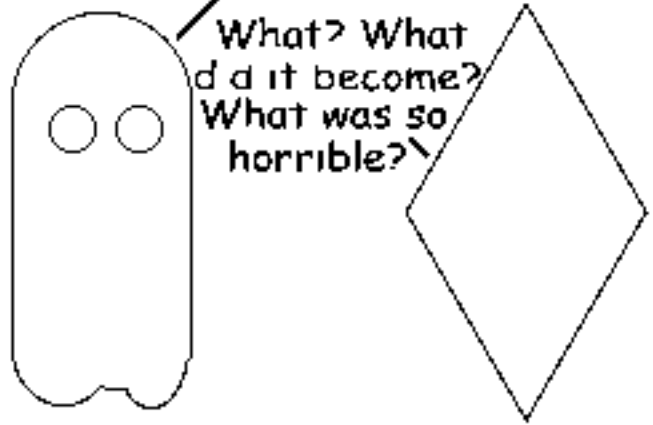

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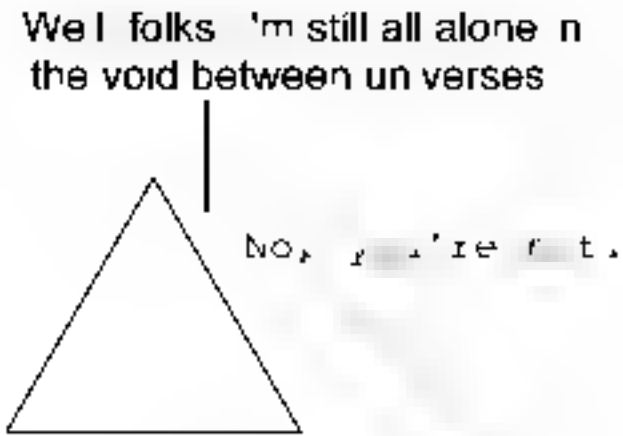
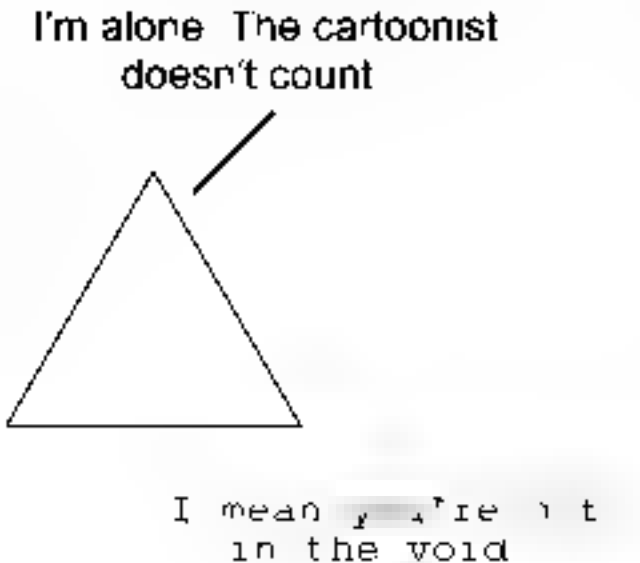
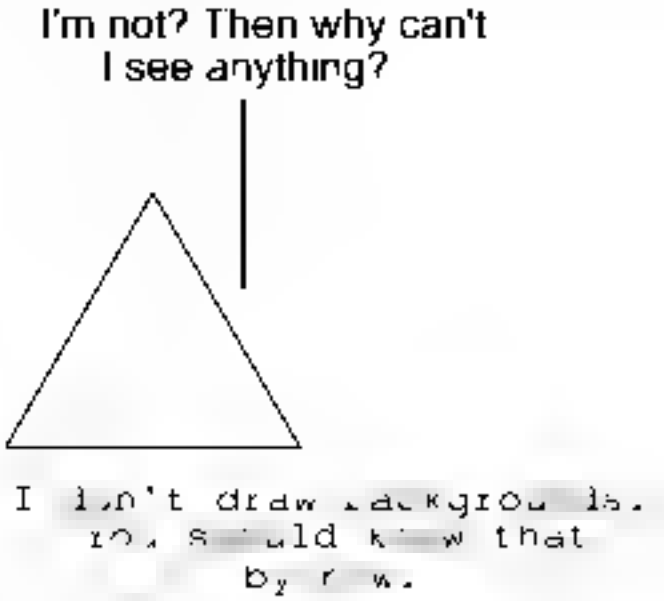
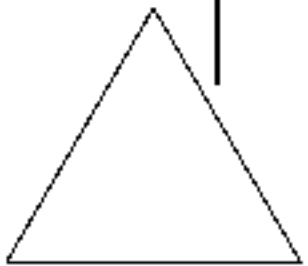






Triangle and Robert

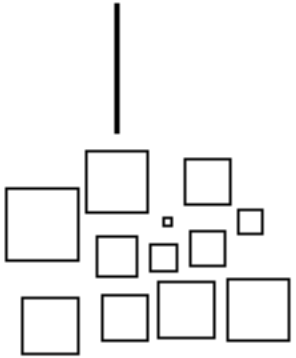
Where am I? What happened? I remember I remember try ng to find the ibrary and there was this woman She took me somewhere somewhere strange And now 'm here



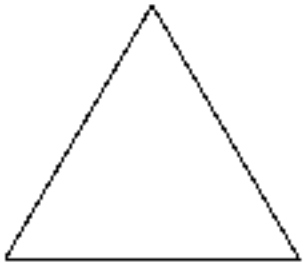
I at' . as qo d a I-Cap as ar y

So where is here?

On beha f of the Sq rare Guild we welcome yo r to Metric Land



No I'm not doing an Oz parody



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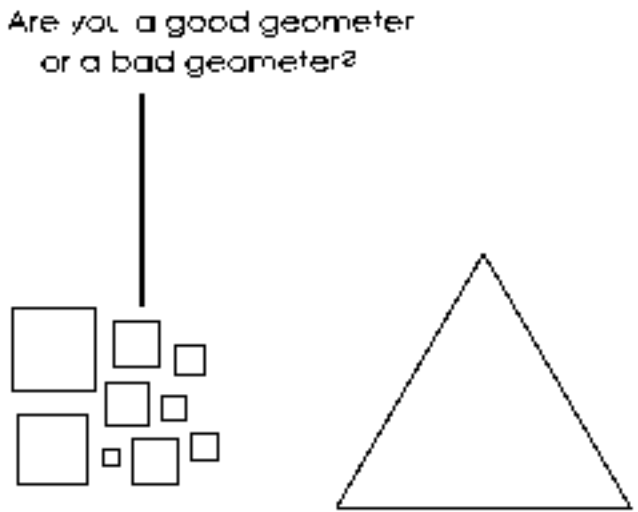

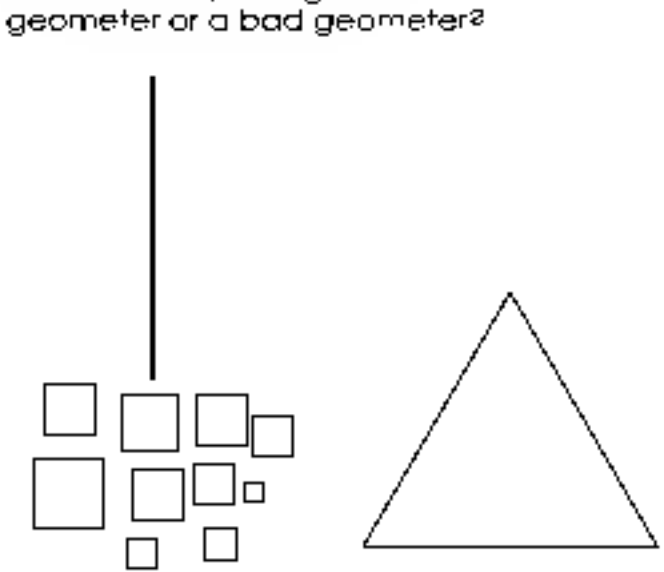

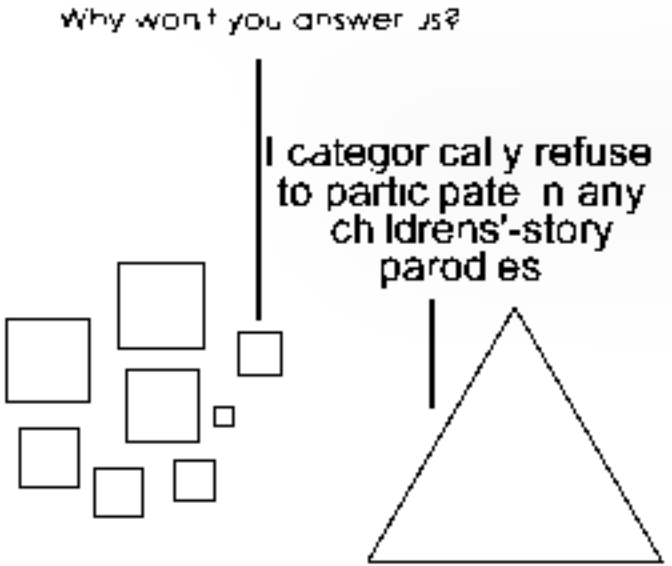

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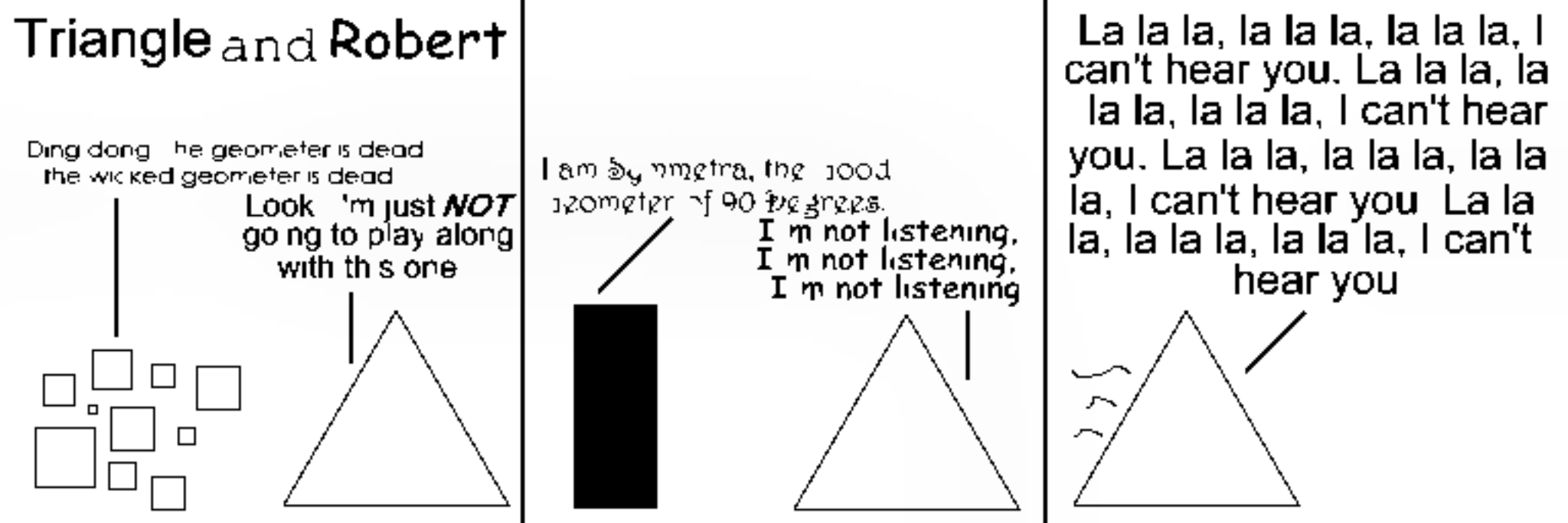

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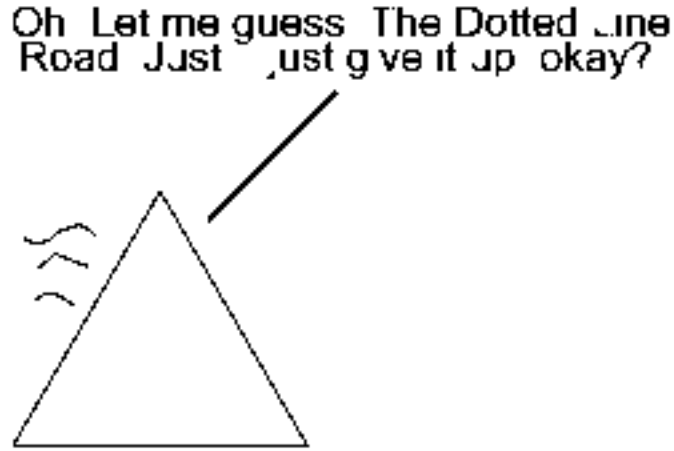

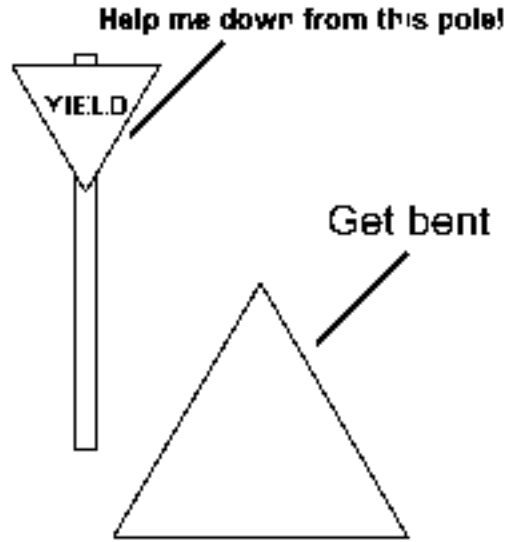

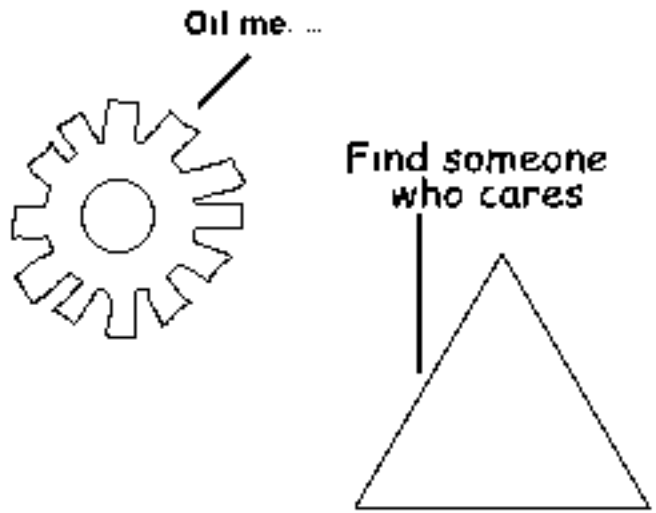

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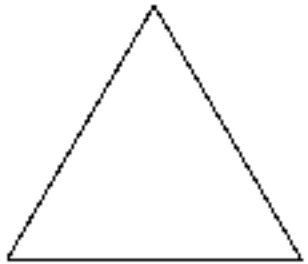

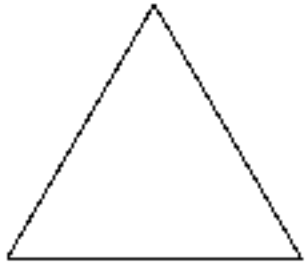

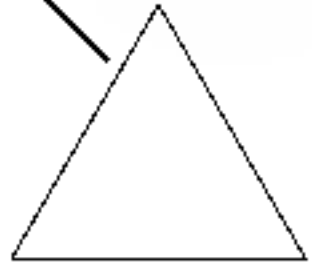

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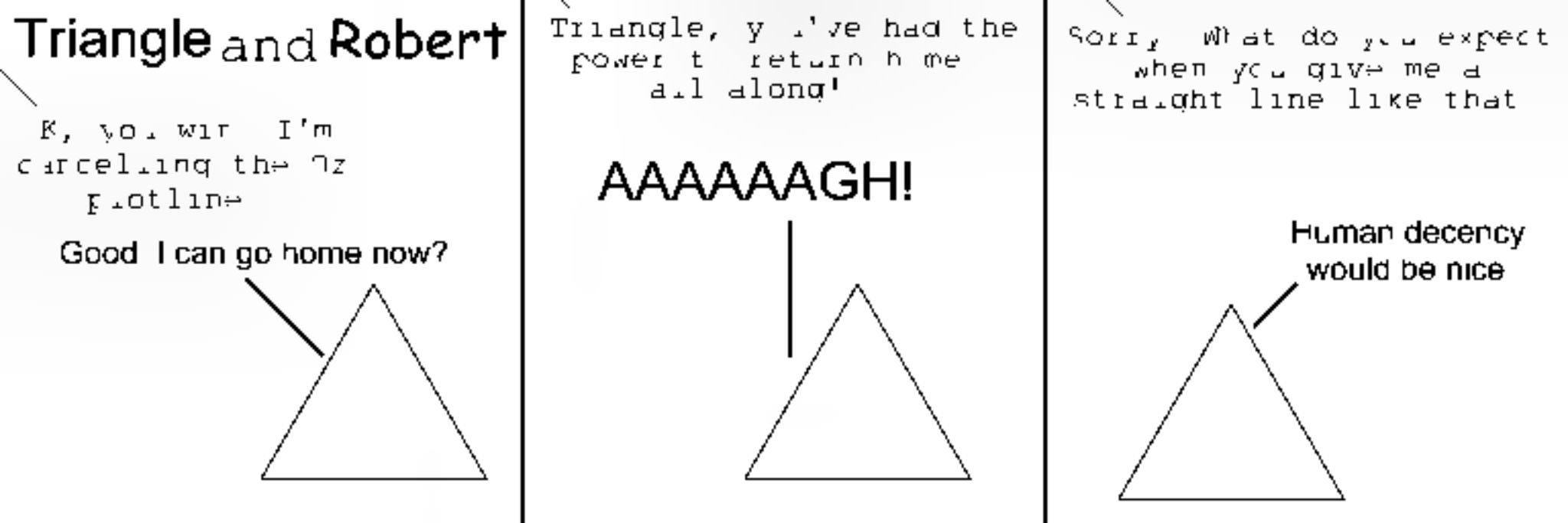

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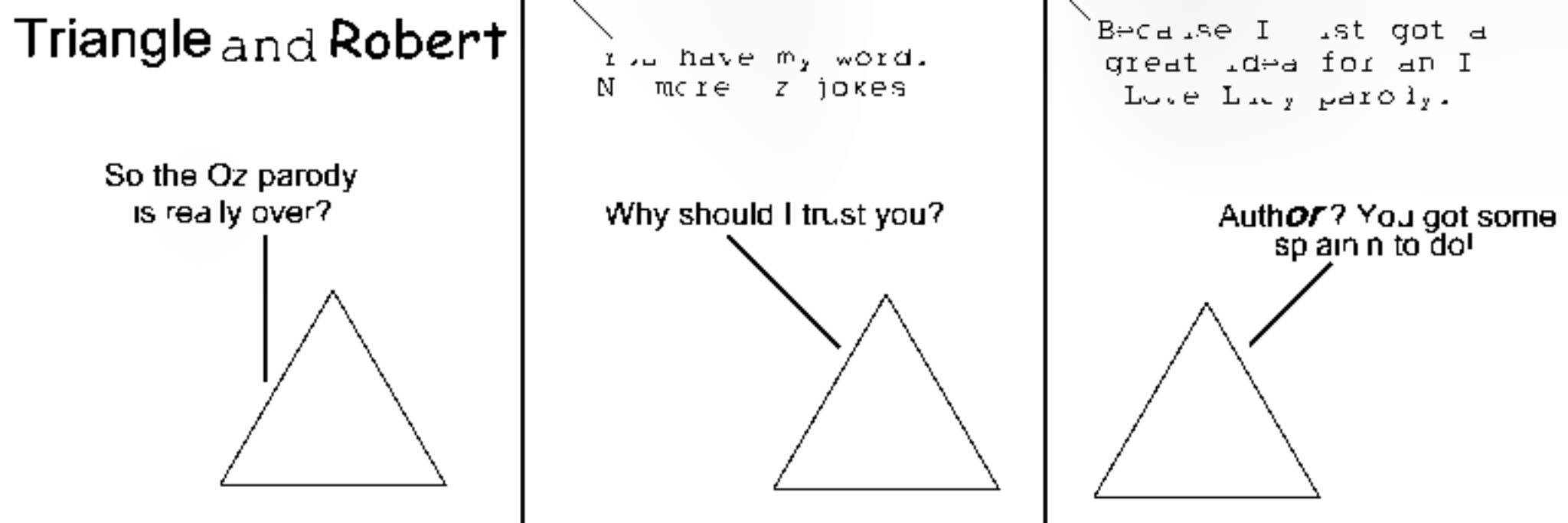

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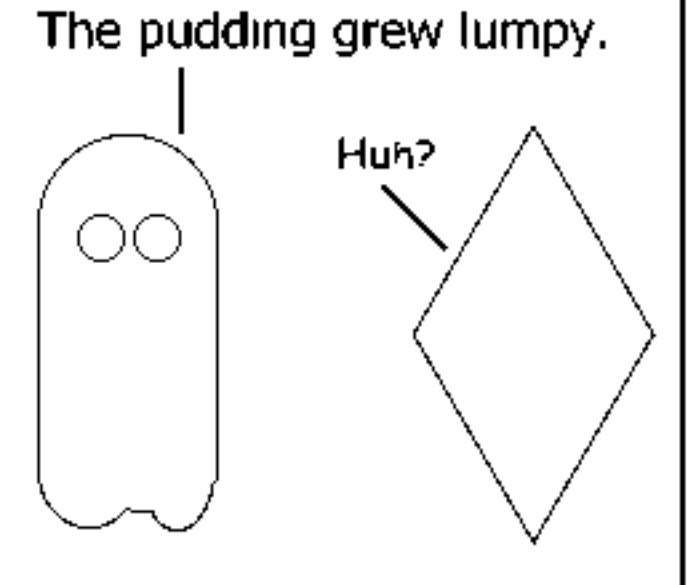
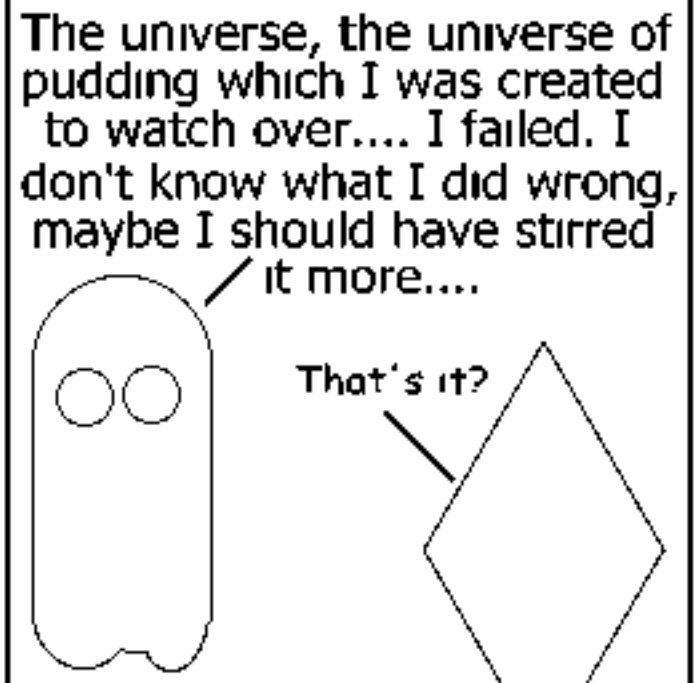
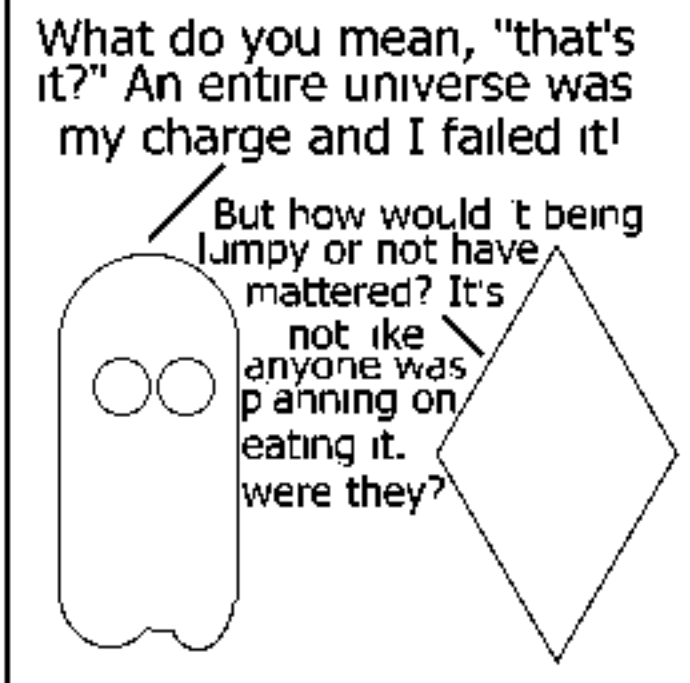
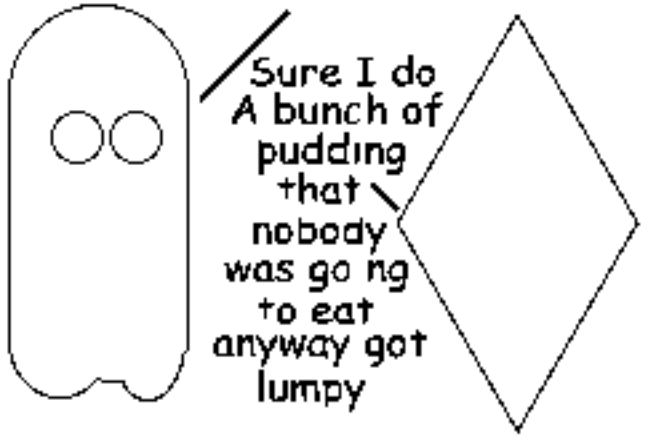




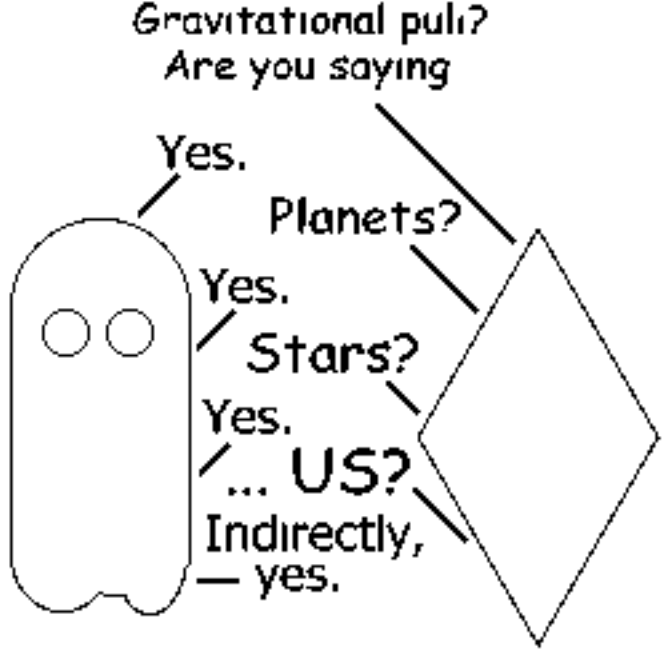


Triangle and Robert

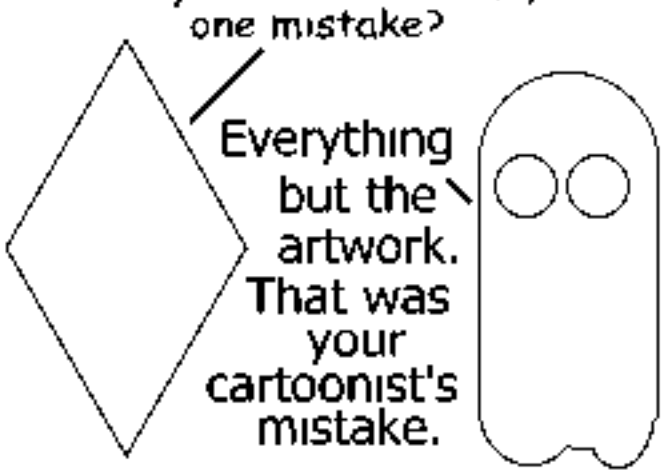
Mortal, you simply do not comprehend the magnitude of my failure.

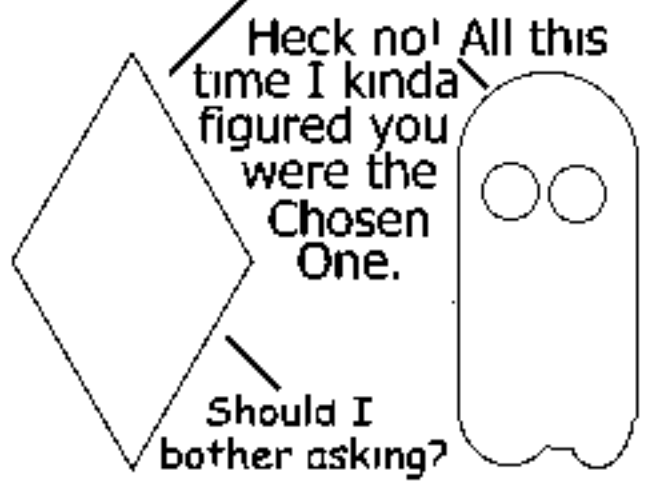


Not merely a "bunch" of pudding, mortal! Not a "bunch"! A UNIVERSE of pudding! A universe that was meant to have a soft, creamy texture! Lumps in such a pudding aren't just a culinary annoyance! Lumps like that have their own gravitational pull! Now look what you made me do, there's no room for artwork in this panel.



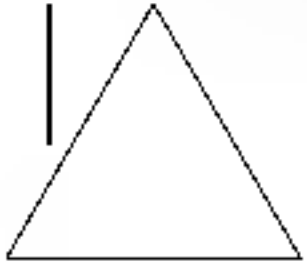
Triangle and Robert





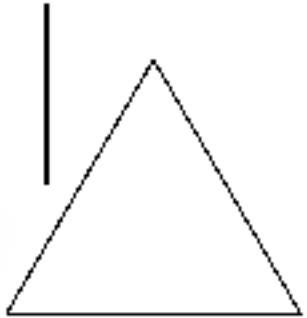
Triangle and Robert

No Oz parodies, no I Love Lucy parodies, no Brady Bunch parodies no Star Trek parodies no Powerpuff Girls parodies no Saturday Night Live parodies I am doing NO parodies



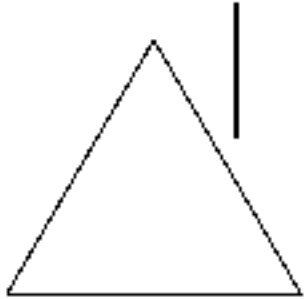
Would you parody Get Smart

I will not parody Get Smart



Would you parody Newhart

I will not parody Get Smart. I will not parody New - Hey! No Dr Seuss parodies

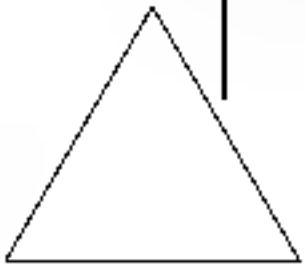


Triangle and Robert

Why can't you just drop me into whatever plotline Robert s in?

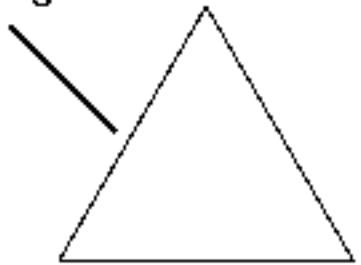
He s getting some exp sit1 n right row that I don't want y u t k1 w.

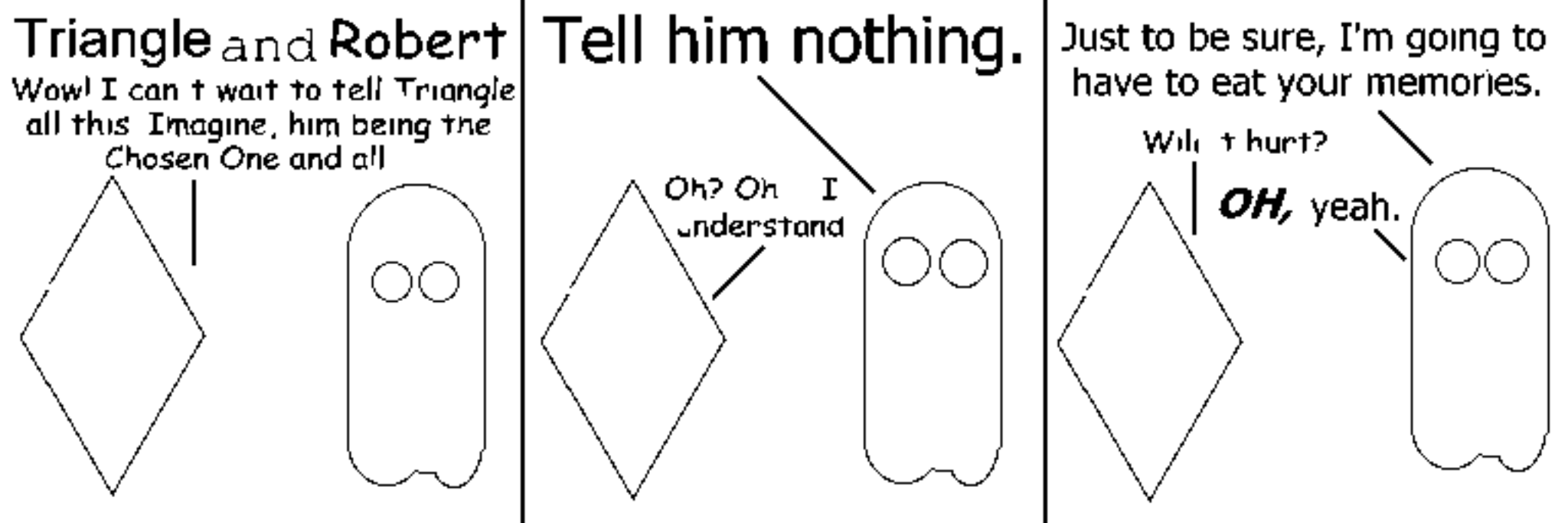
What s the po nt? He'll just tel me when I see him



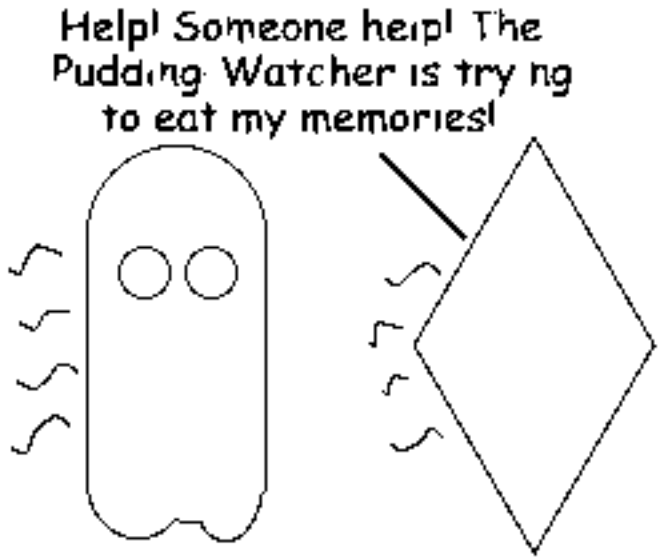
G o1 point. I'1l have t give him amnesia

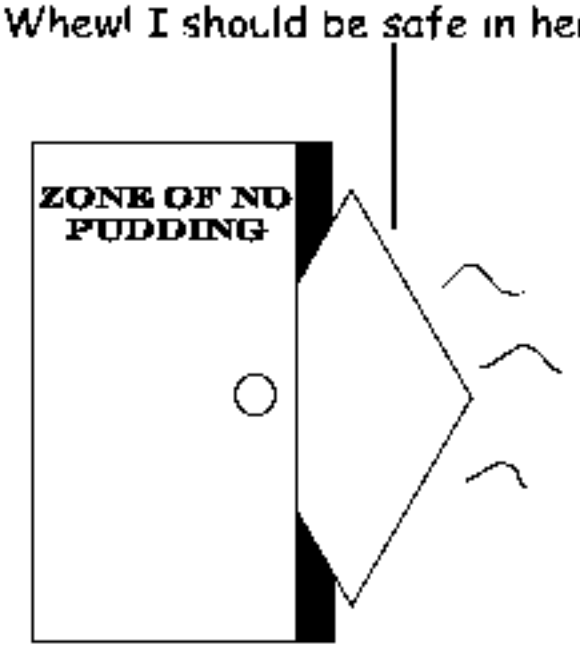
Just when you thought it was as contrived as it could get




Triangle and Robert
Wow! I can t wait to tell Triangle all this Imagine, him being the Chosen One and all
Tell him nothing.
Oh? Oh I understand
Just to be sure, I'm going to have to eat your memories.
Wil t hurt?
OH, yeah.

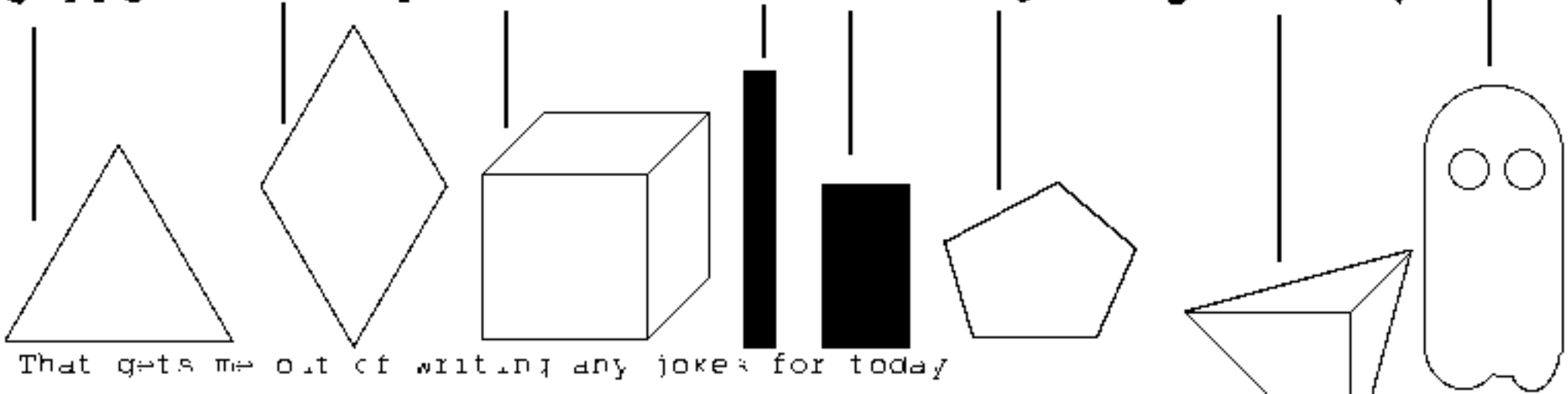
Triangle and Robert





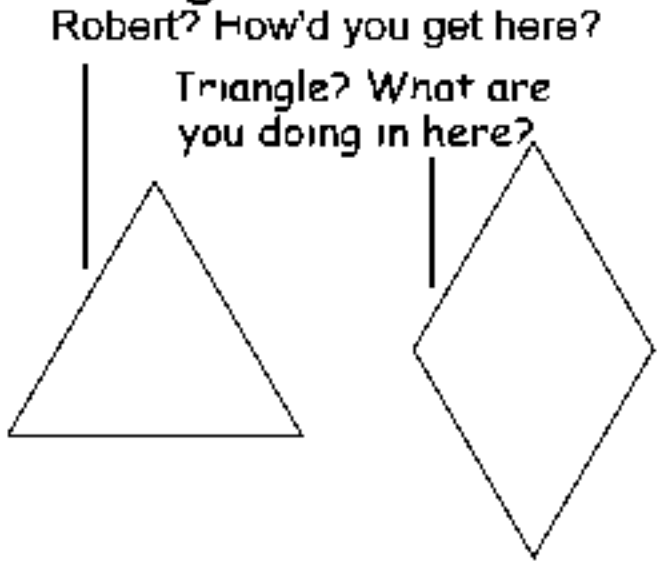
Triangle and Robert

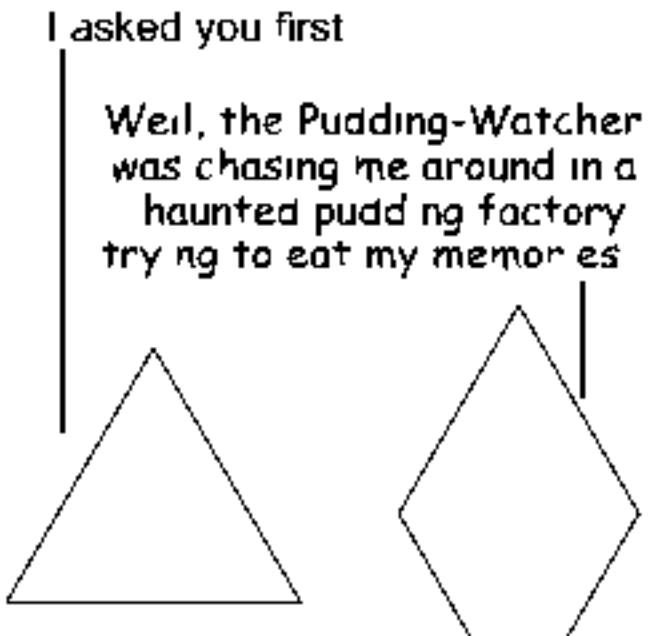
Happy 50th strip from all of us here at Triangle and Robert!

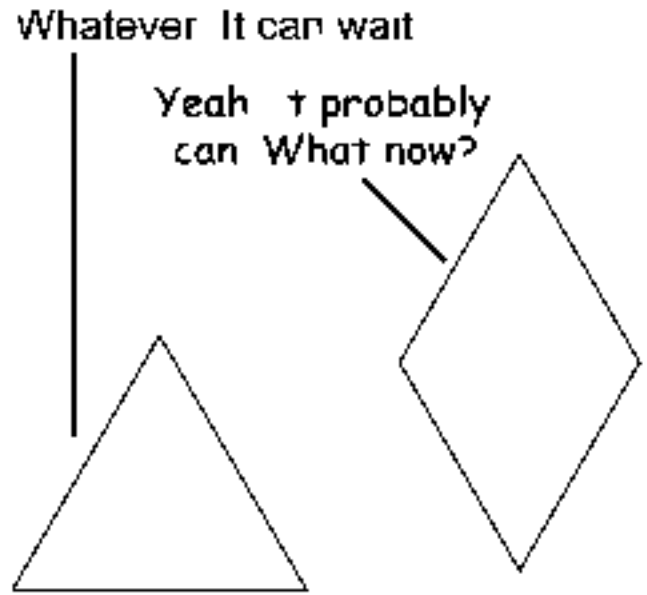


That gets me out of writing any jokes for today

Triangle and Robert







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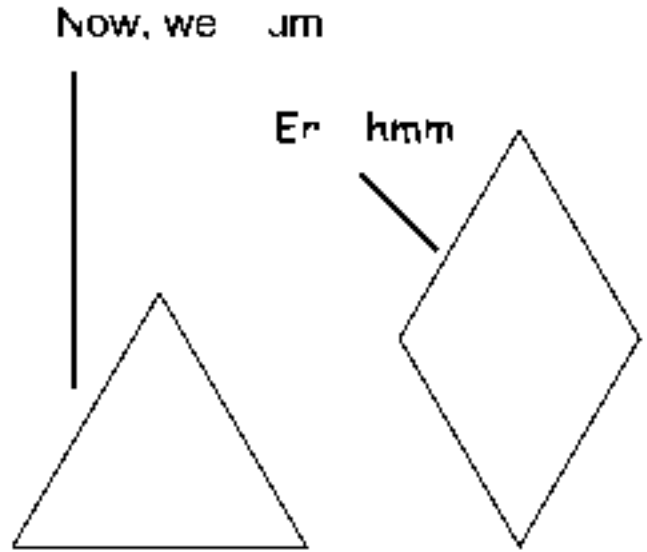

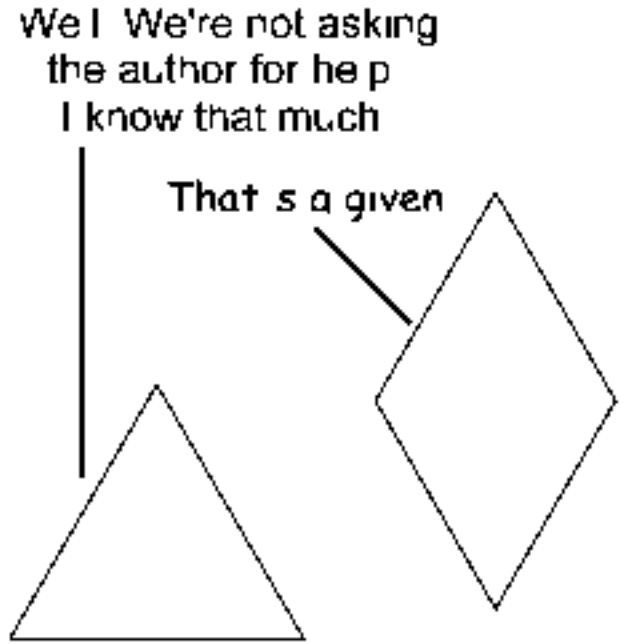

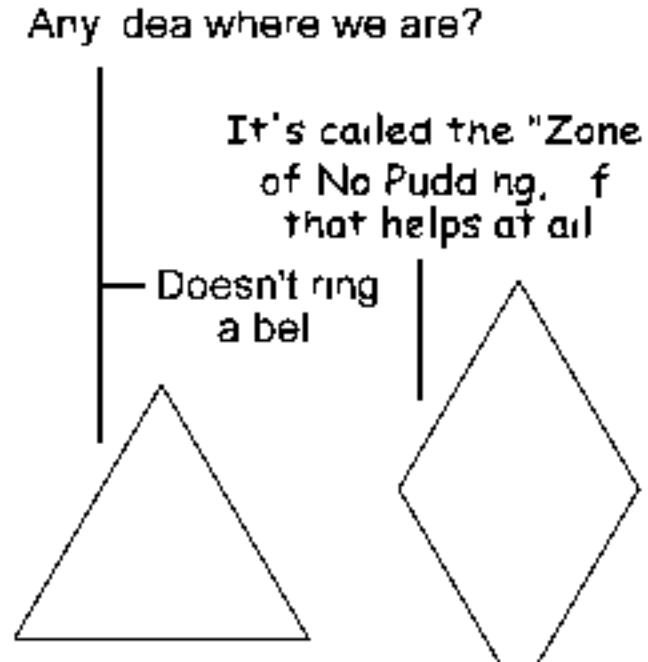

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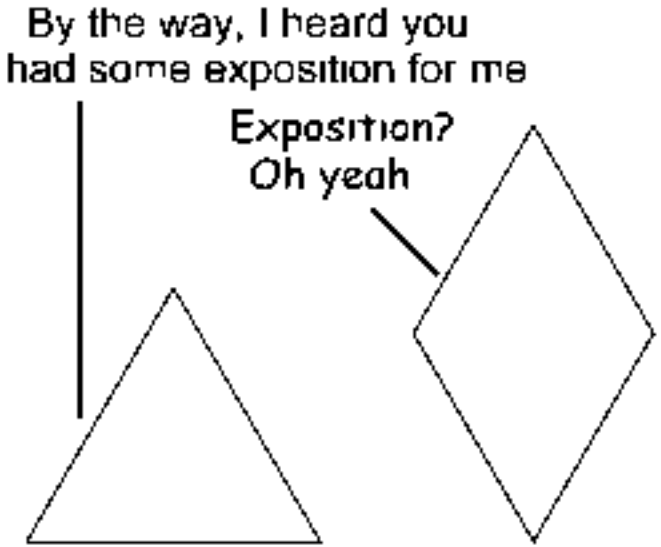

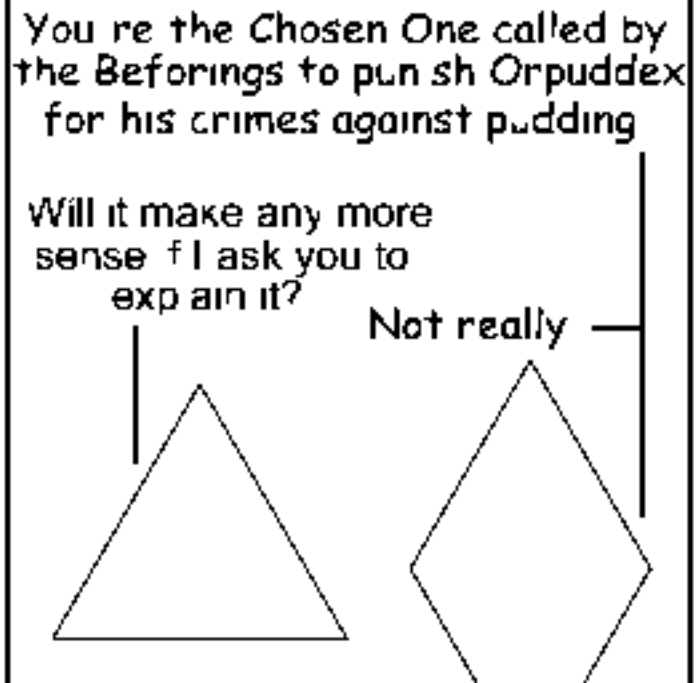

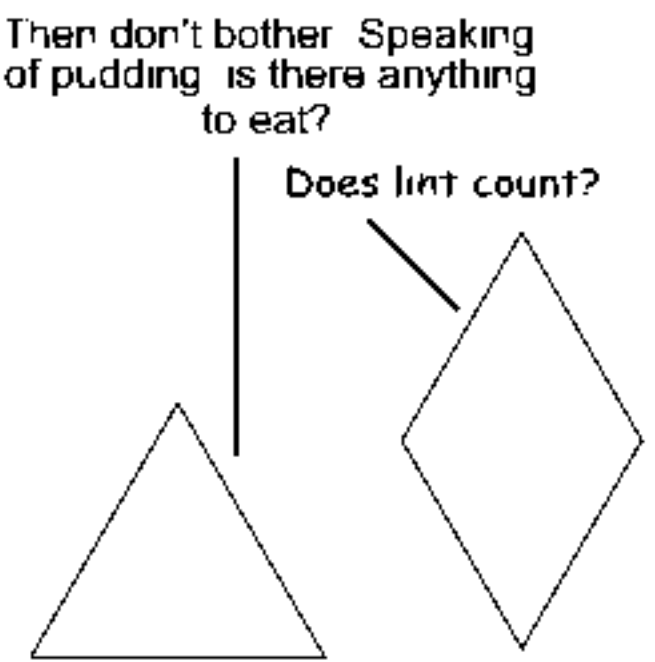

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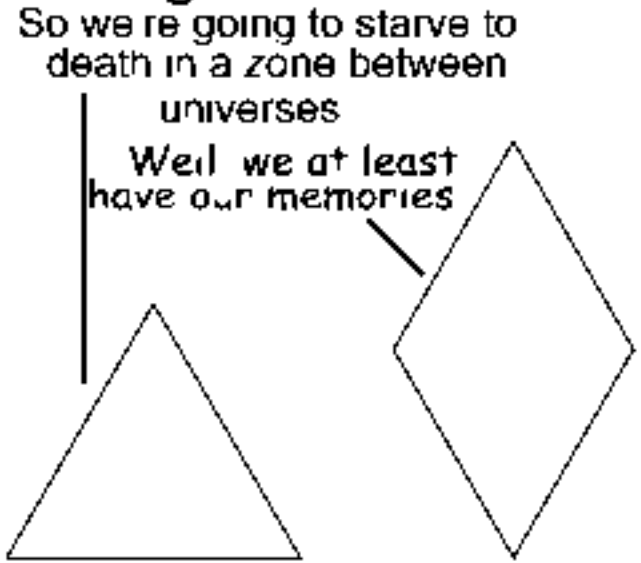

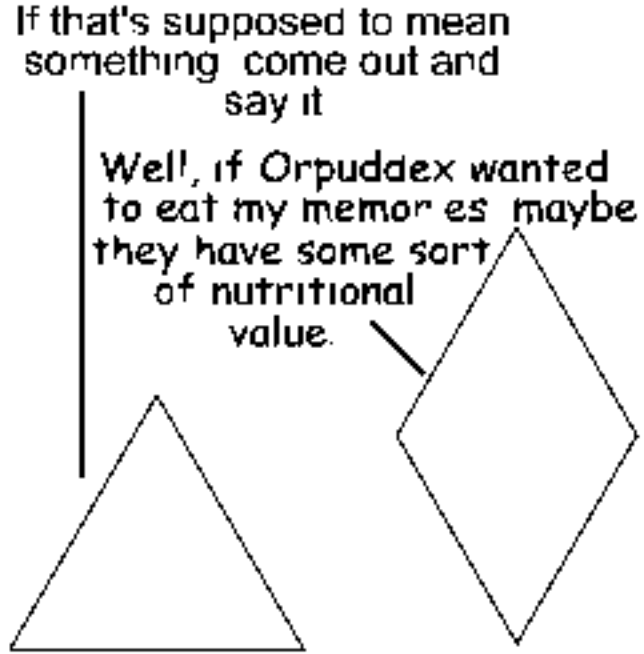

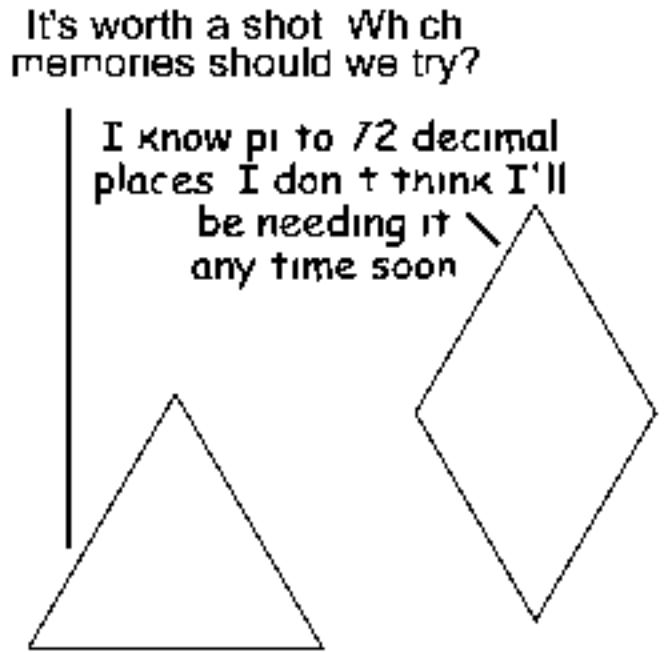

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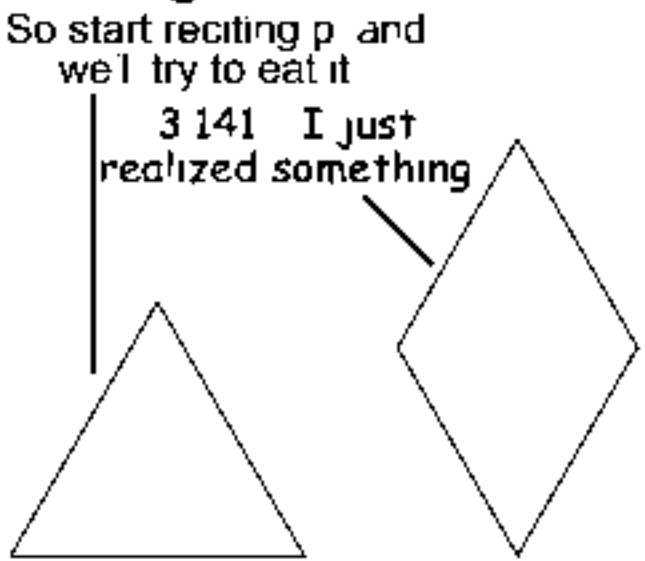

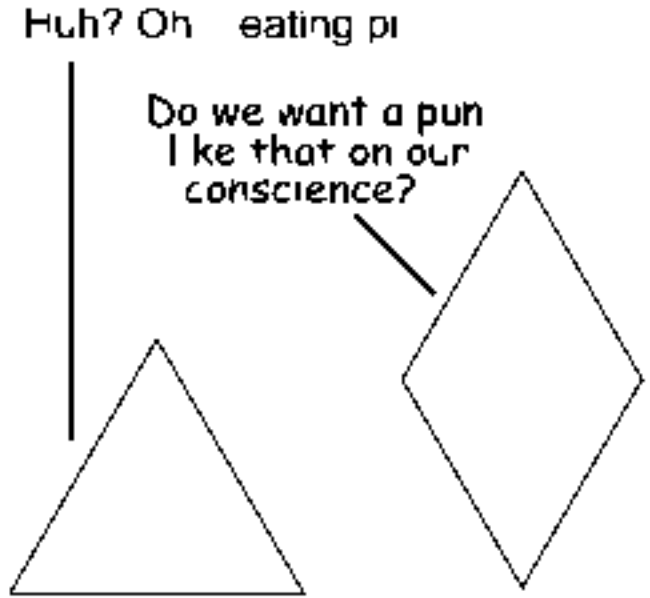

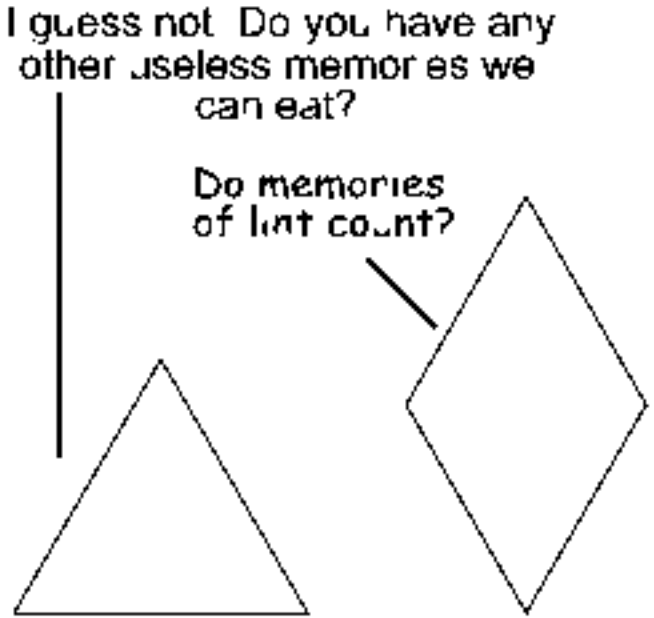

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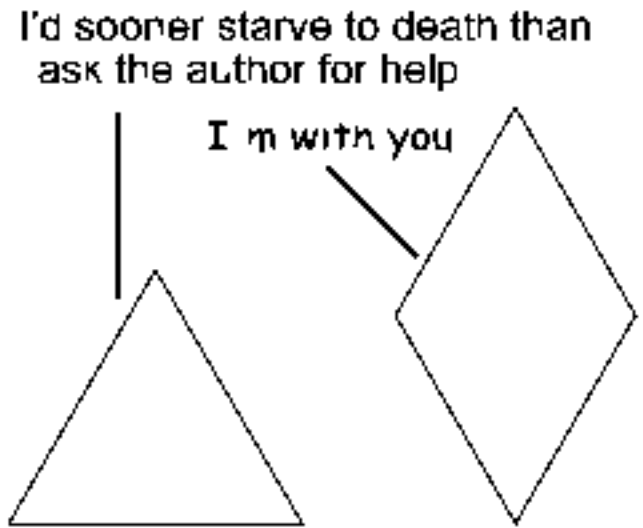

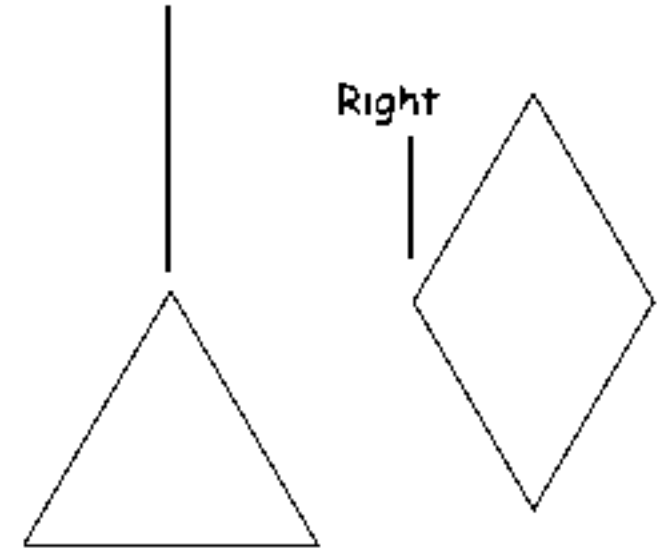

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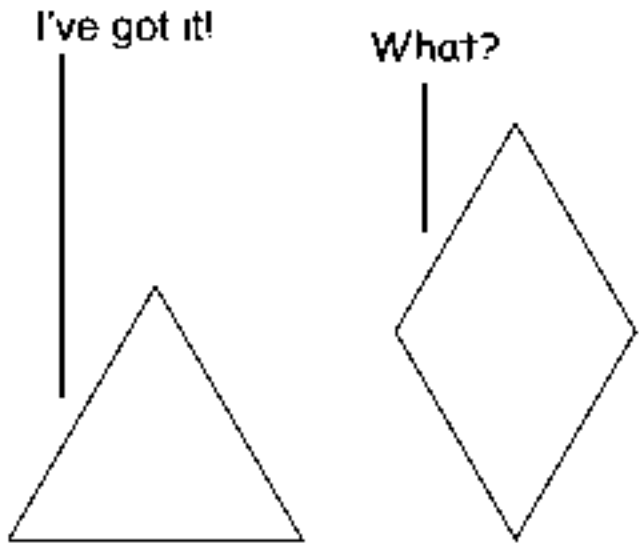

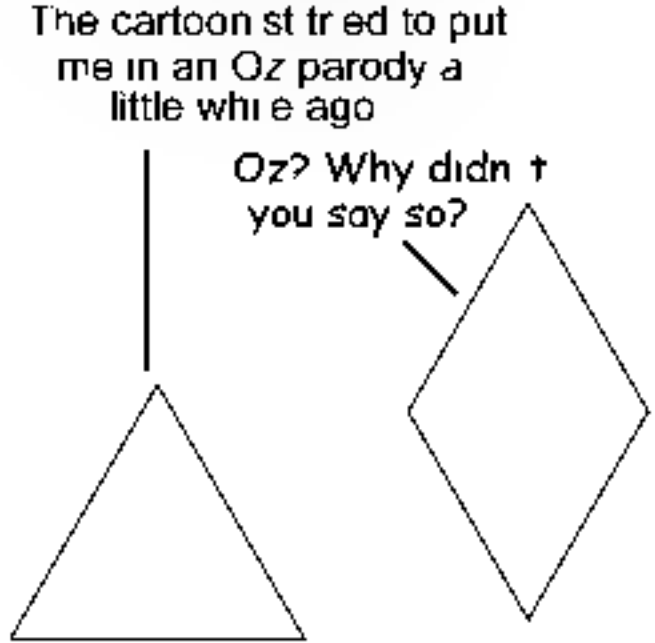

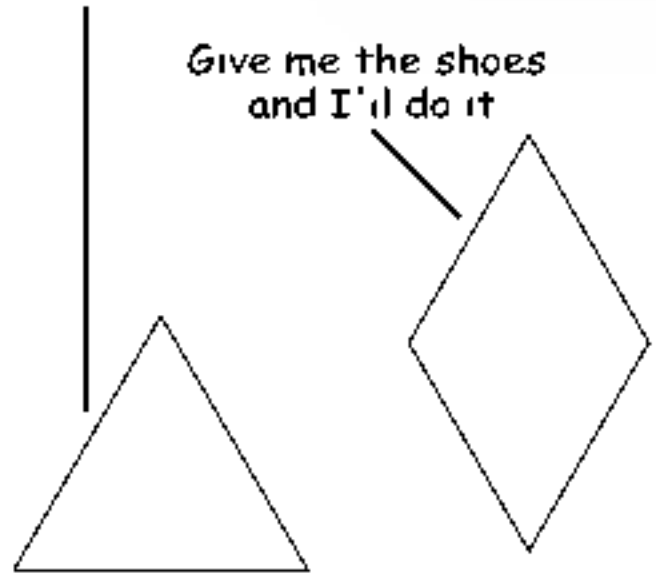

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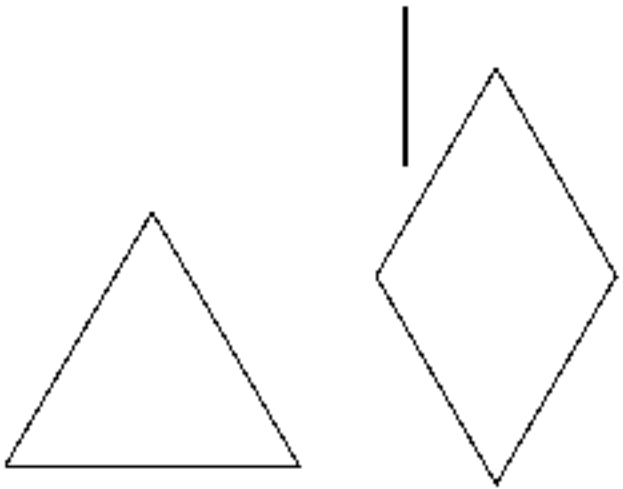

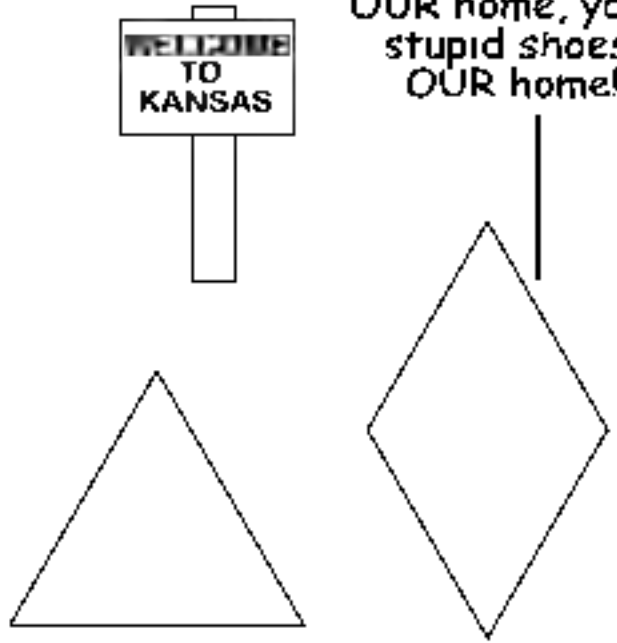

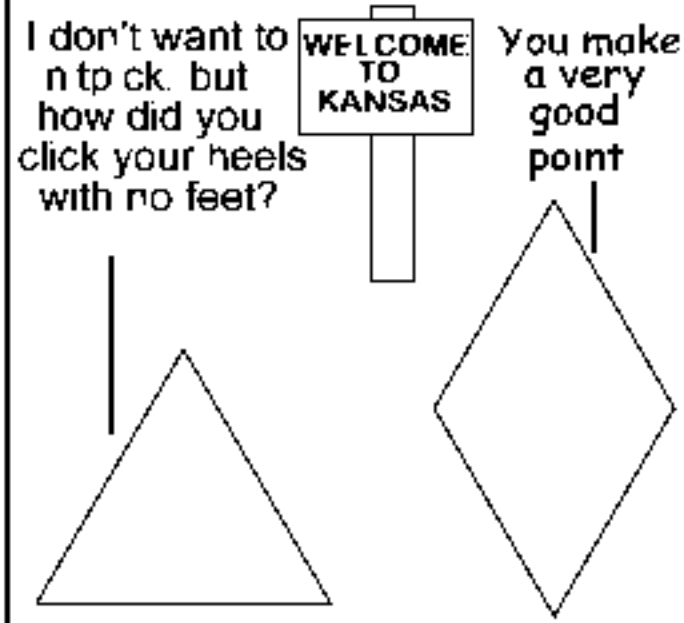

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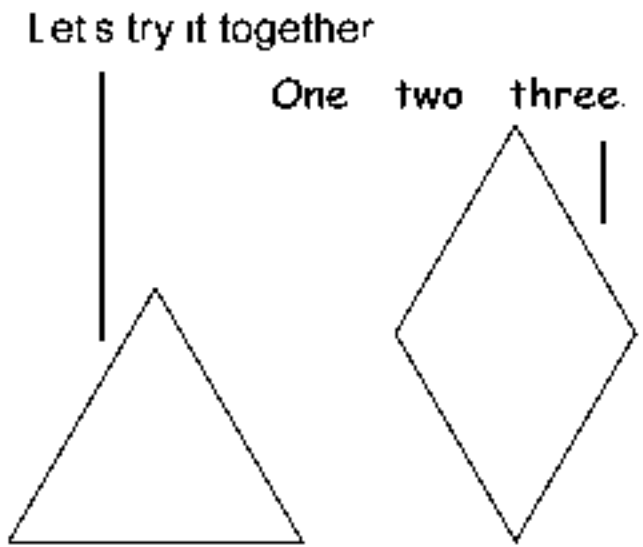

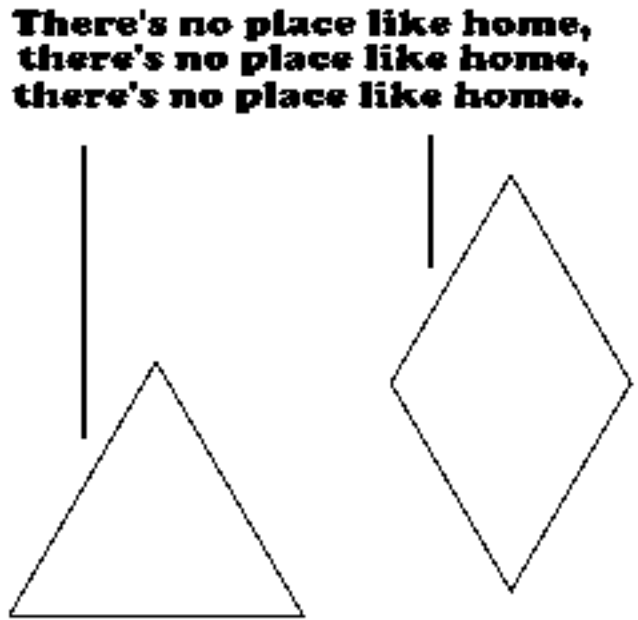

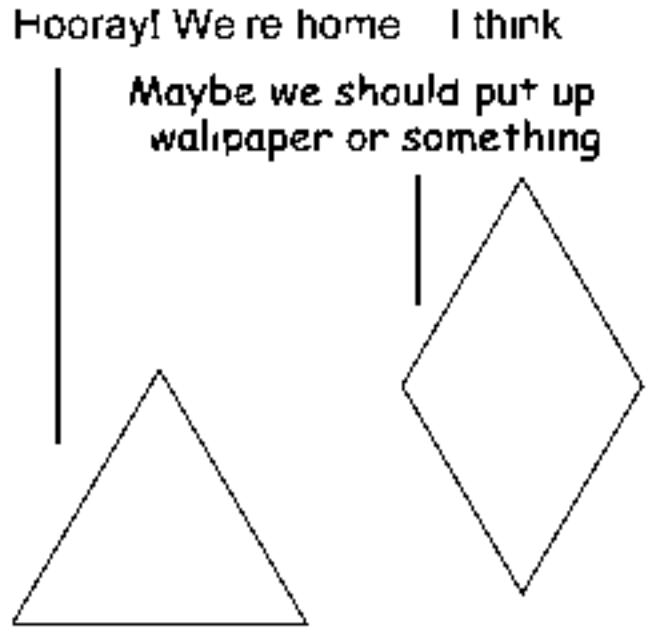

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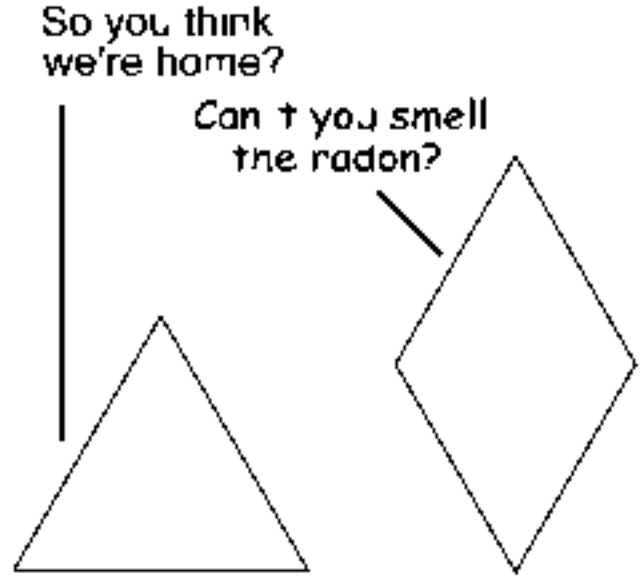

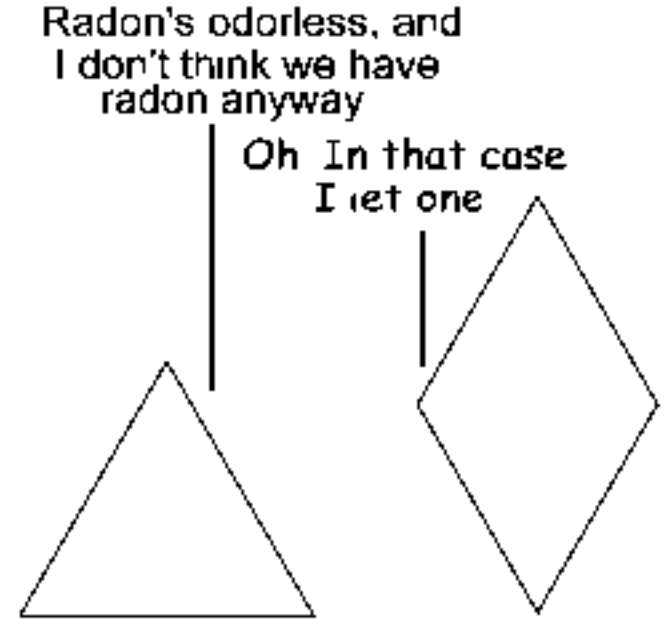

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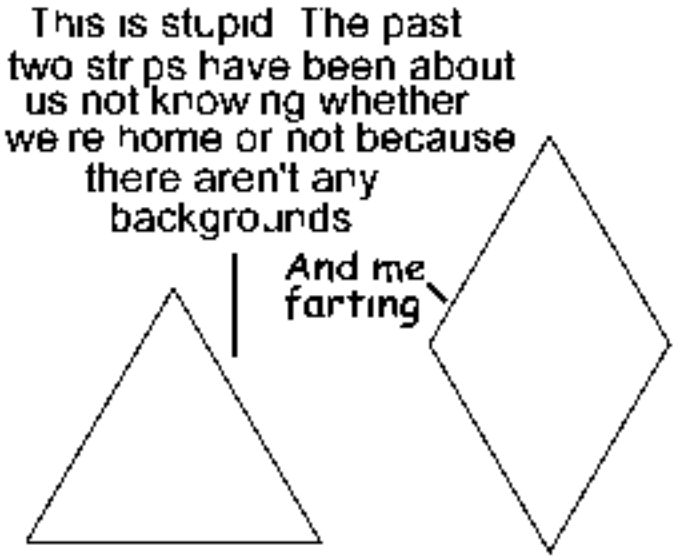

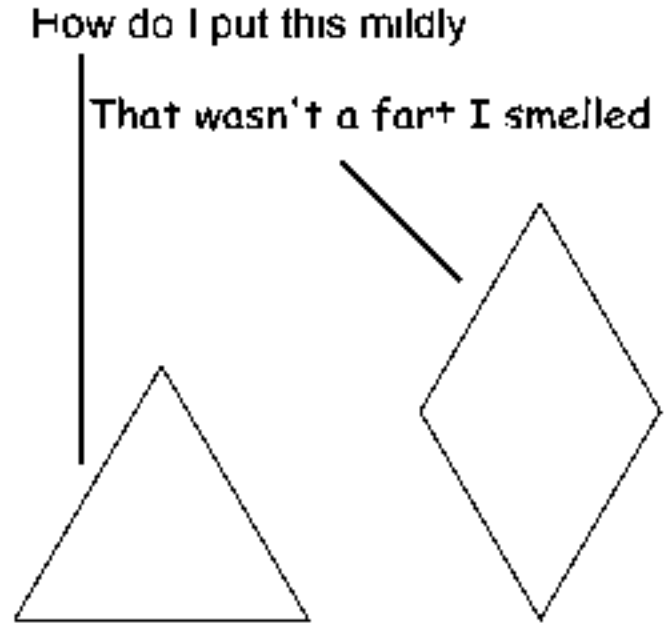

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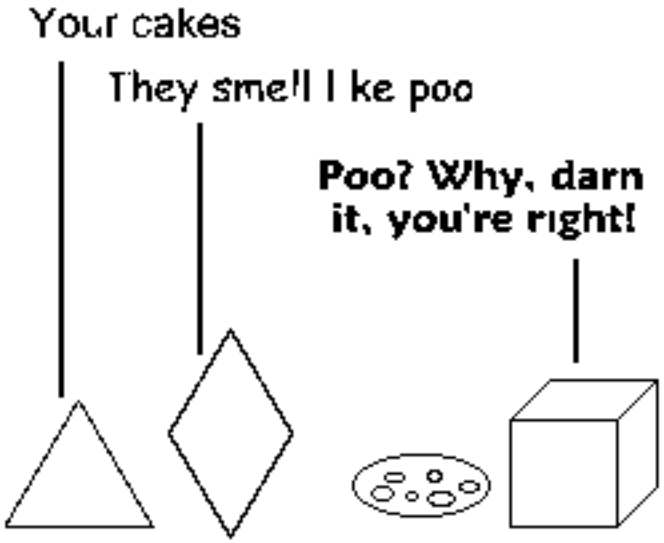

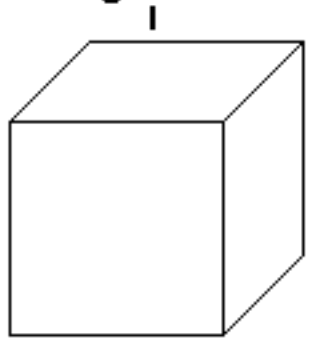

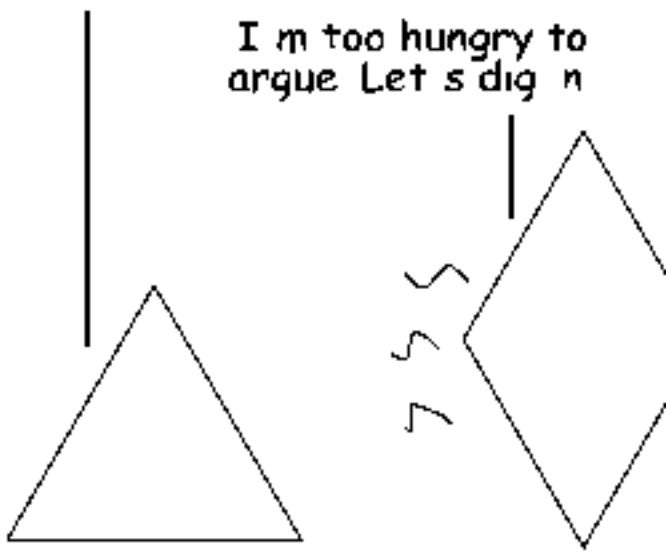

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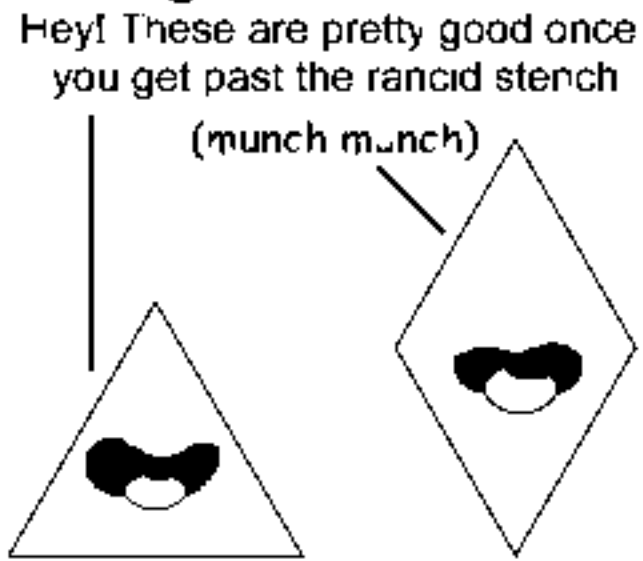

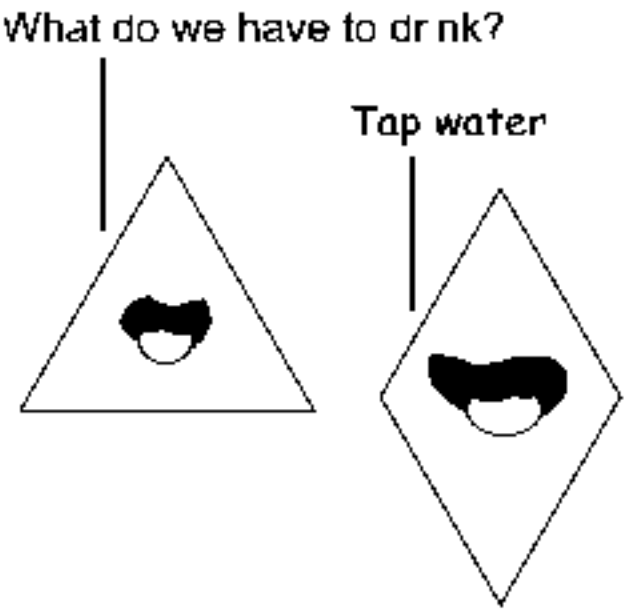

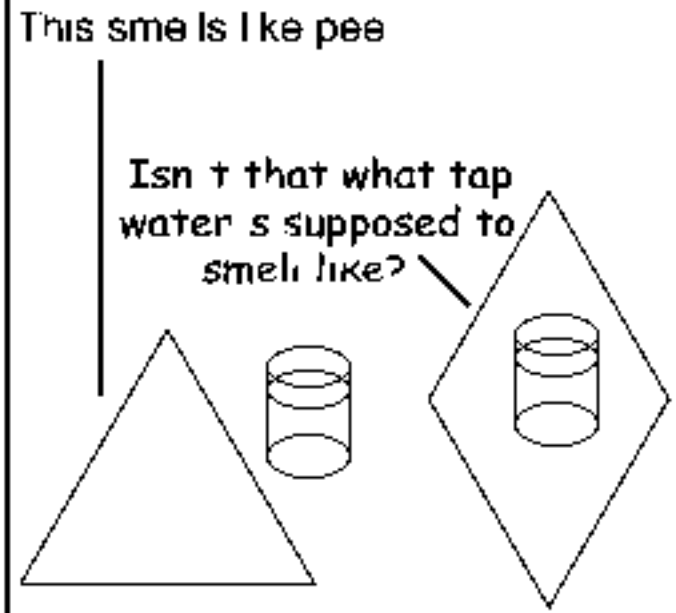

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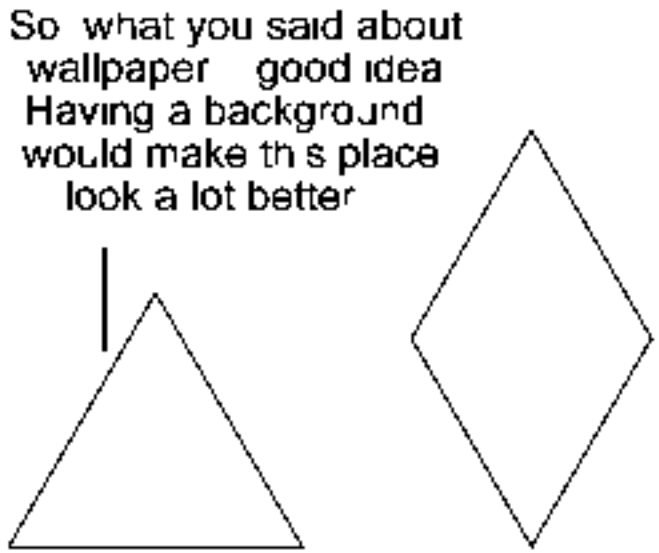

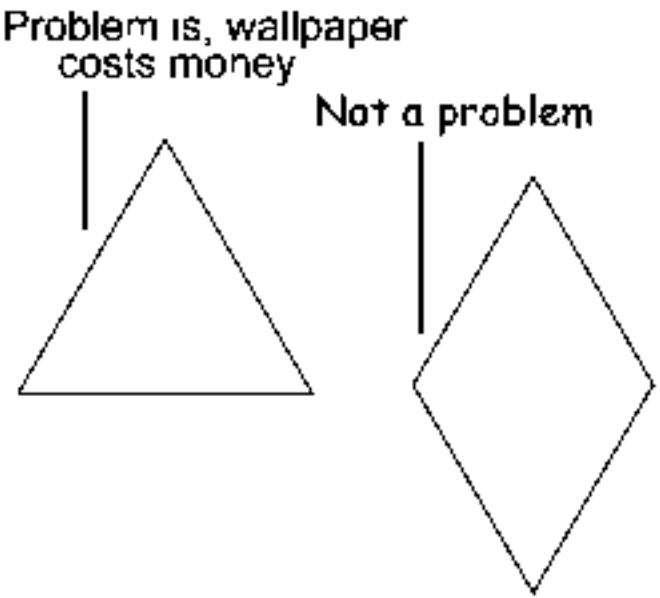

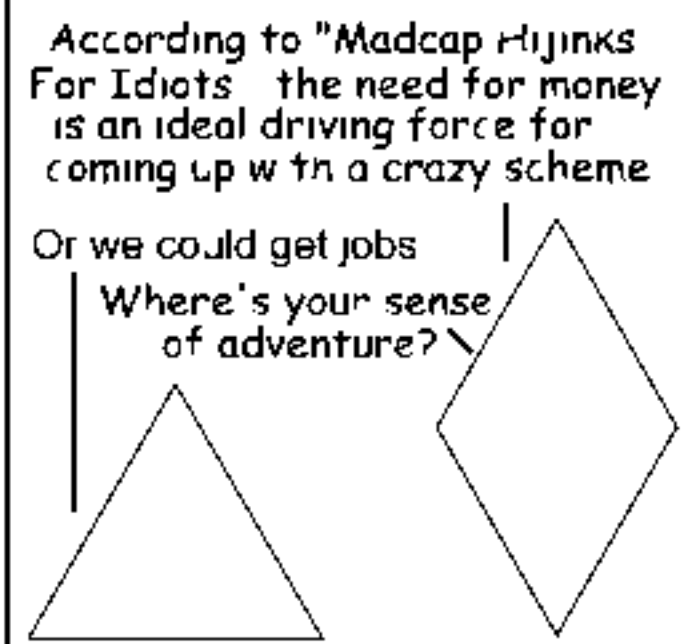

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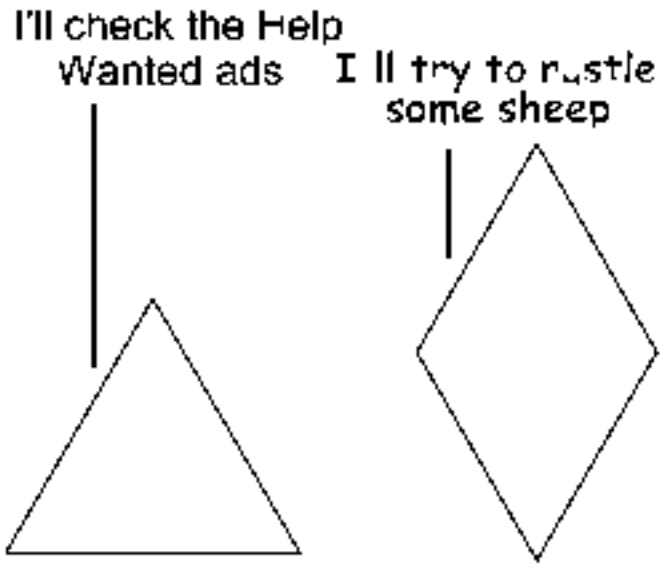
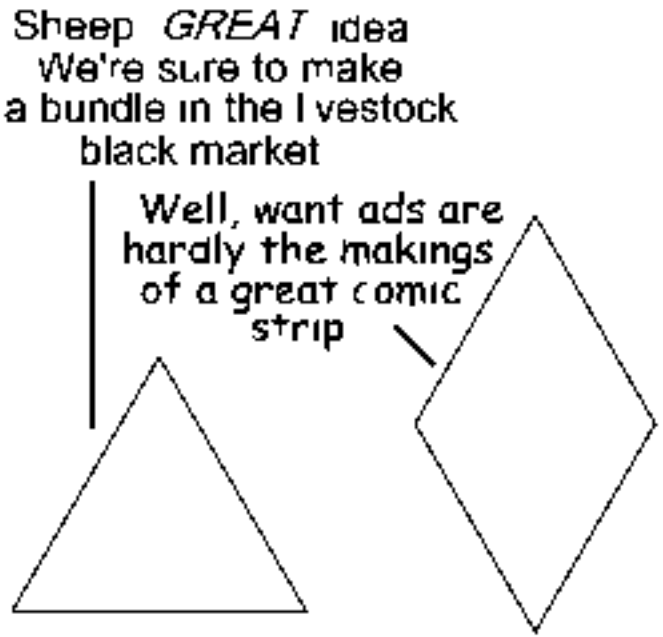
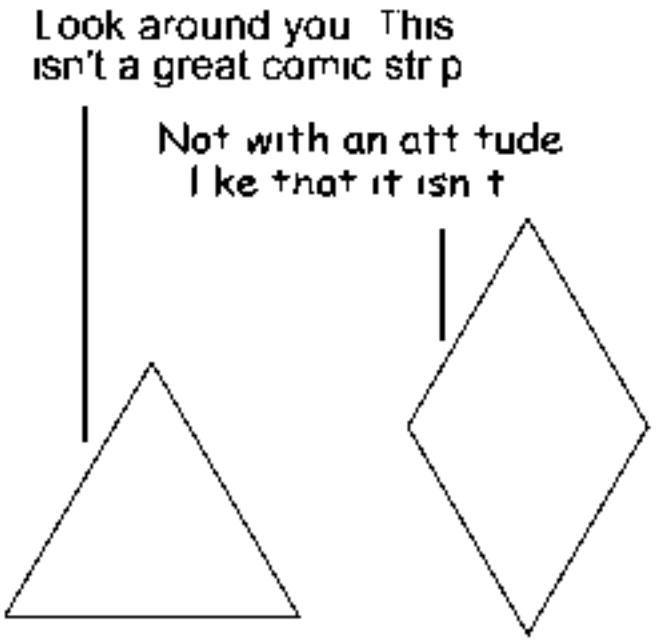
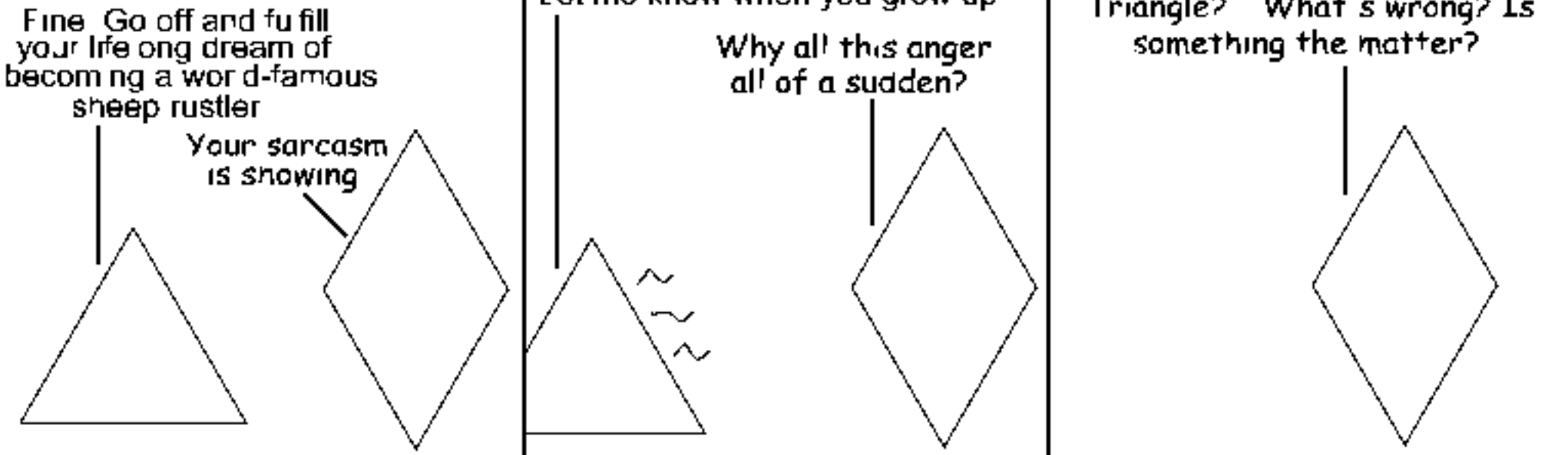




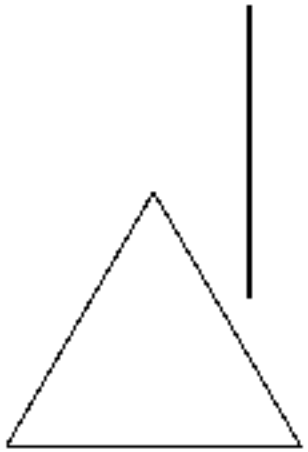


Triangle and Robert



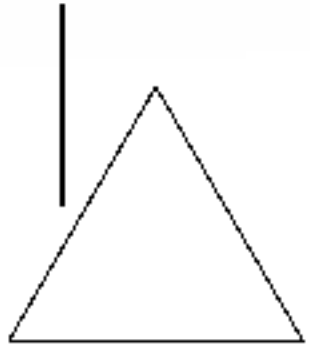
Triangle and Robert

Author! AUTHHHORRR!



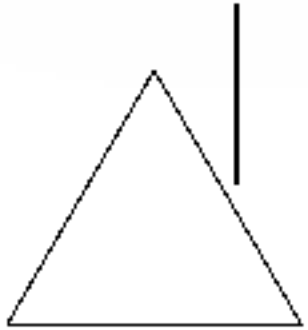
I'm not going t erase
y u, so don't ask.

There's no po nt to my being drawn
You created me I'm not grateful



I'm not looking for your
gratitude I don't even
need y ur cooperation
Cre wa, or arot er, y
will serve the strip

You don't get it do you



Triangle and Robert

This has gone from a "comic strip" to an "existential-despair strip"

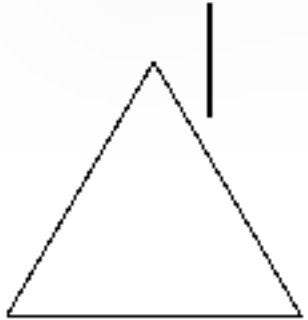
Honestly, I understand what you're going through. I just can't do anything about it.

I don't think you *can* understand

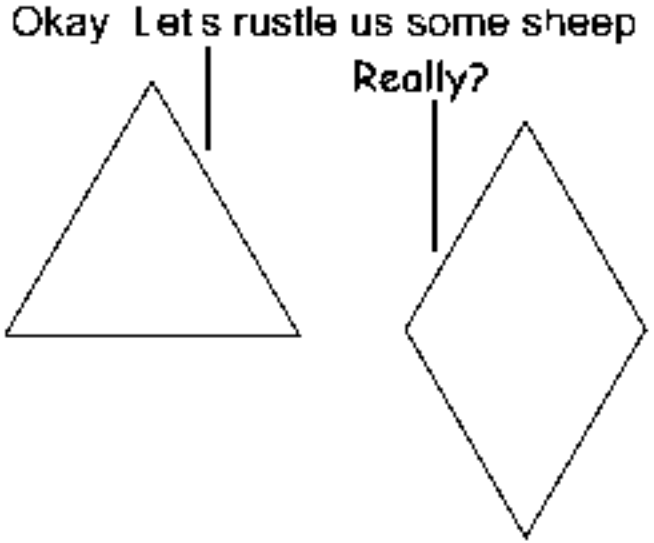
At least, I know you're here for a reason, even if it's a stupid one. I don't have that much.

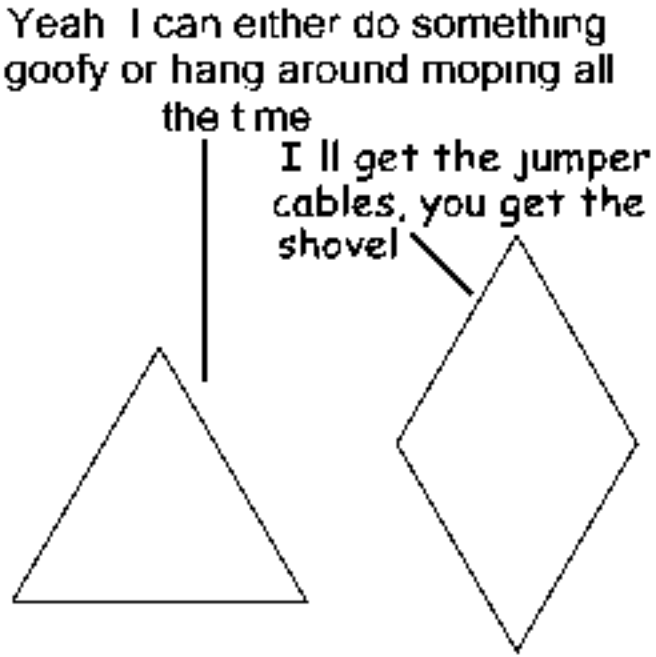
Let's stop whining and just try to make this strip funny for a change

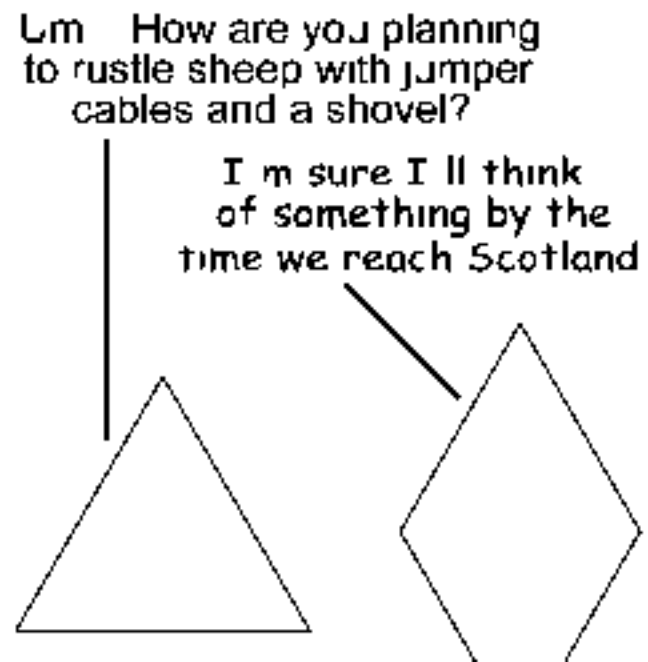
Exactly.



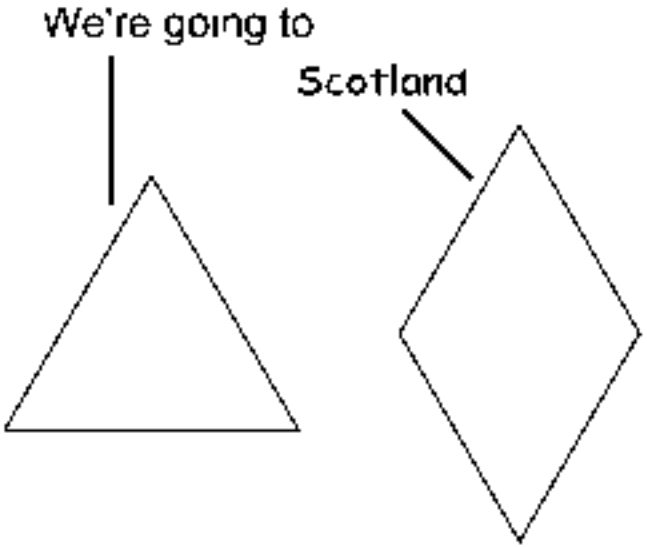
Triangle and Robert

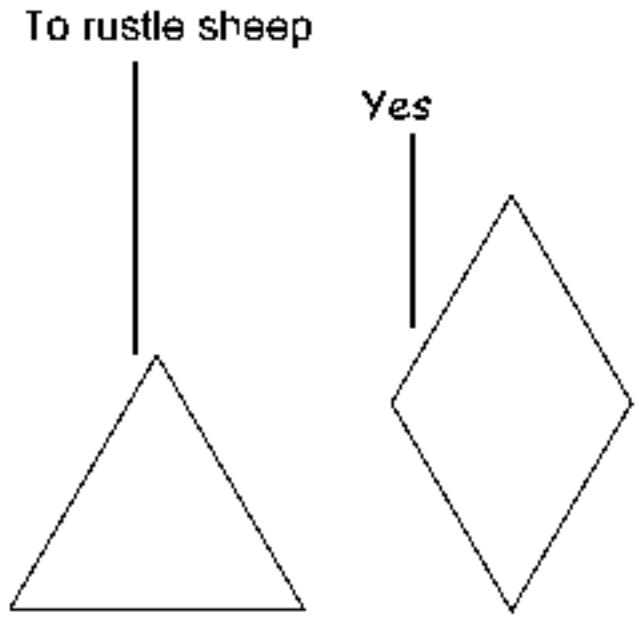


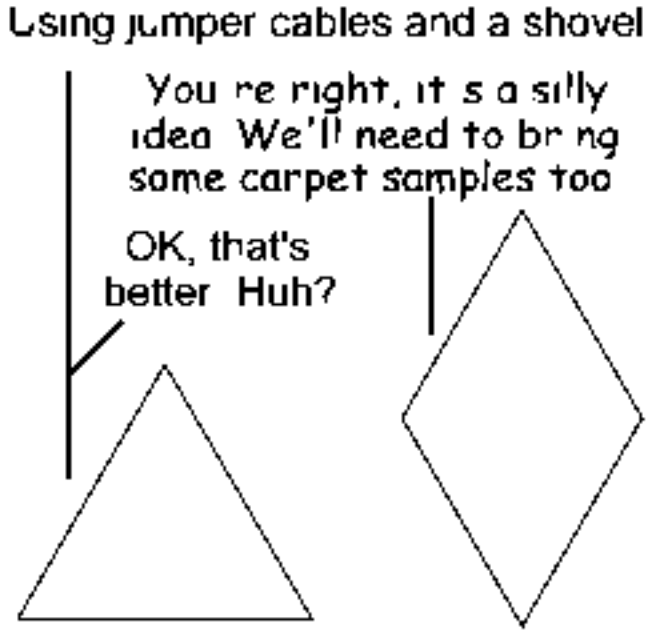




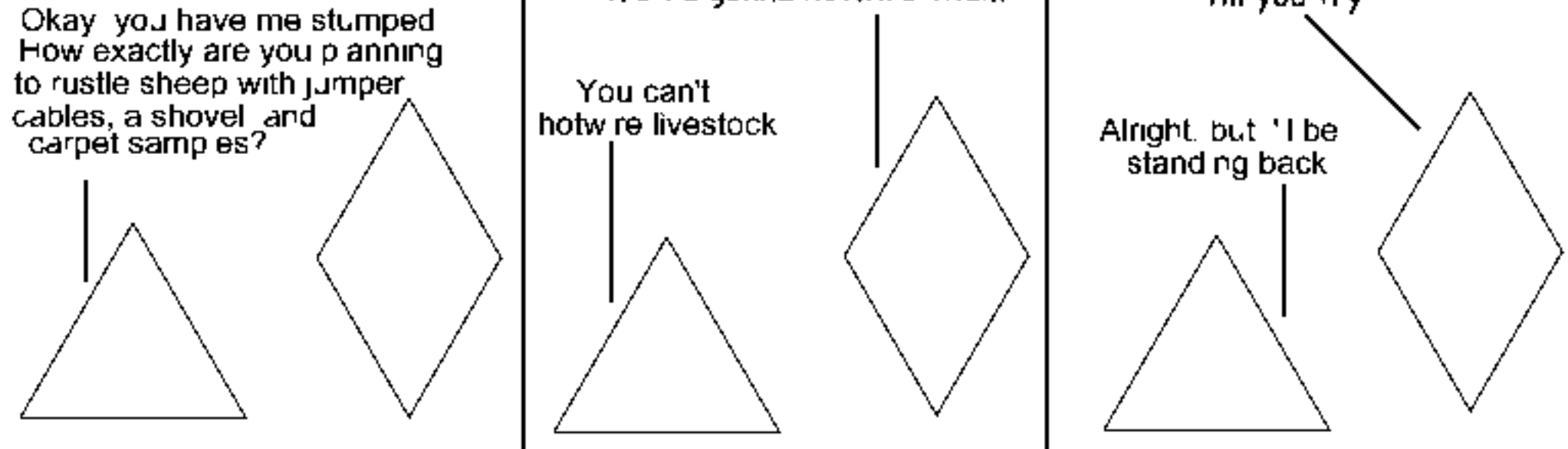
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



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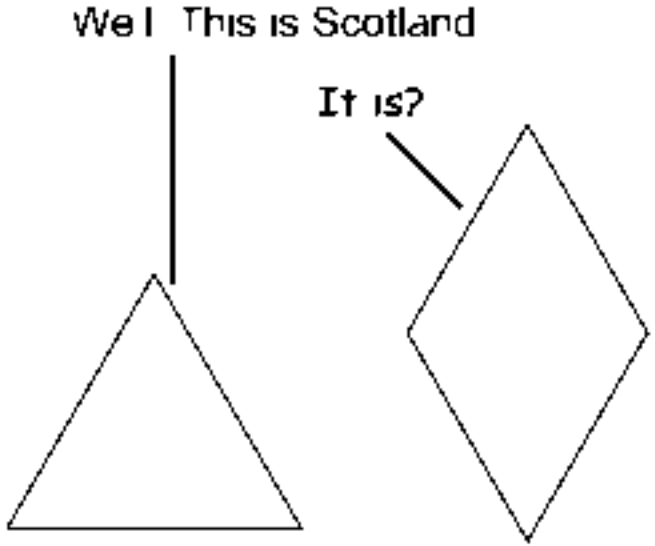
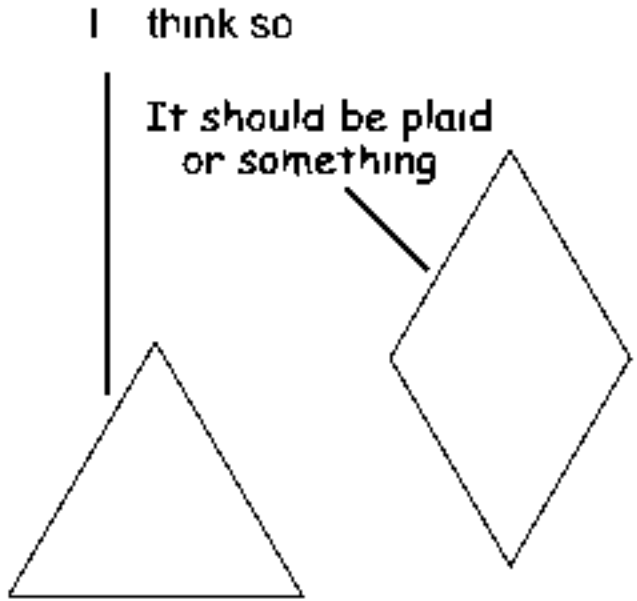
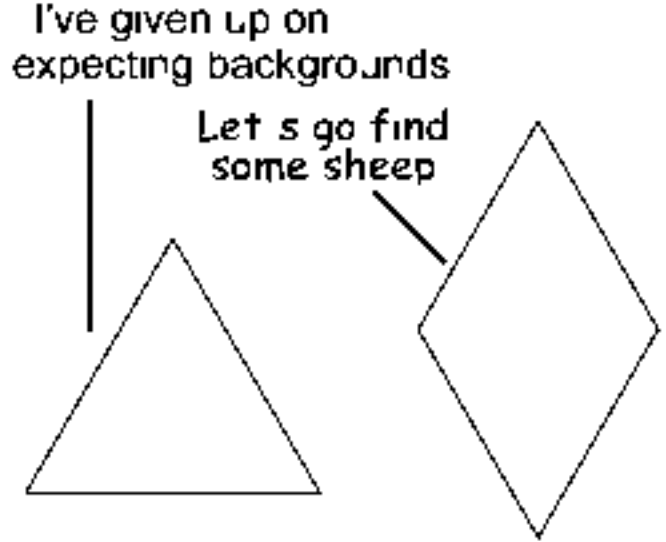
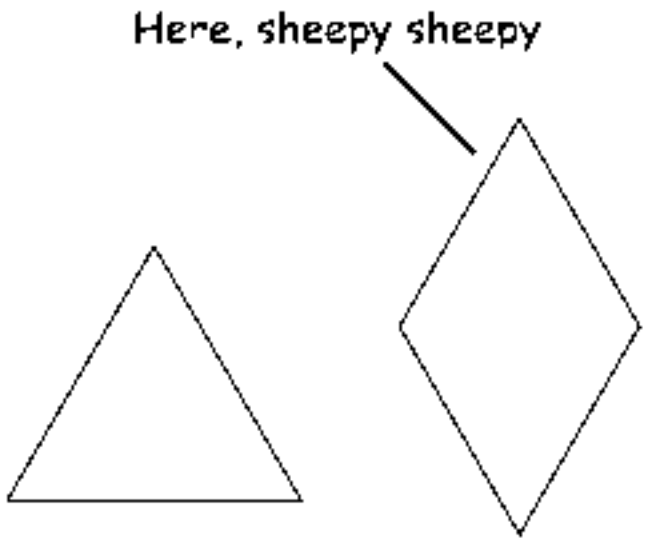
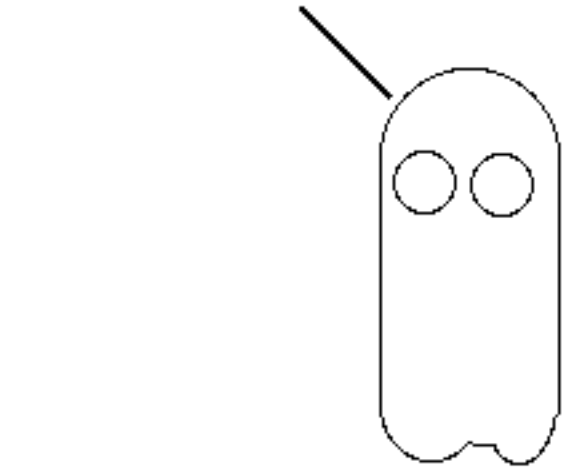


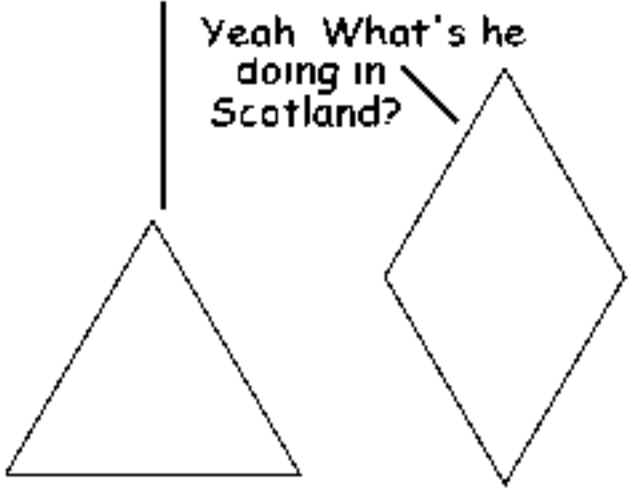




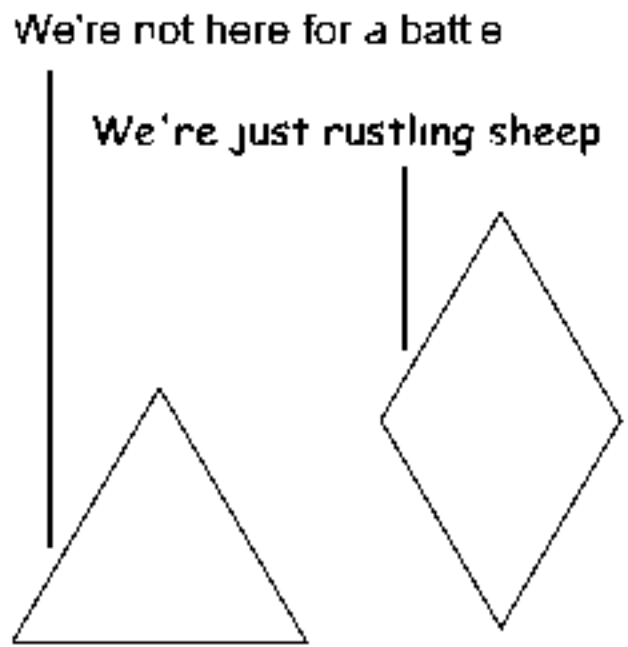
Triangle and Robert

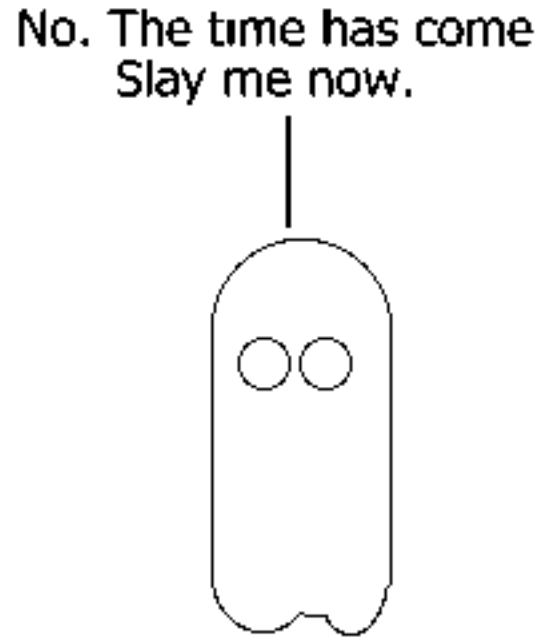






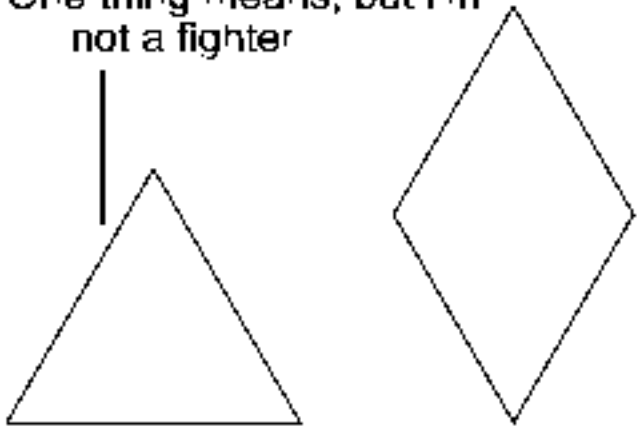
Triangle and Robert



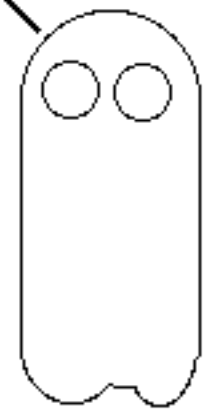


Triangle and Robert

Look Orpuddex don't know what exactly this whole Chosen One thing means, but I'm not a fighter

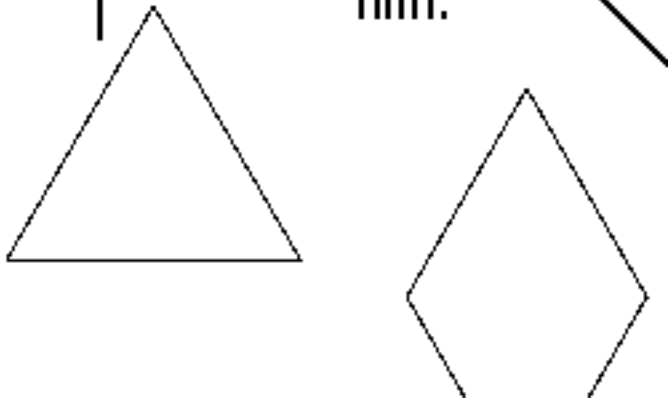


You are the Chosen One, selected by the Beforings to bring me to justice. I had hoped it would not come to pass, but it has.

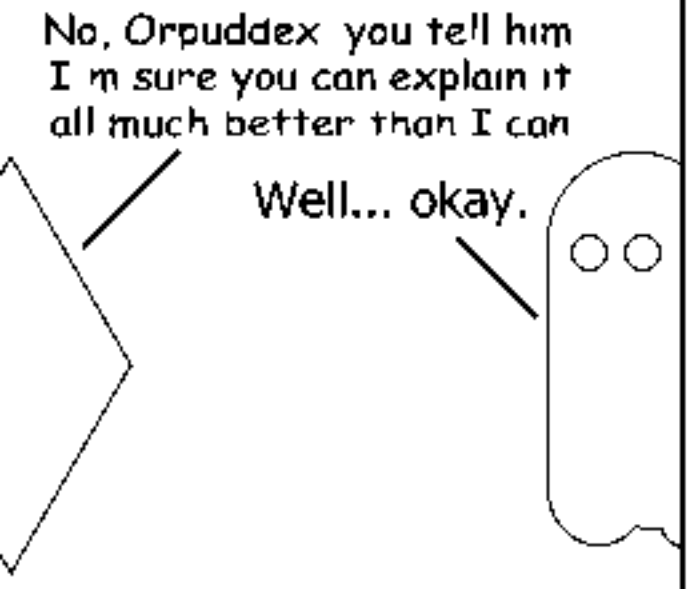


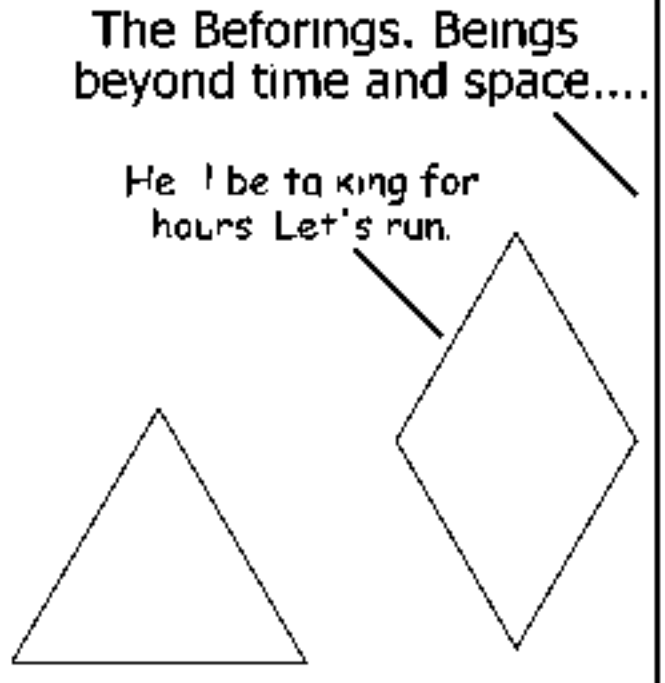
Justice for what? Are you some sort of criminal?

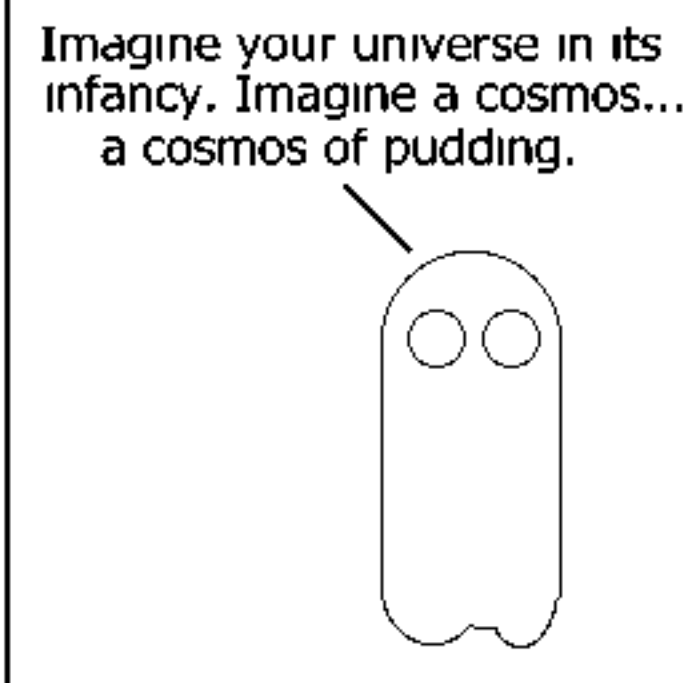
I'm not going through the whole explanation again. Robert, you tell him.



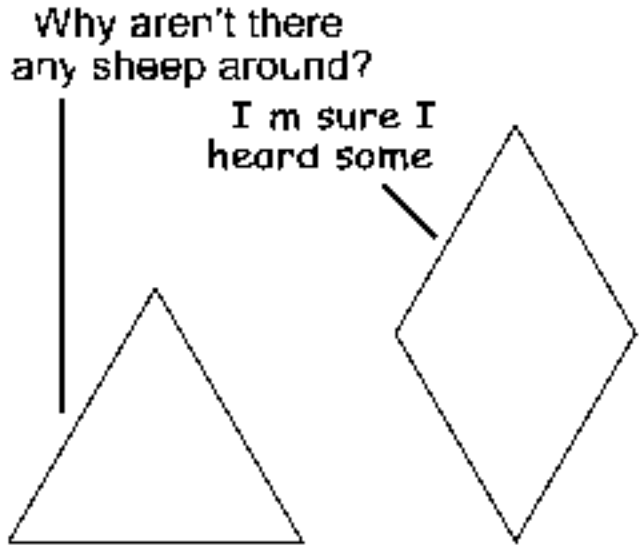
Triangle and Robert

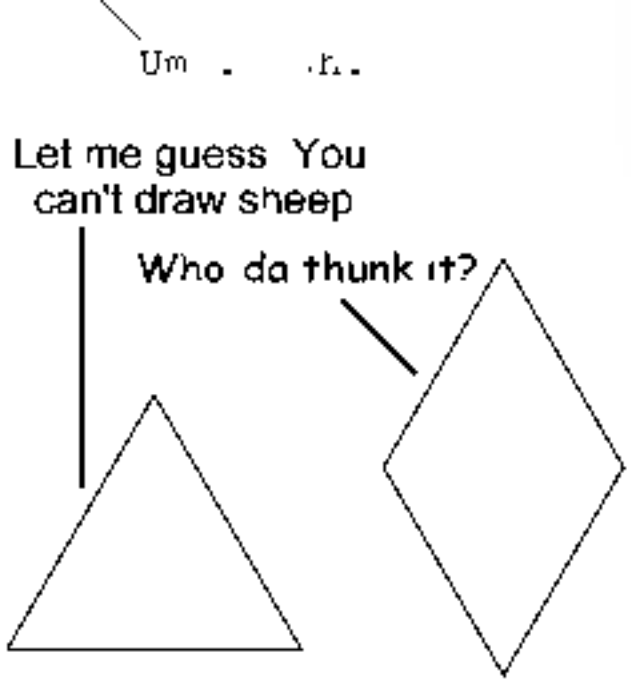


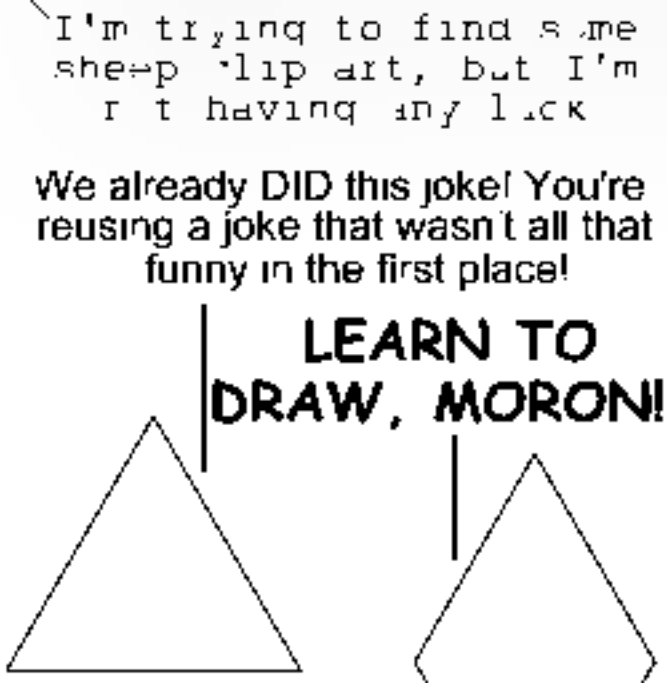




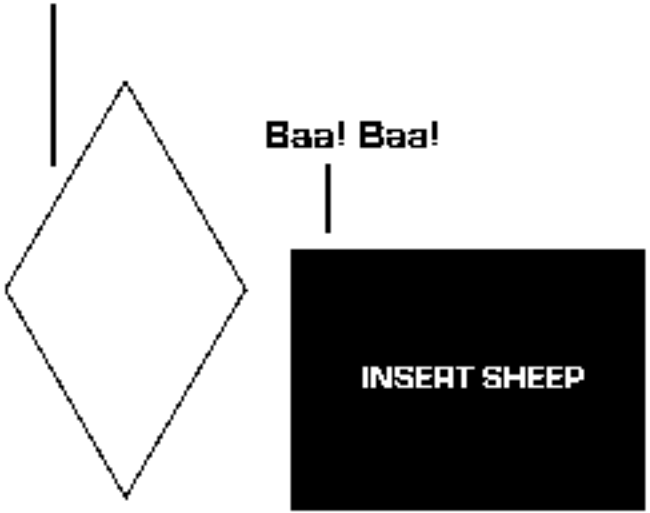
Triangle and Robert

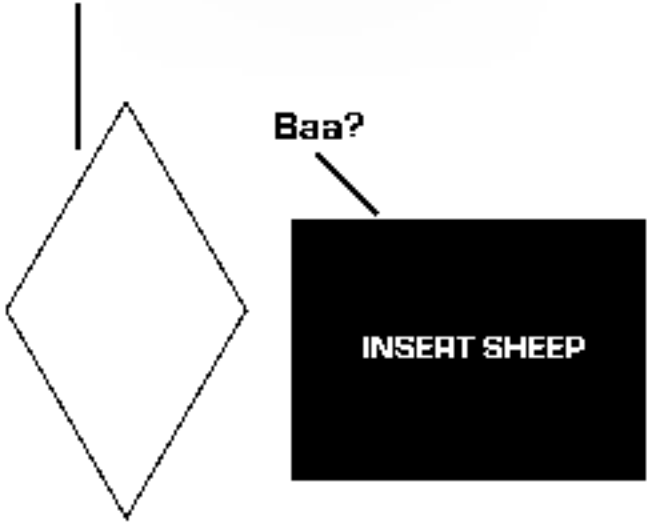


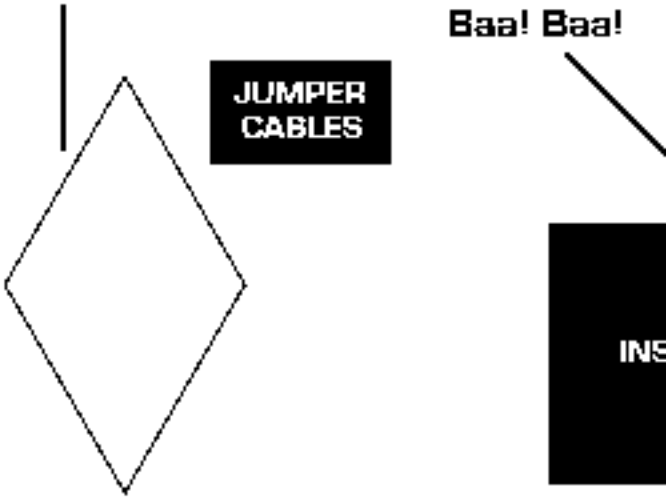




Triangle and Robert







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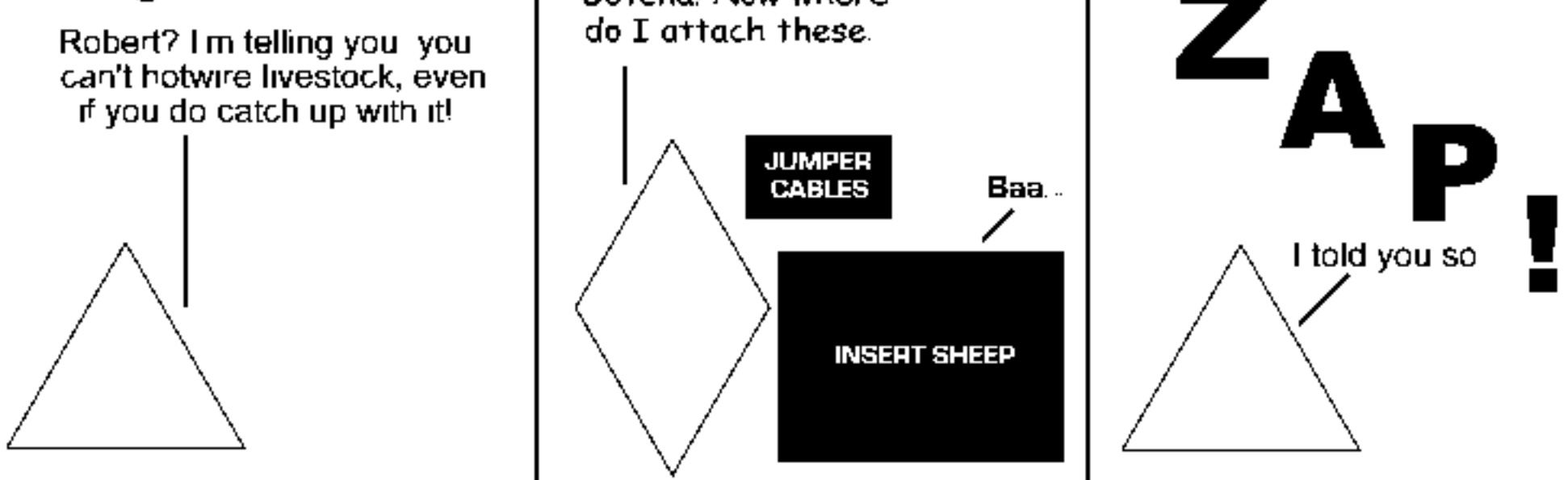

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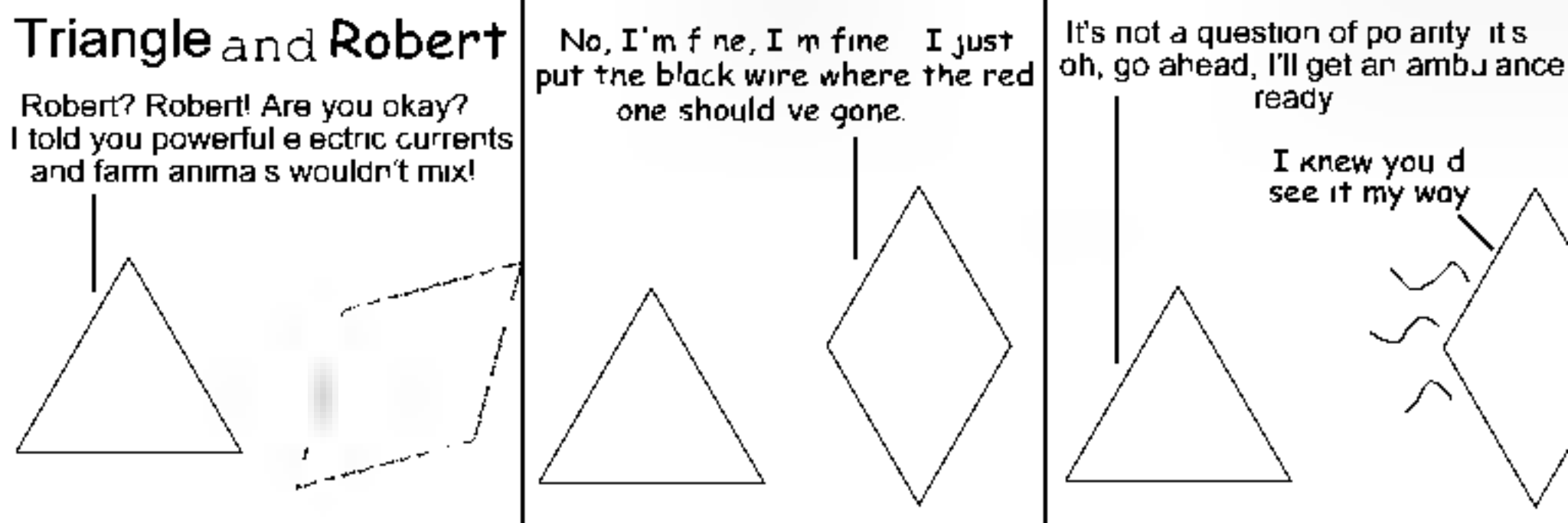

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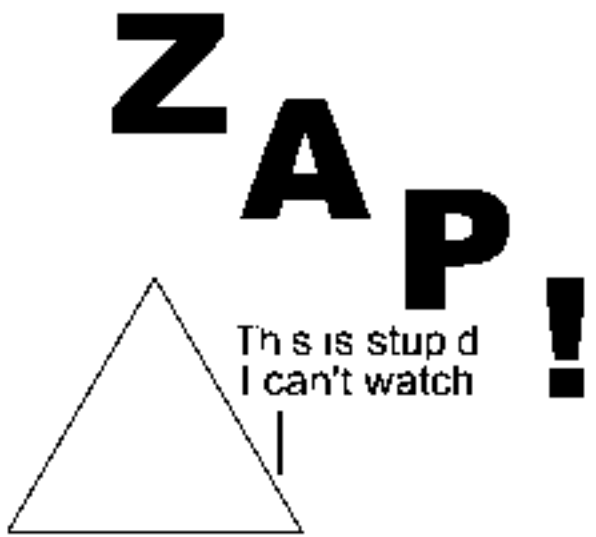

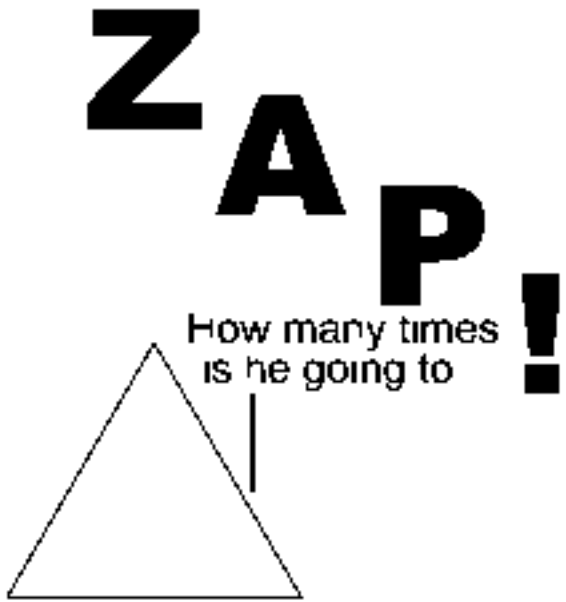

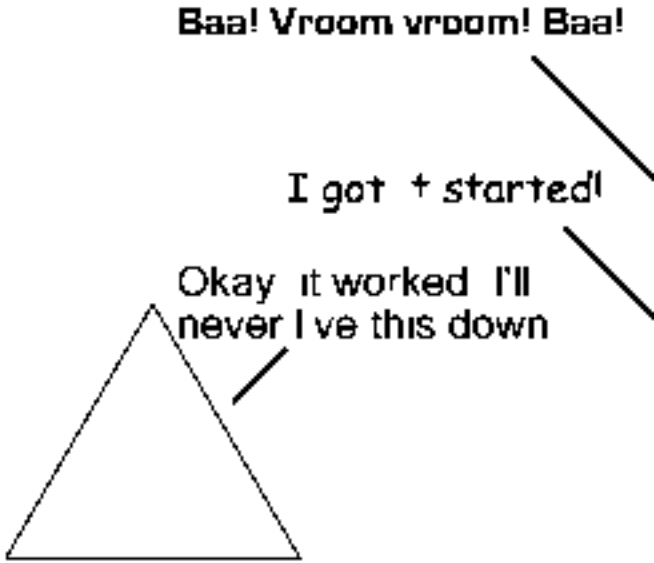

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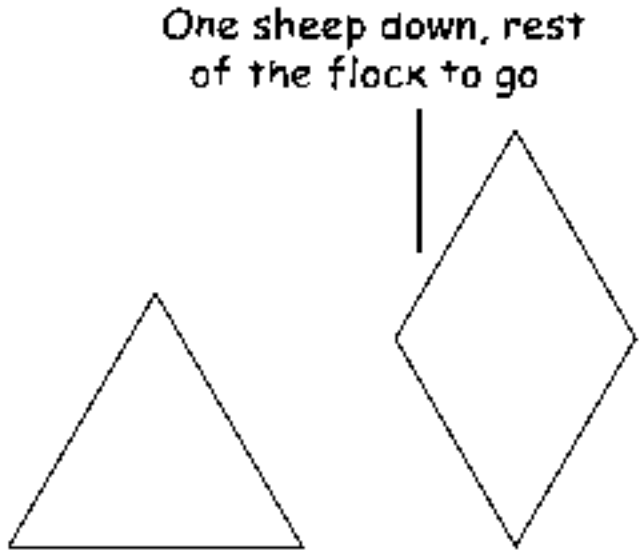

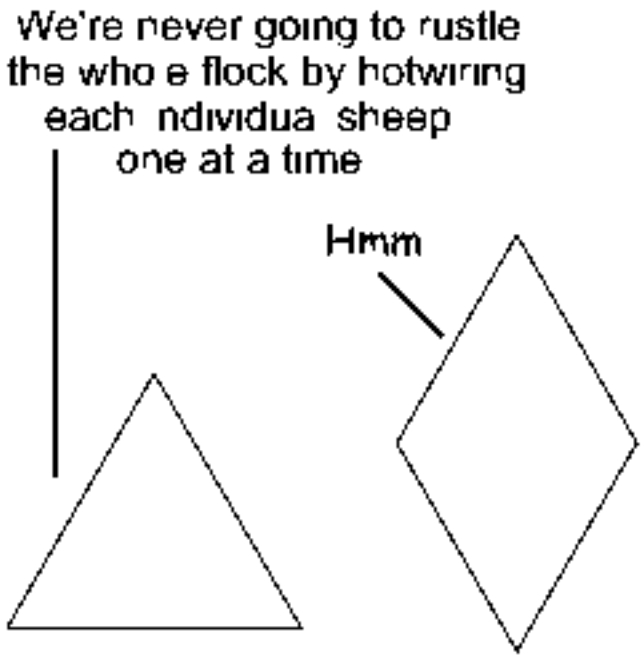

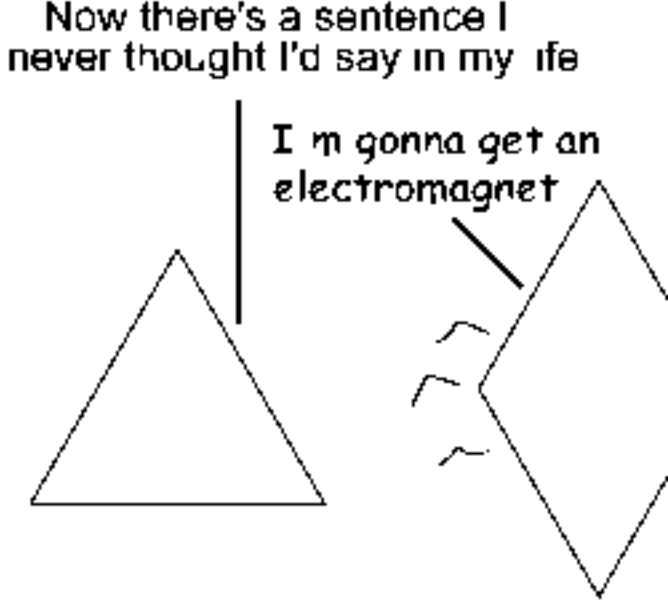

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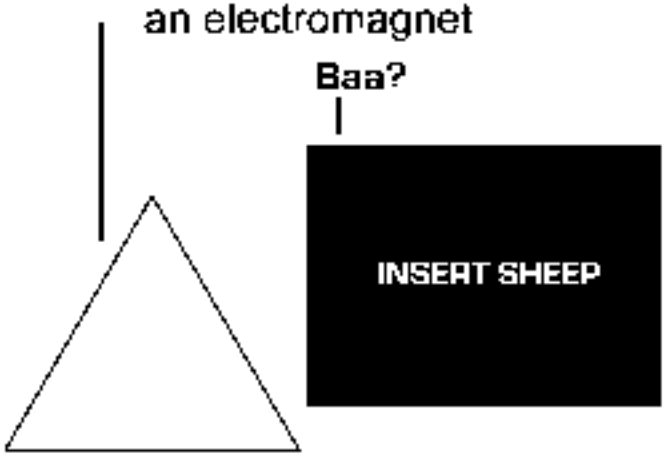

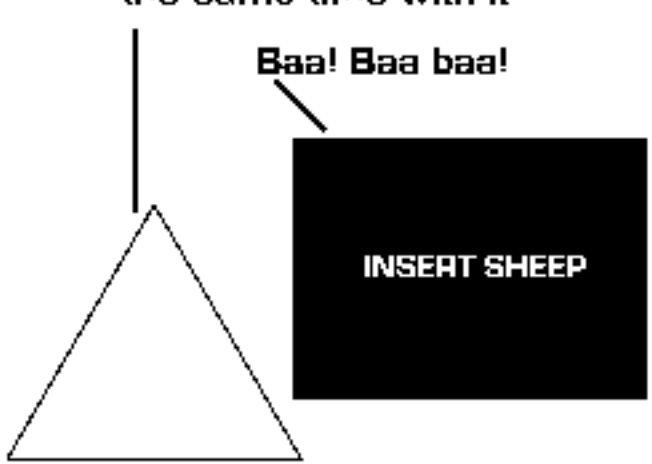

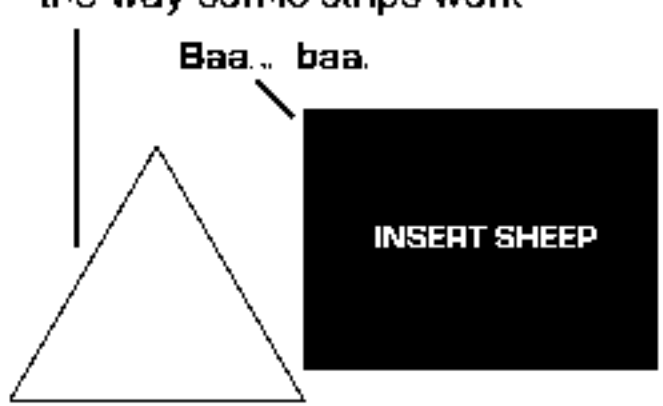

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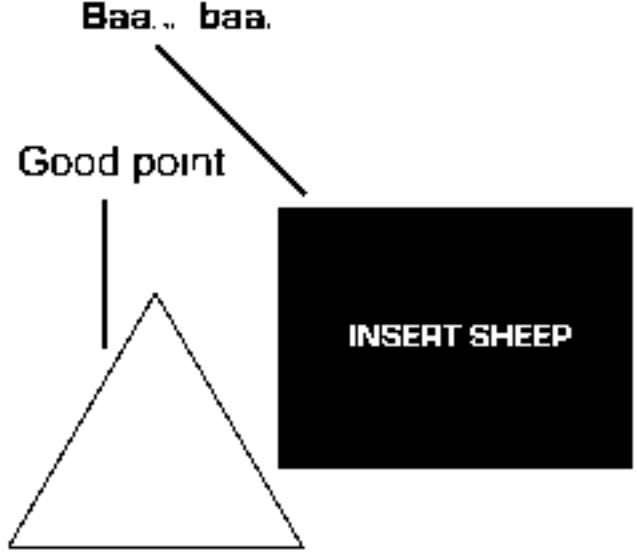

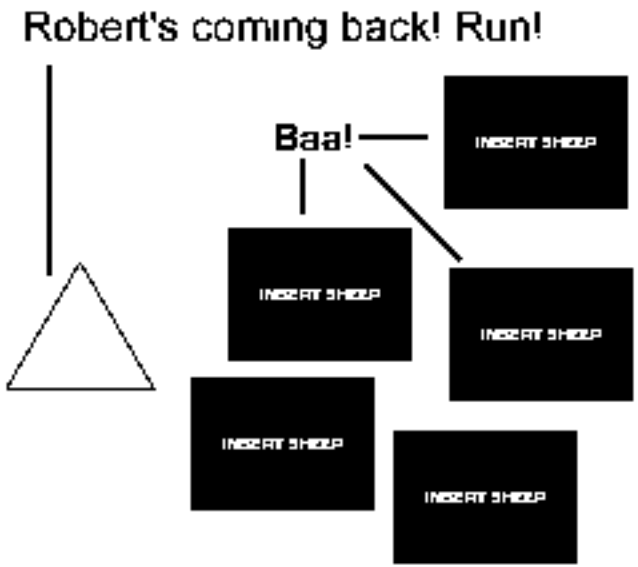

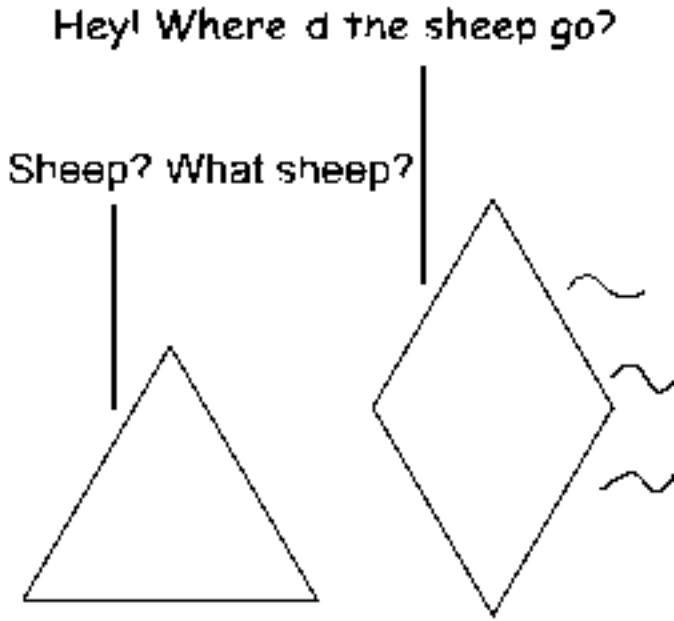

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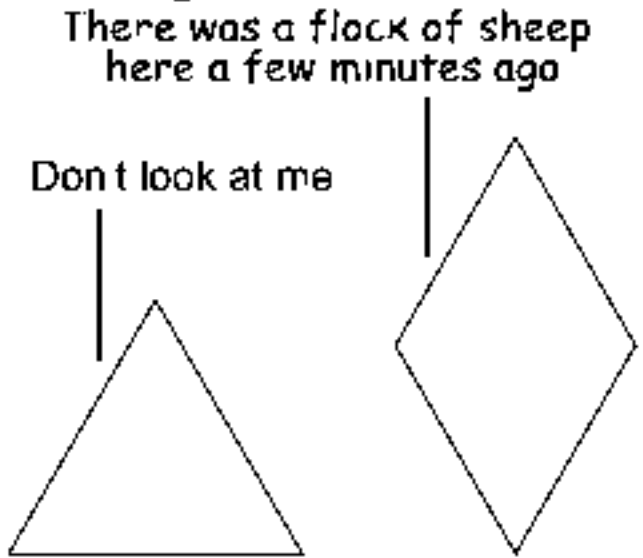
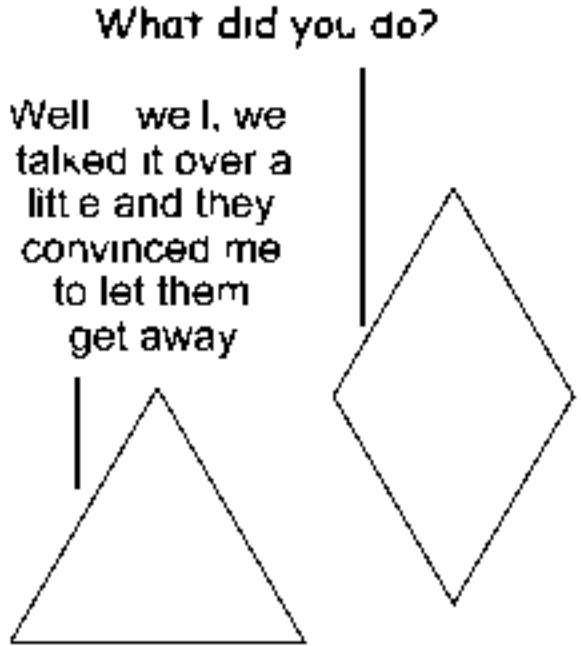
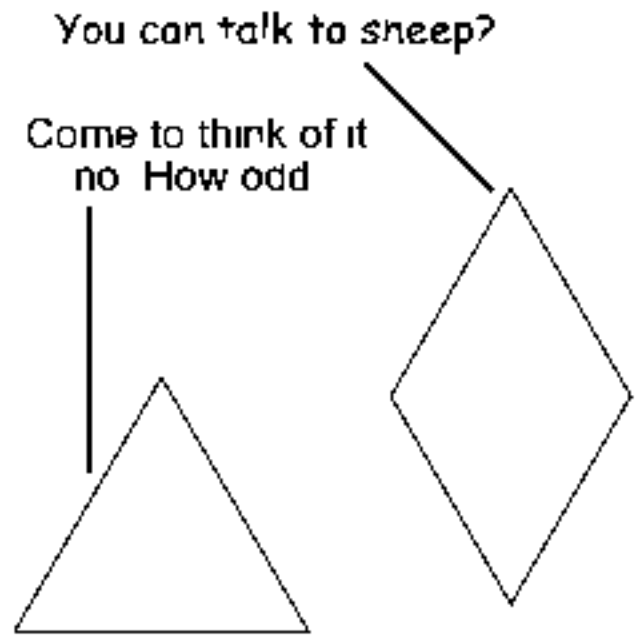
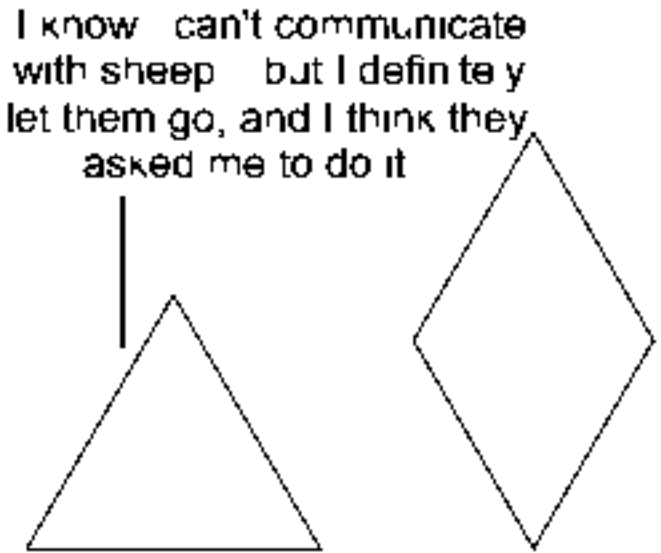
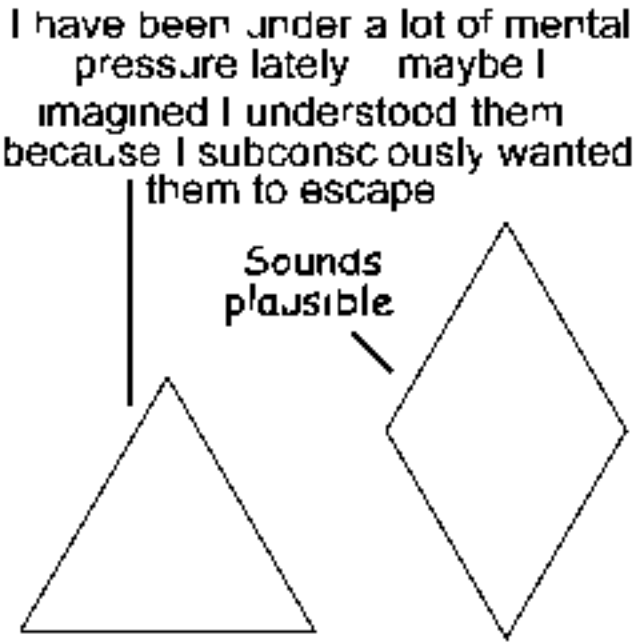


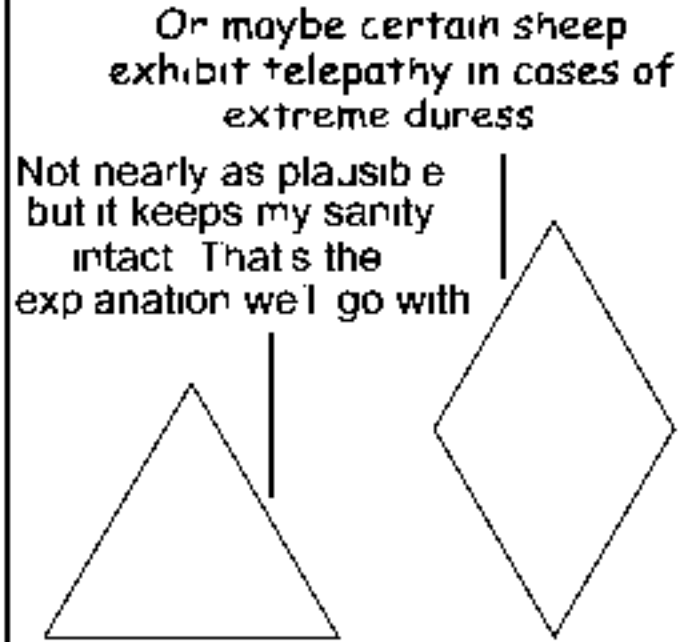




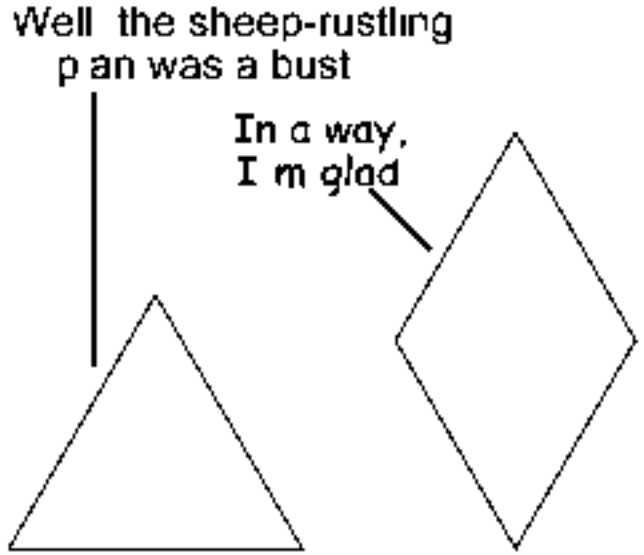
Triangle and Robert

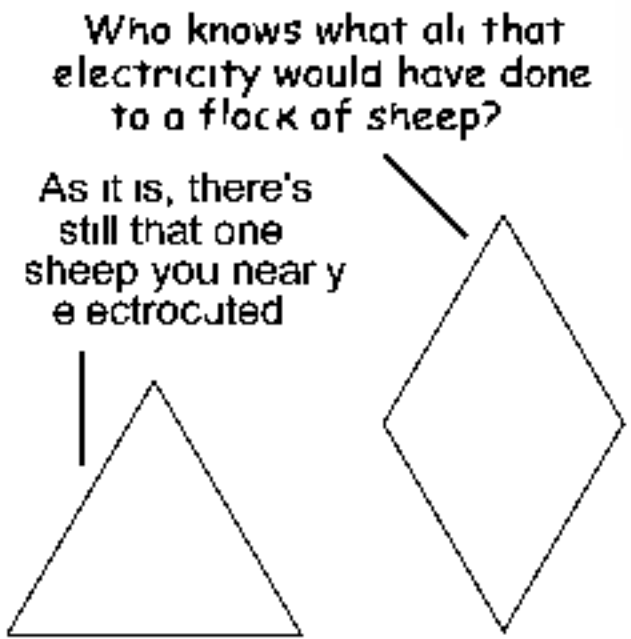


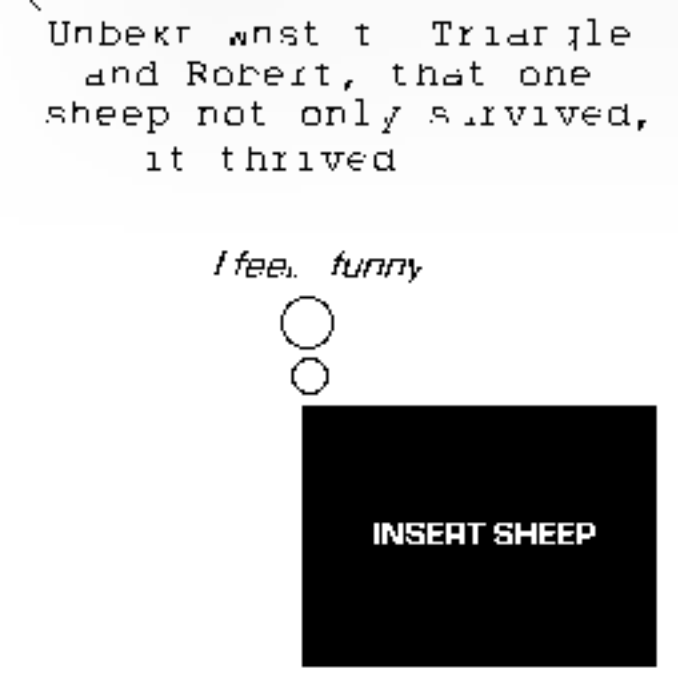




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert
All that electricity it did something to me I can feel myself changing.
INSERT SHEEP
Baa!
INSERT MUTATING SHEEP
I... I am a sheep... become... A GOD!
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Well, I suddenly have incredible powers far beyond those of normal sheep.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

And the artist didn't bother to draw me... that gives me something to want revenge for.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Cool! I'm a supervillain! Time to start taking over the world now.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Hmm... I'm a sheep turned into an evil mastermind by a jumper-cable-wielding sheep rustler. What would be a nice ironic way to take over the world?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I've got it! I'll seize control of the world's supply of artificial flavorings!

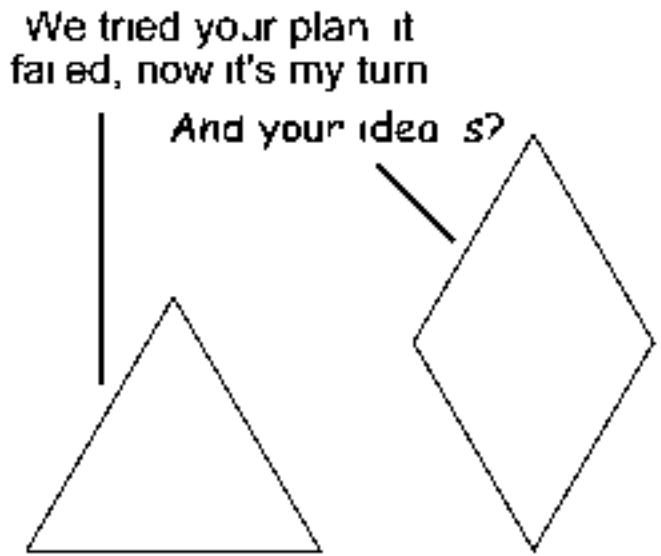
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

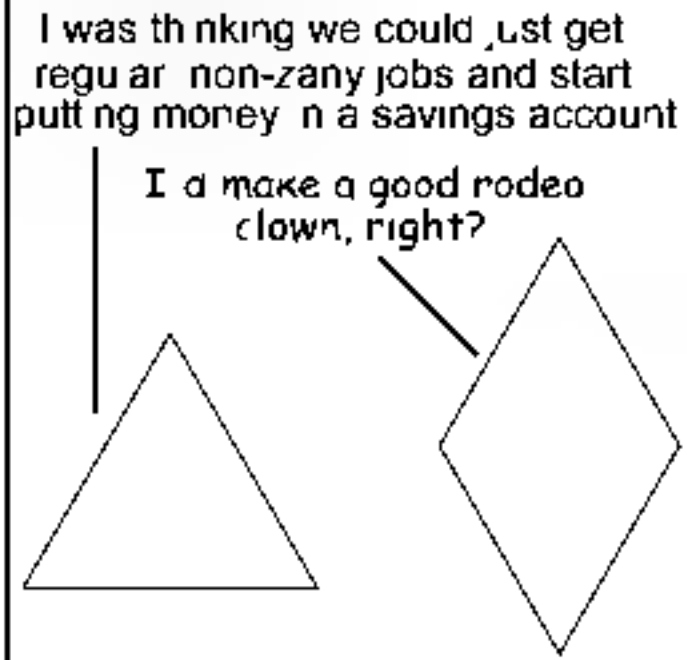
Not to contradict you or anything, but I don't see the irony in that plan

Of course not. You're not a super-genius.

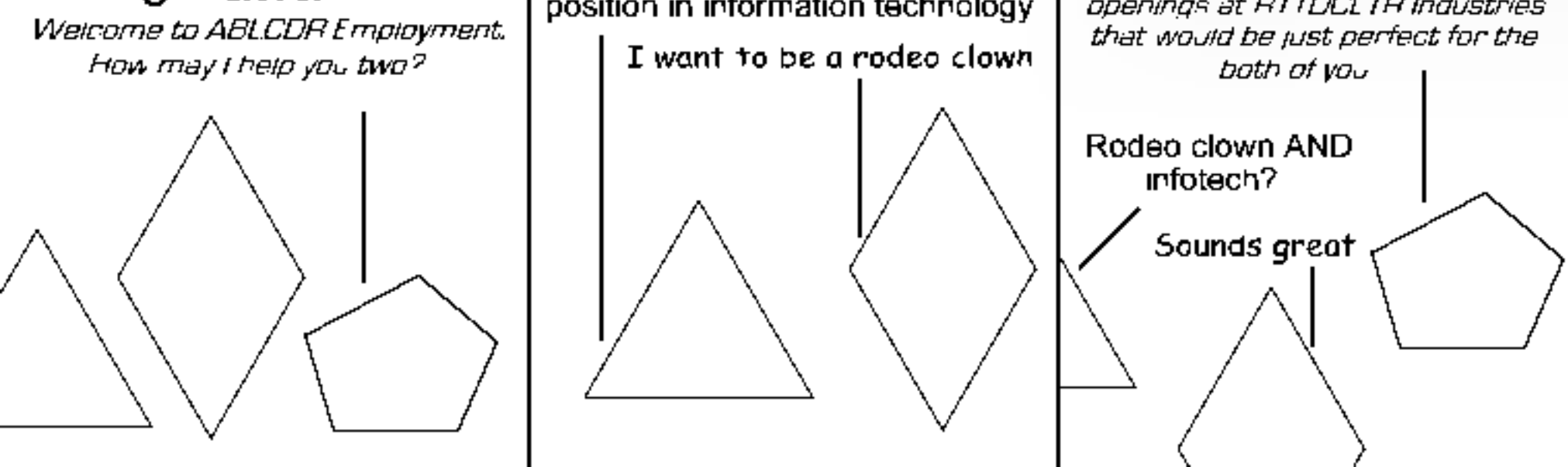
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

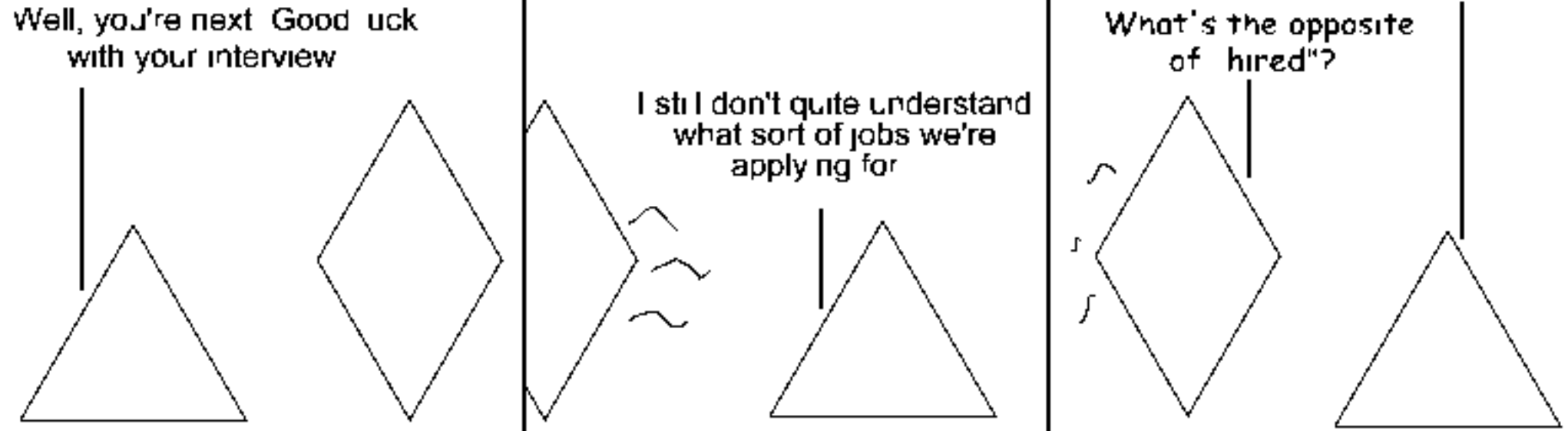




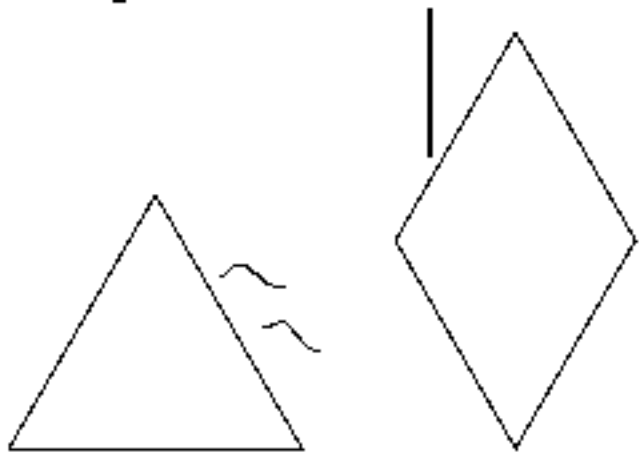
Triangle and Robert

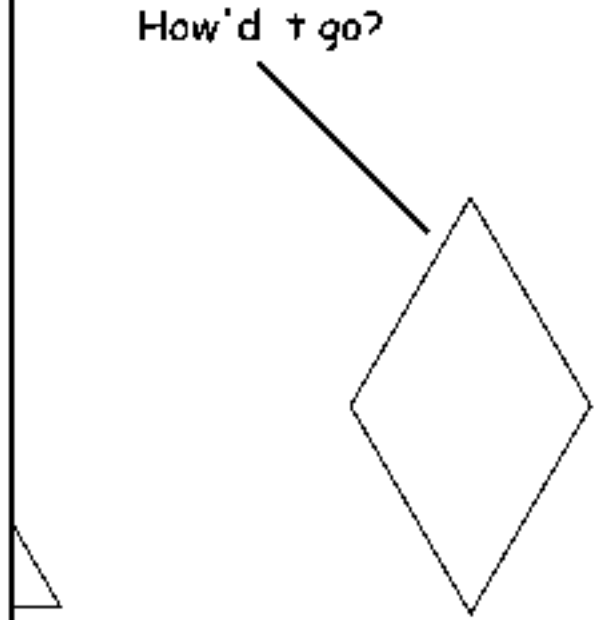


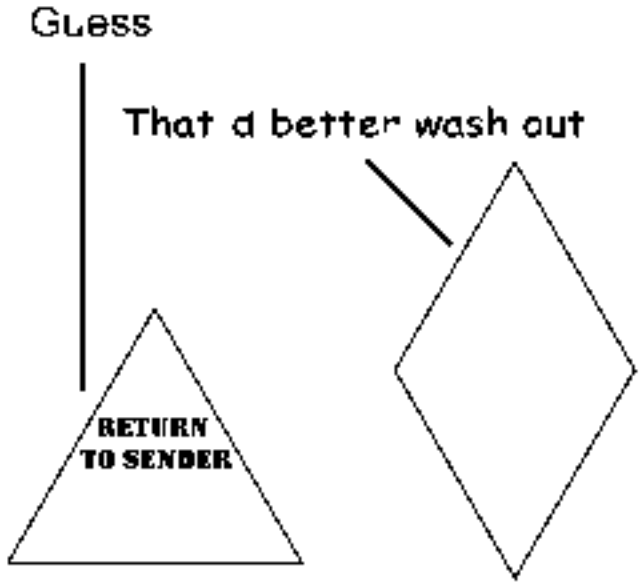
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Meanwhile, in an abandoned warehouse that has some semi humorous Batman esque relationship to sheep, although I can't think of what that relationship might be at the moment

Oh yeah... the sheep that the builders rejected has become the cornersheep....

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

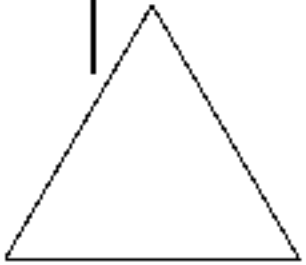
You're gonna taste it! Oh yeah, you're ALL gonna taste it soon!

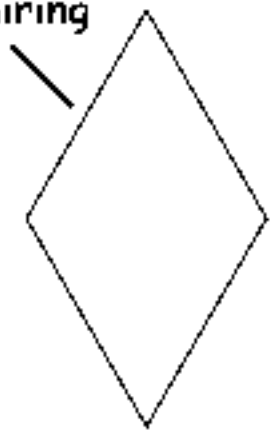
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

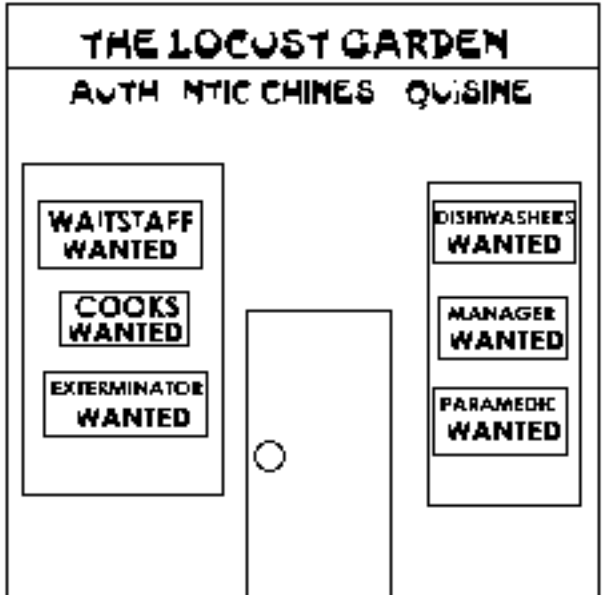
Triangle and Robert

That was a bust Now what?

This place looks like it's hiring

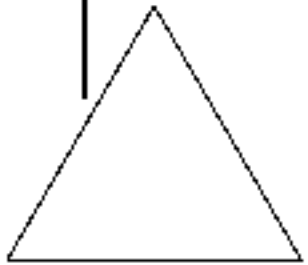


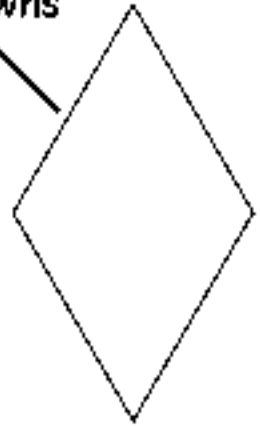




Okay but I m on y going along with this because it'll be funny

No openings for rodeo clowns





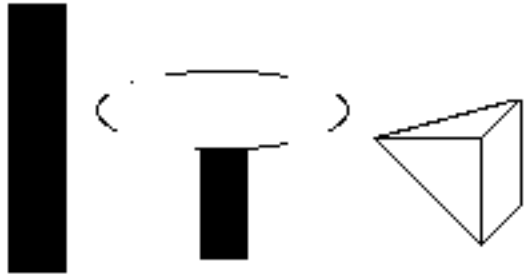
Triangle and Robert

Welcome to the Locust Garden
May I take your orders?

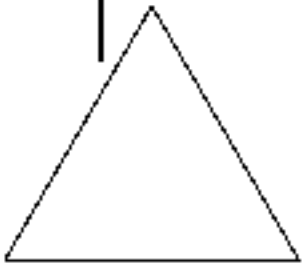
I'm not sure What's good today?

I'd recommend the green r ce

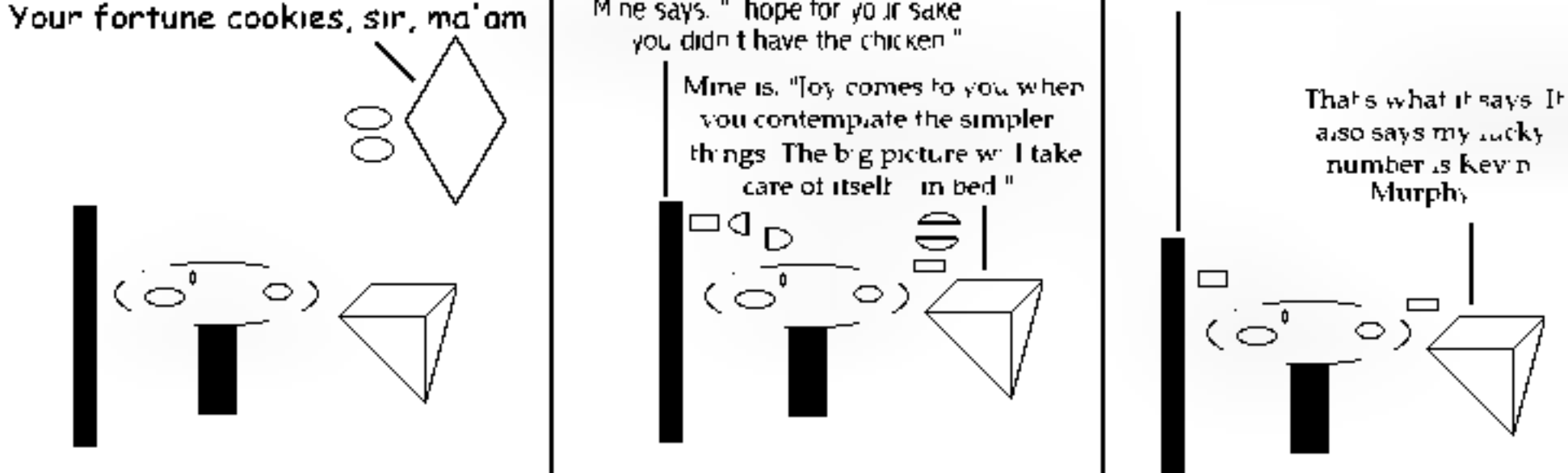
Green?



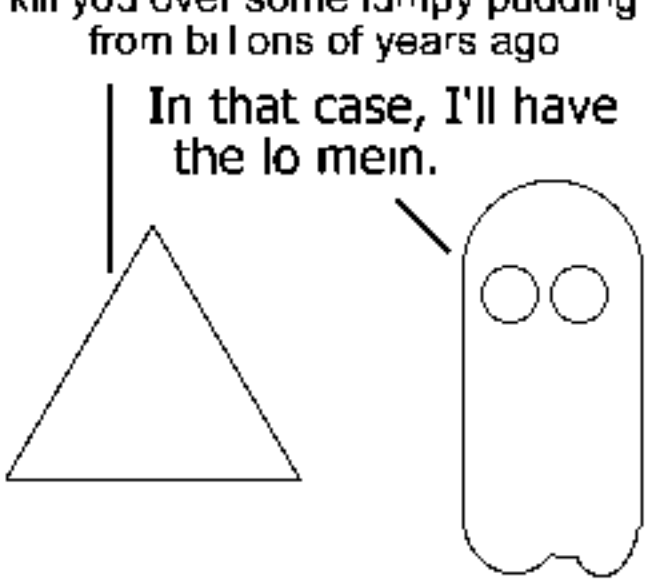
It was white to start with
but well you know

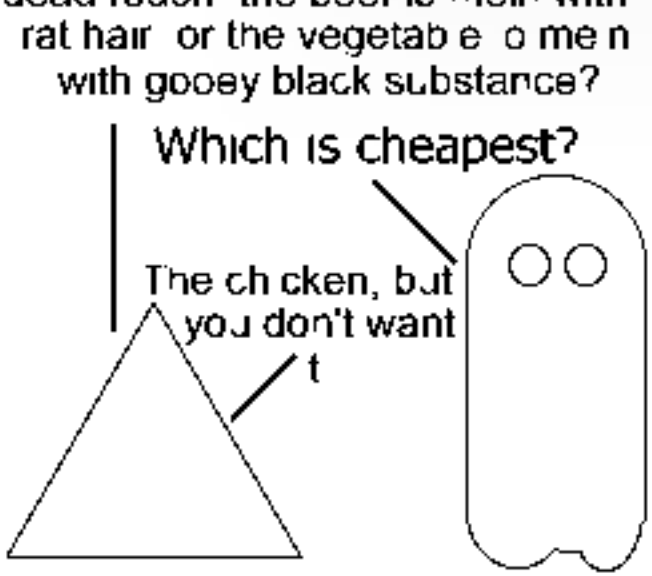


Triangle and Robert



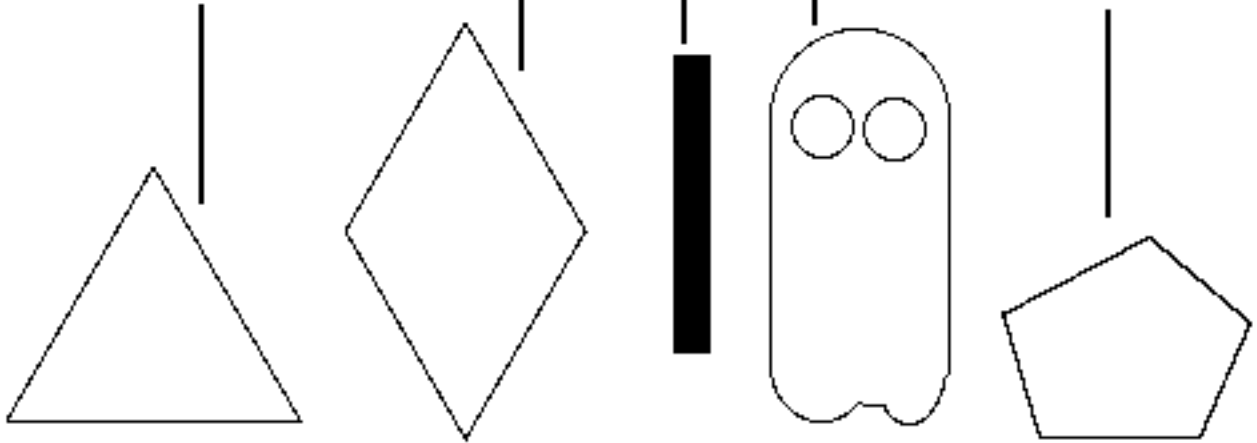
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

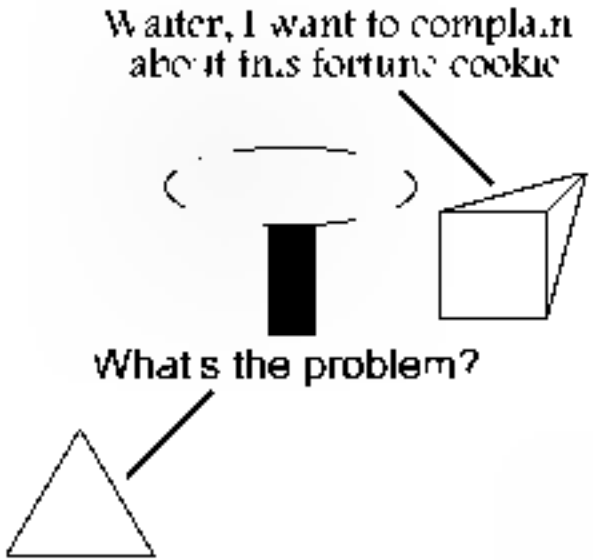
Happy 100th strip from all of us at Triangle and Robert and The Locust Garden!

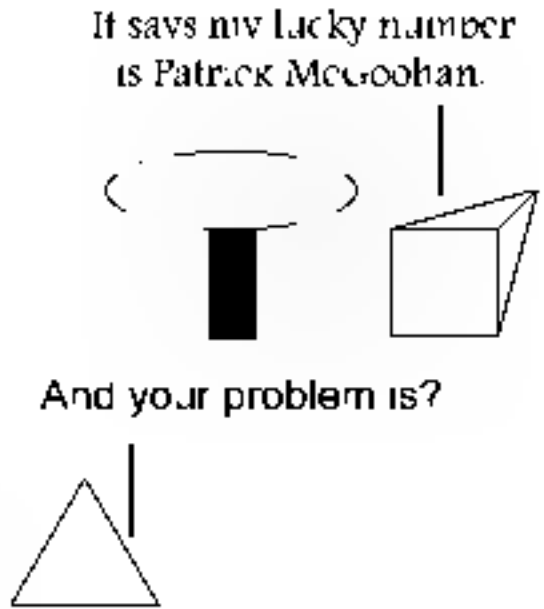


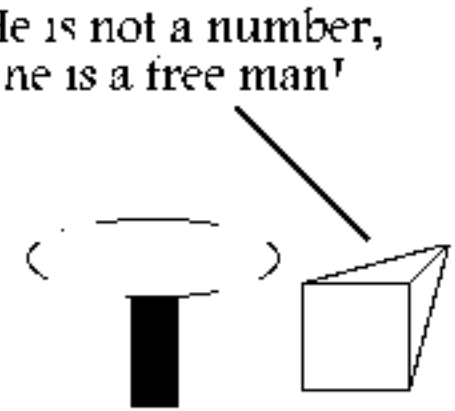
And while the fools are occupied with the 100th strip festivities, I shall set my plan into action.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert



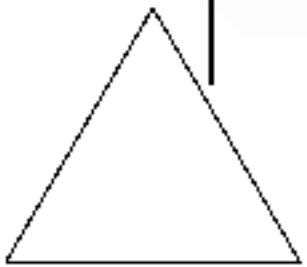




The Triangle

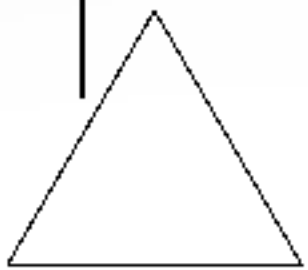
Who is Number One?

Y u are Triangle



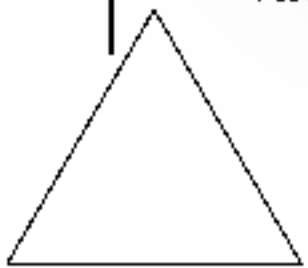
Who is Number One?

Y u are Triangle

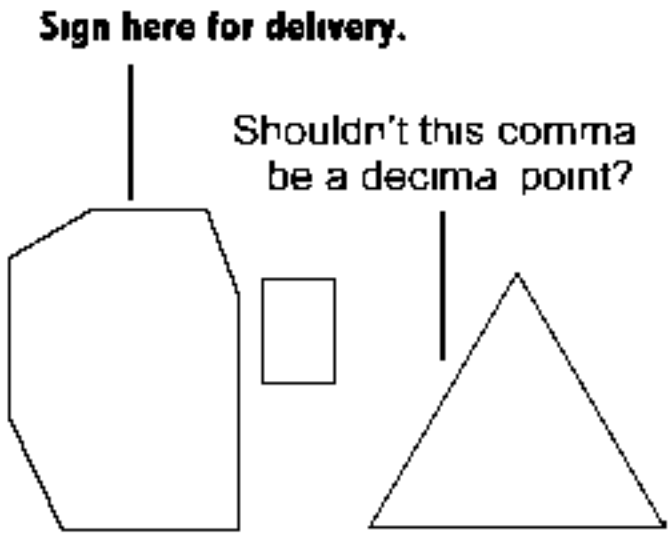


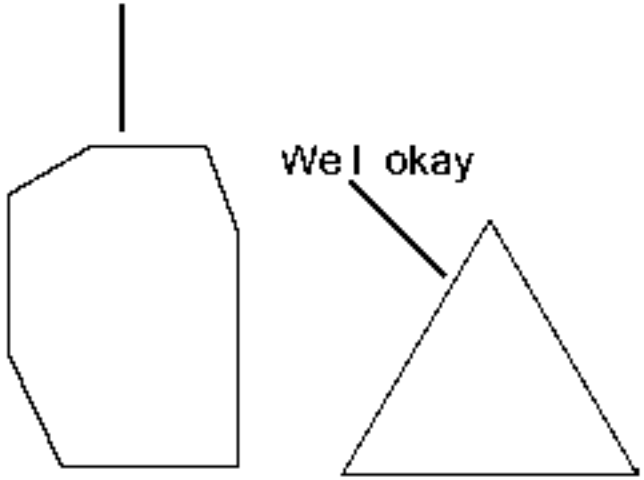
Okay, et's try this from
a drfferent angle
Who is Tr ang e?

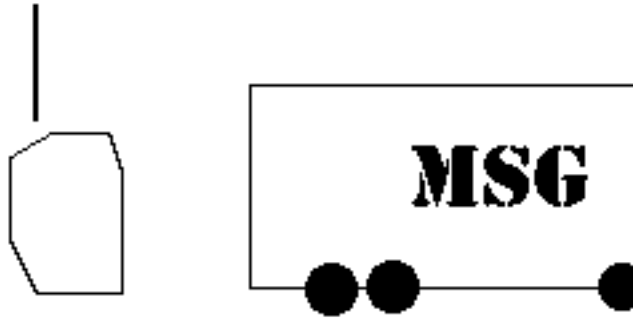
Y u are Number
One ***DARN IT!***



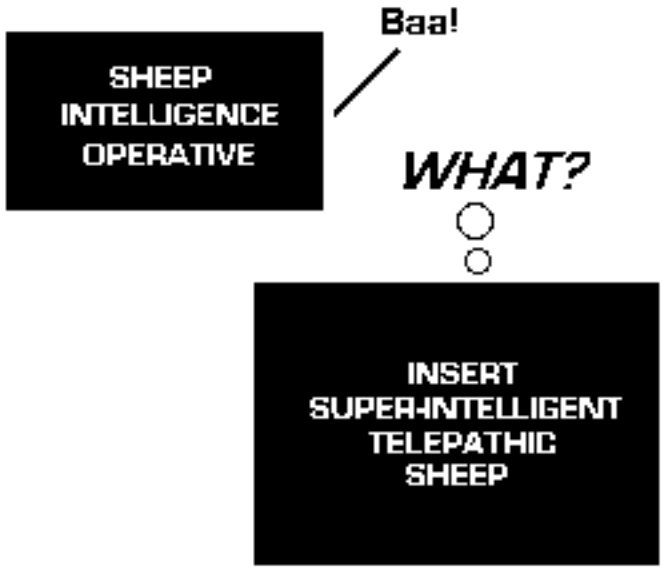
Triangle and Robert

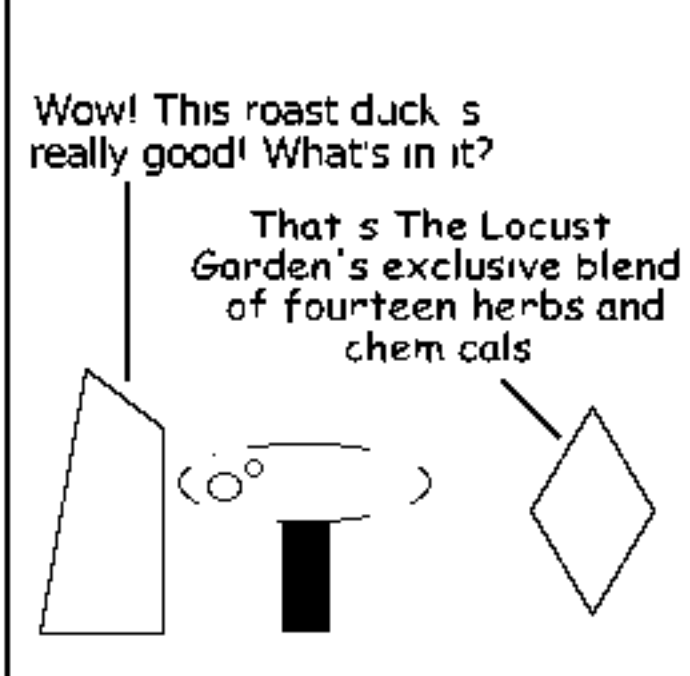




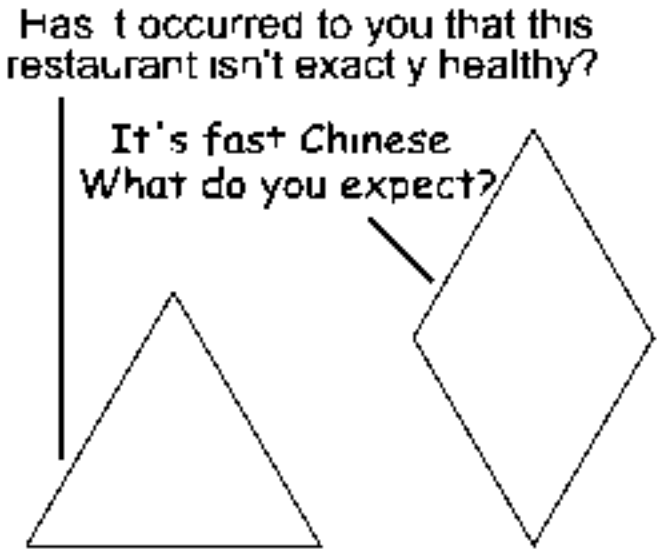


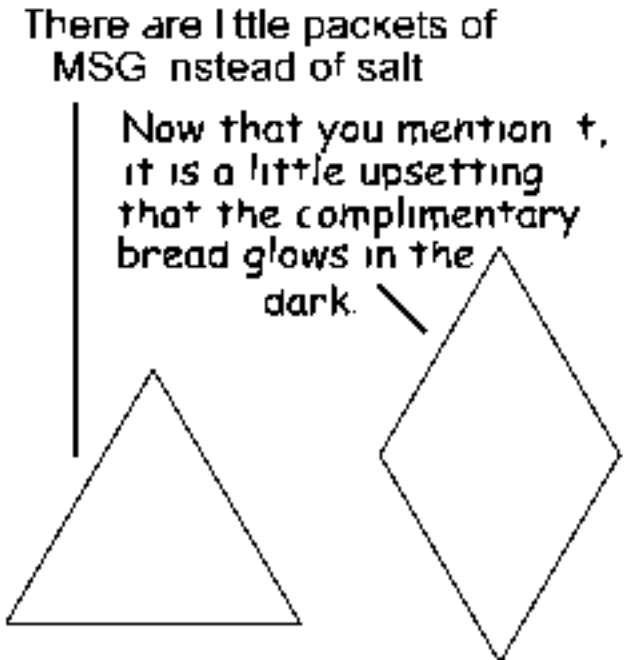
Triangle and Robert

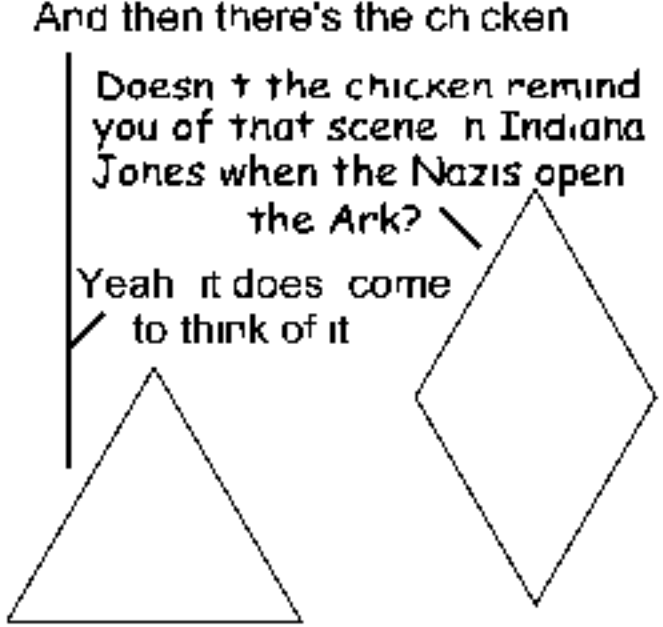




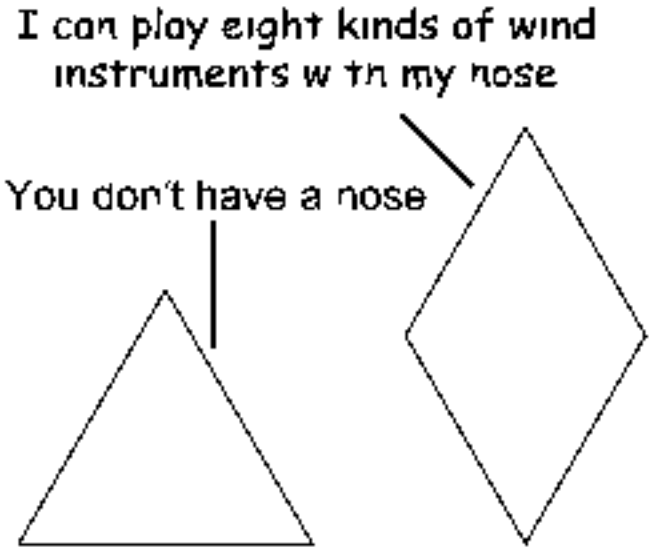
Triangle and Robert

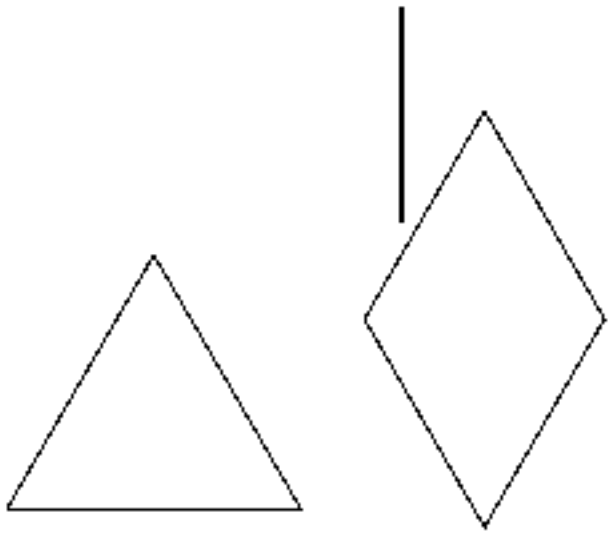


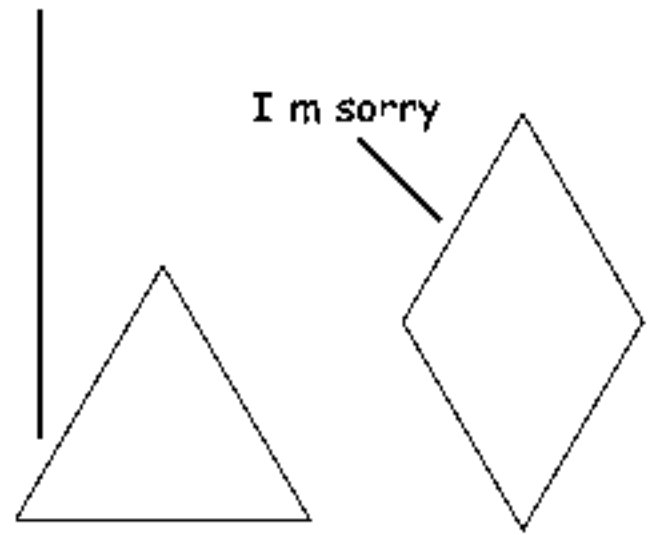




Triangle and Robert

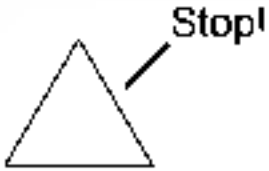


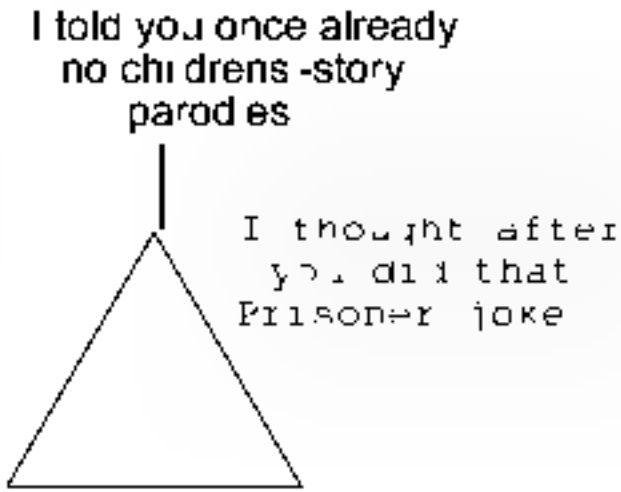


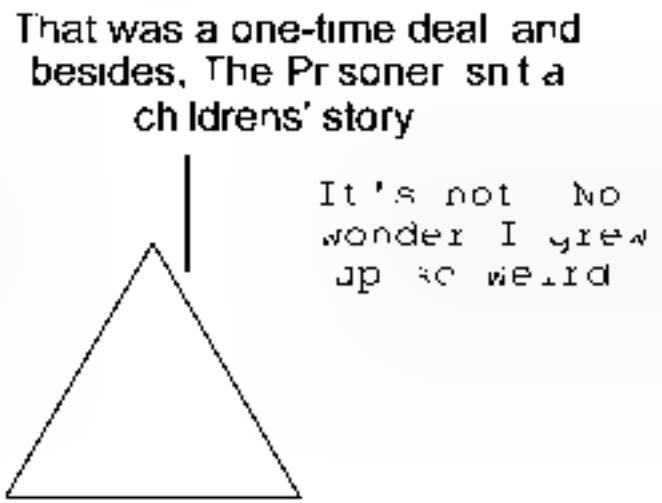


Triangle and Robert

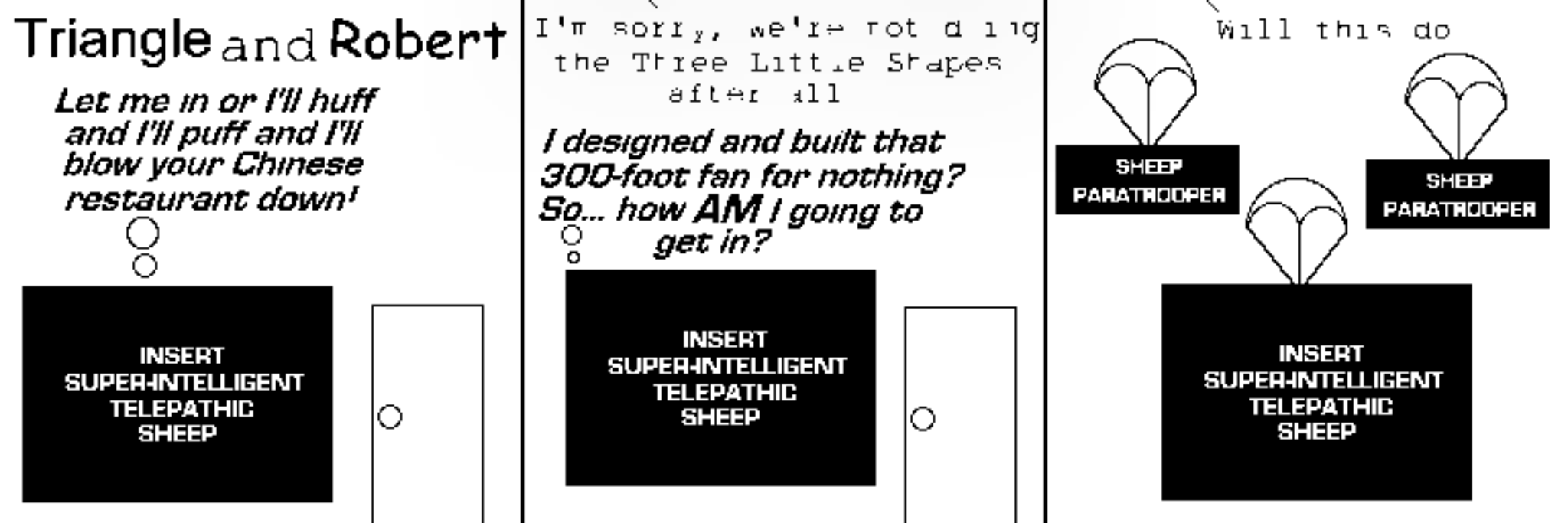
Once upon a time, in a Chinese restaurant in a land far away, there lived three little shapes and a big bad super intelligent telepathic sheep. The first little shape



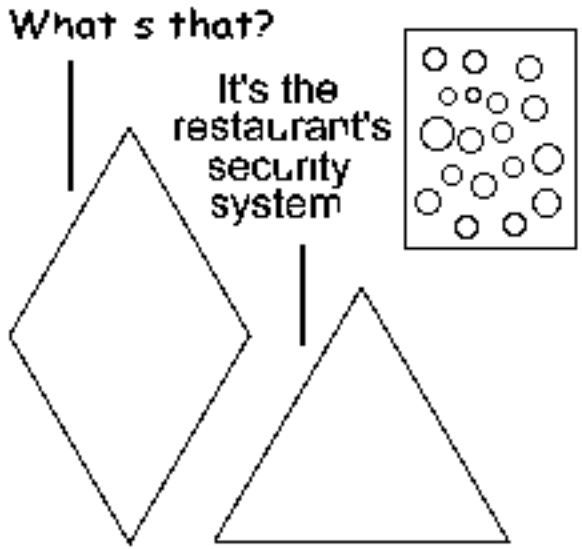


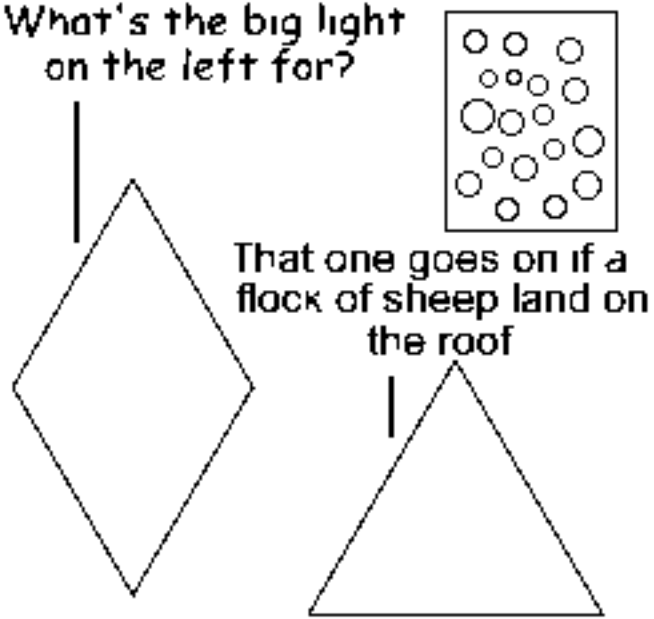


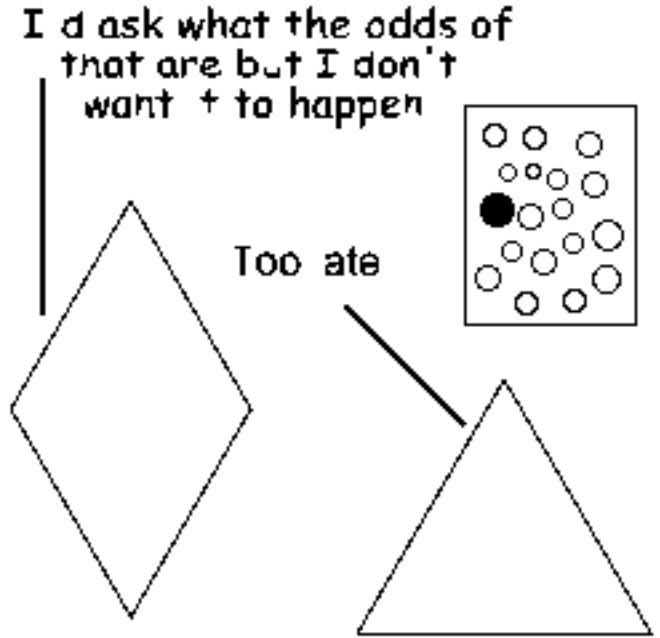
Triangle and Robert

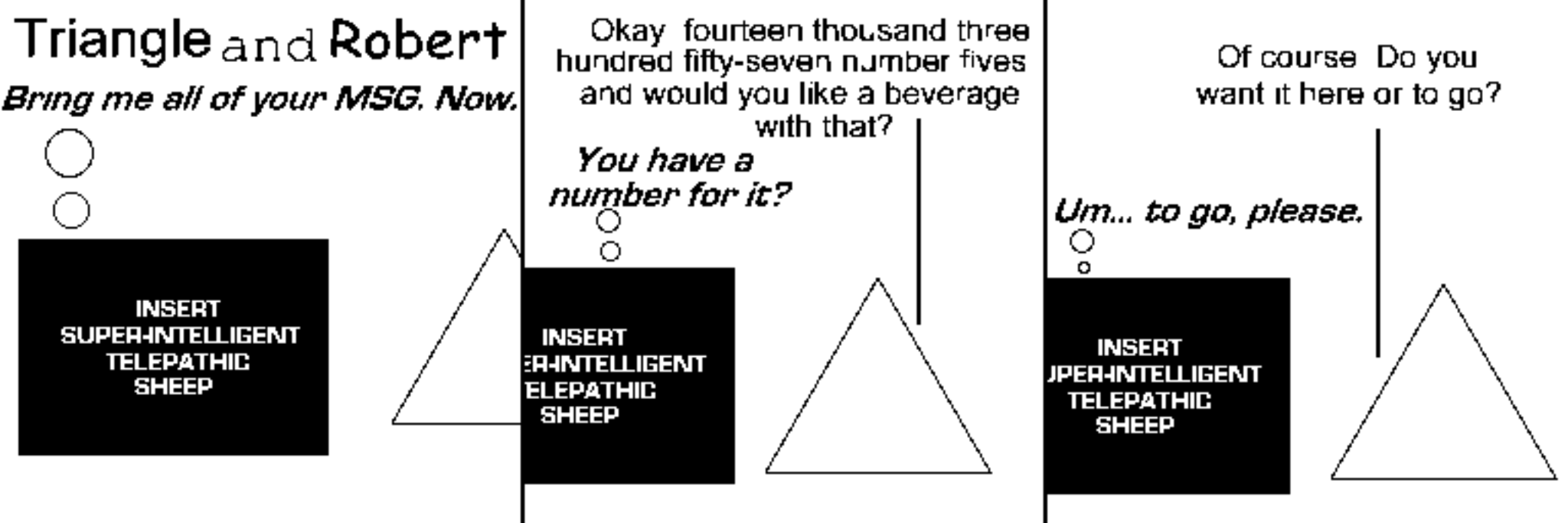


Triangle and Robert



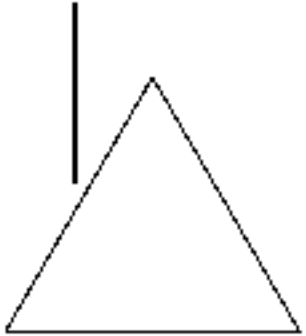





Triangle and Robert
Bring me all of your MSG. Now.
INSERT SUPERHNTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Okay fourteen thousand three hundred fifty-seven number fives and would you like a beverage with that?
You have a number for it?
INSERT ERHNTELLIGENT ELEPATHIC SHEEP
Of course Do you want it here or to go?
Um... to go, please.
INSERT JPERHNTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Your order's ready. It comes to seven thousand dollars even including t p



*No, you misunderstand. I'm not **BUYING** this MSG, I'm **TAKING** it!*

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

And how are you p ann ng to escape with over fourteen thousand pounds of potential y-carcinogen c meat enhancer?

Give me a minute, I'll think of something.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIG TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

I've got a hostage! Put all your MSG into a truck or the rhombus gets it!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

It?

Yes. It.

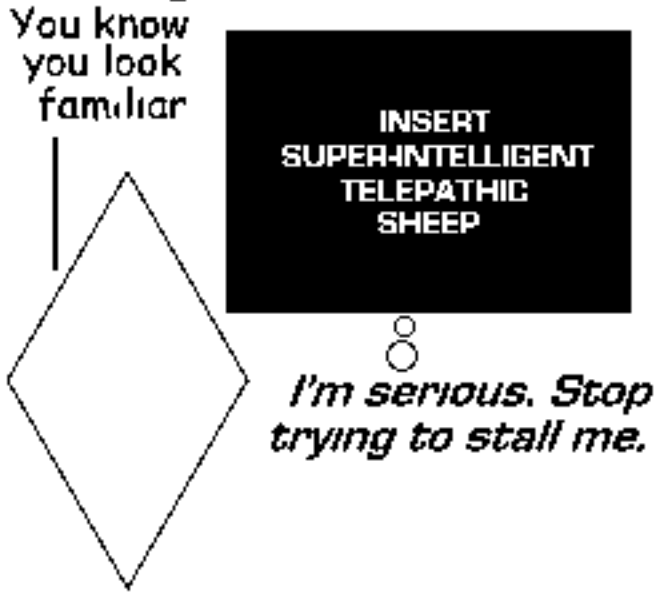
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

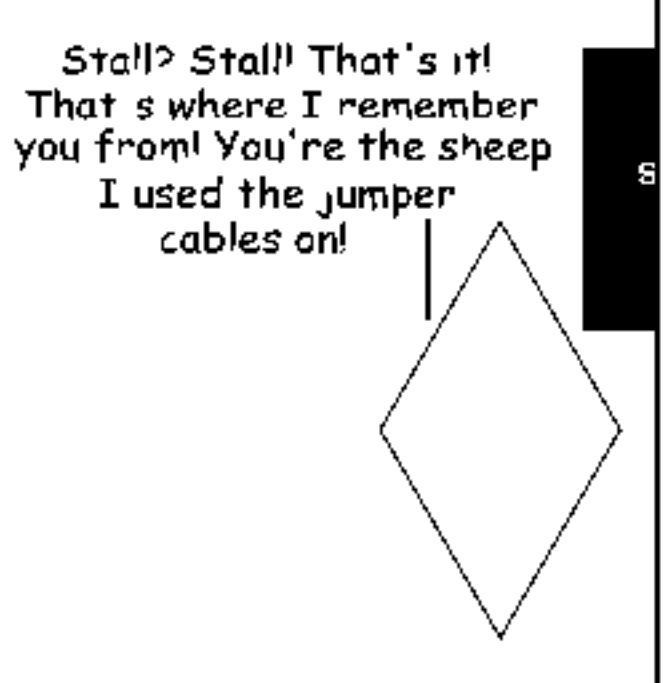
Which would be exactly ?

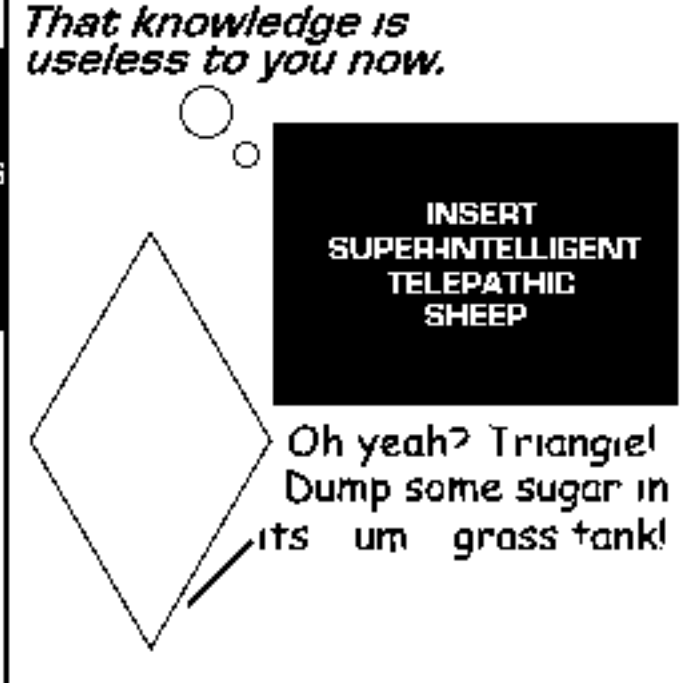
You know "it" It's like... Quit trying to stall me!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Wow That was a c ose one

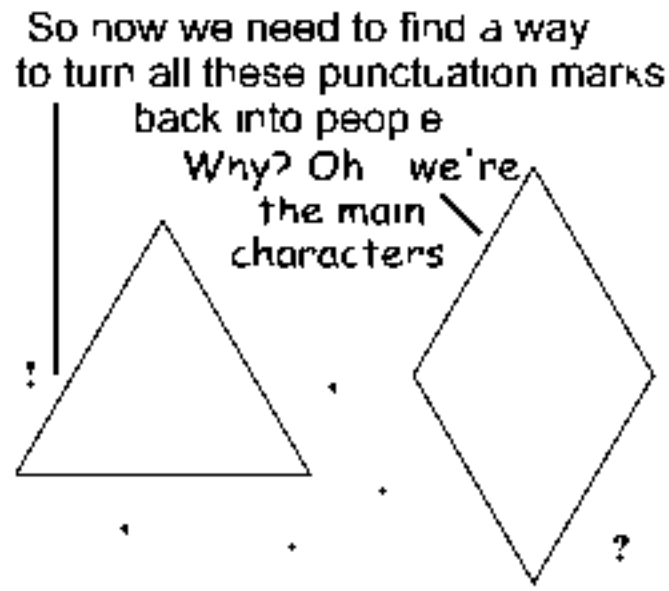
Yeah, t hey! I can t remember the actual fight ng!

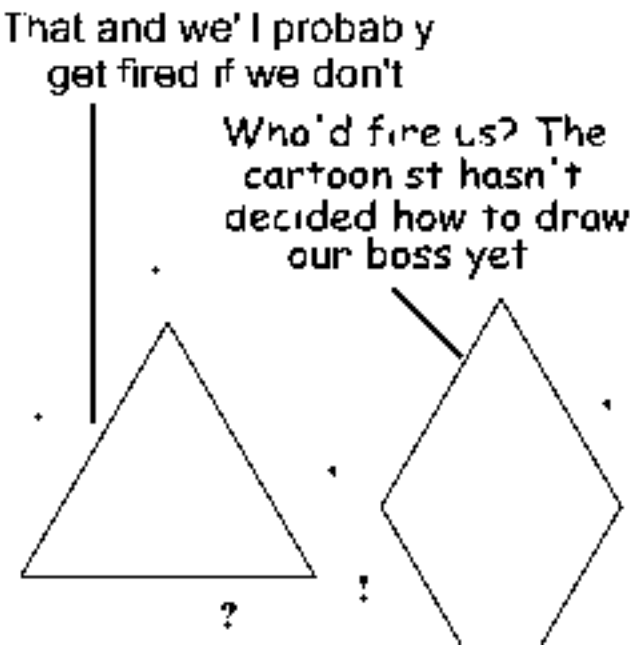
I couldn't draw the fight scene. Basically, there was a brawl between the re taurant patr rs and the parasheep, wh had some sort f ray guns that turned people into punctuation marks. You dul f ught very well, but the C rnersheep used his psychic powers to escape at the last second. He didn't get any of the M G

Now THAT is laziness

What kind of supervillain name is The Cornersheep?

Triangle and Robert





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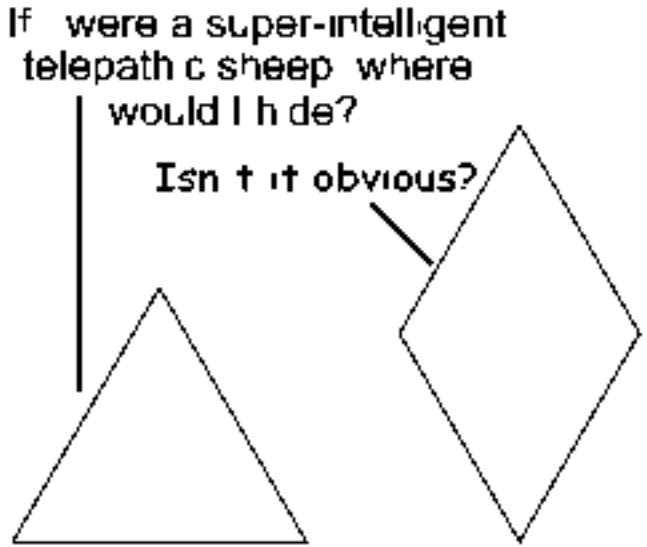
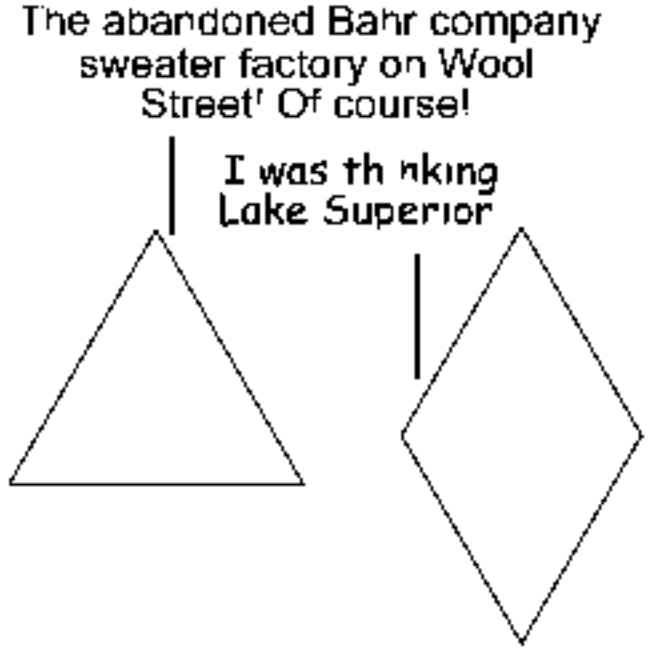
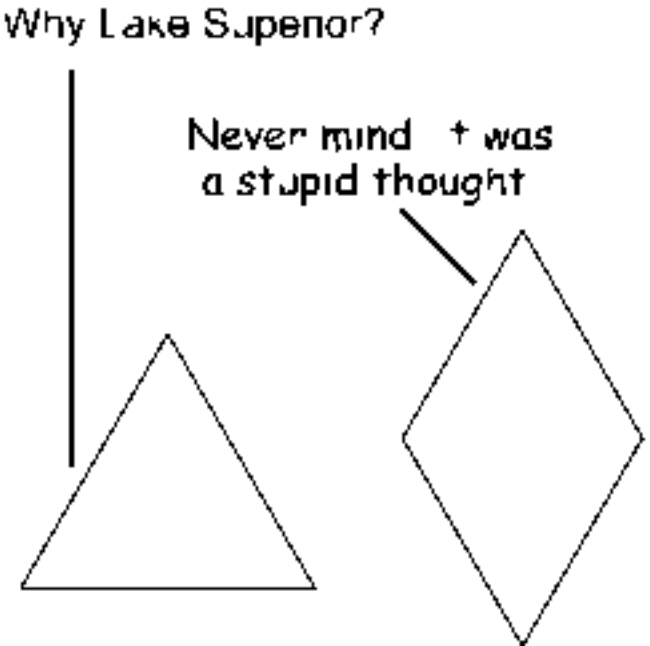
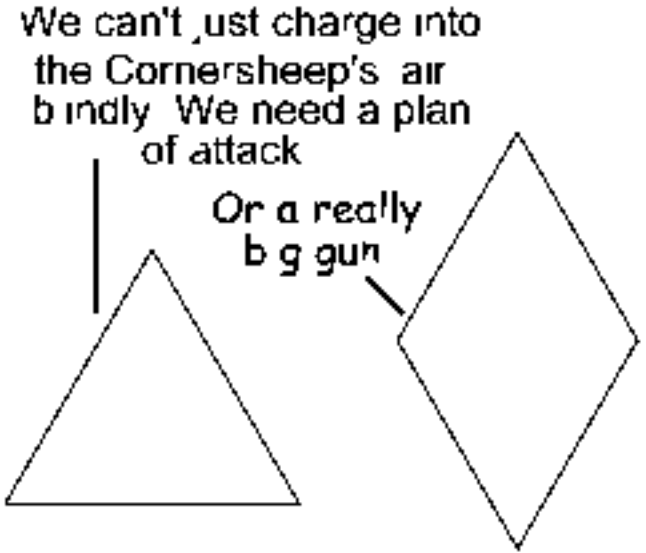
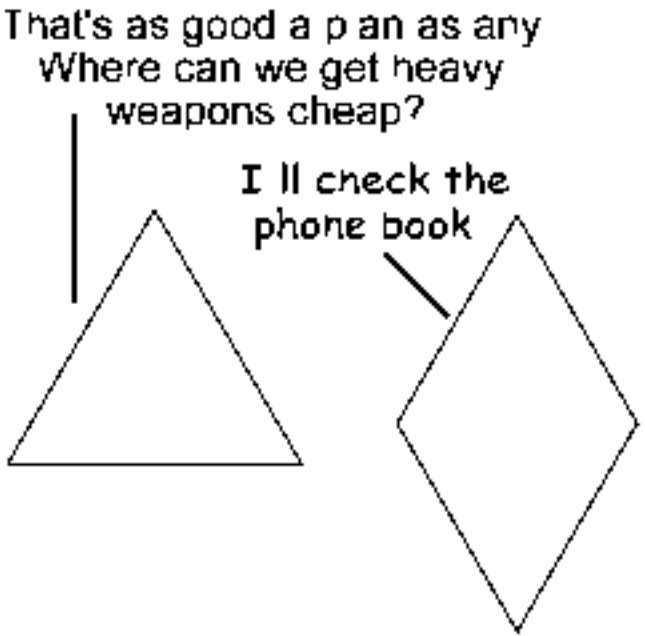


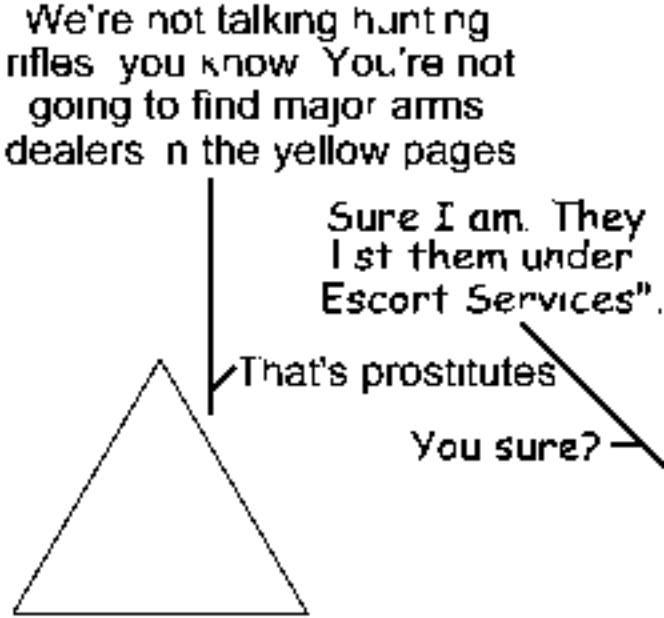




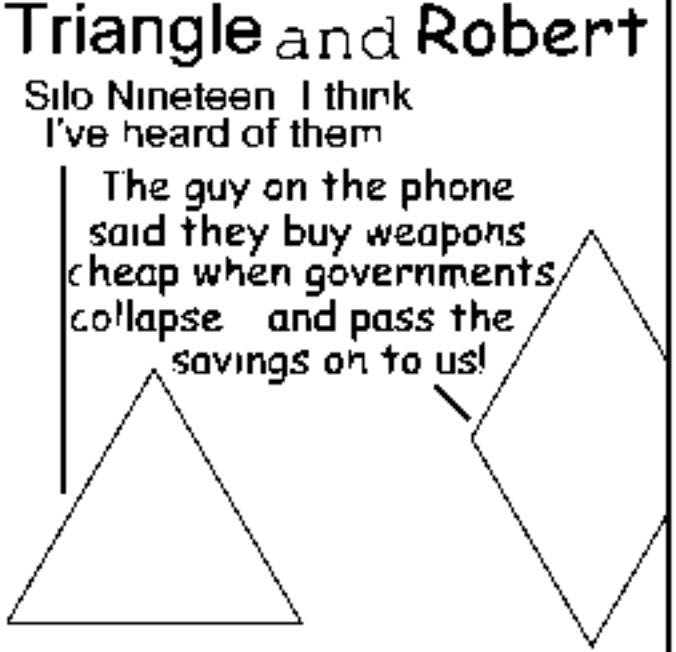
Triangle and Robert

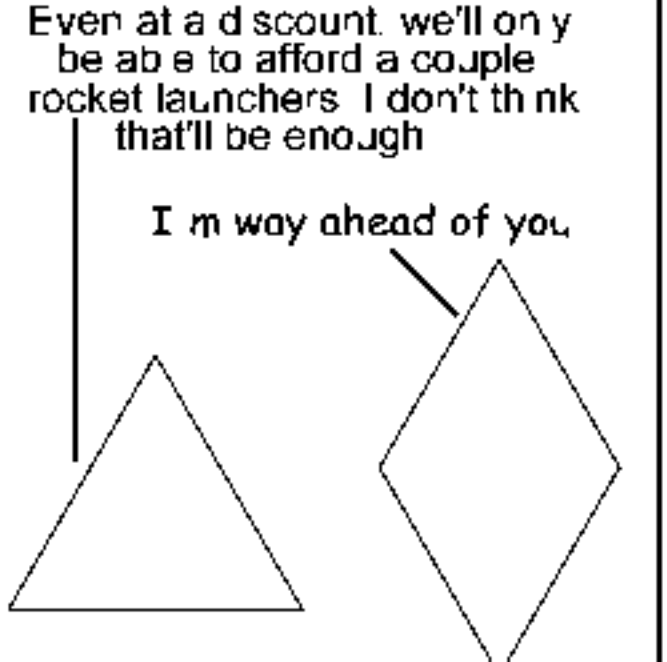


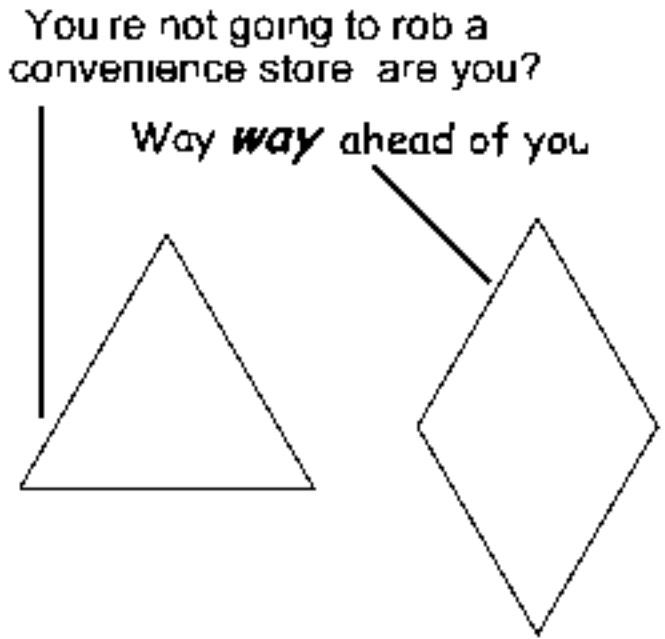




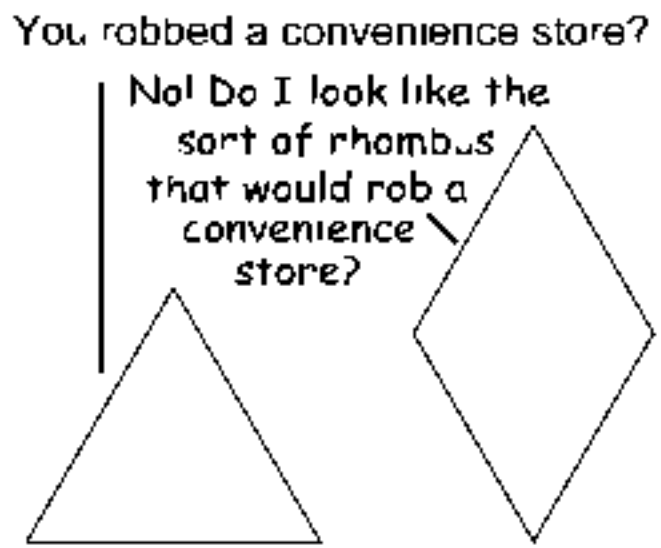
Triangle and Robert

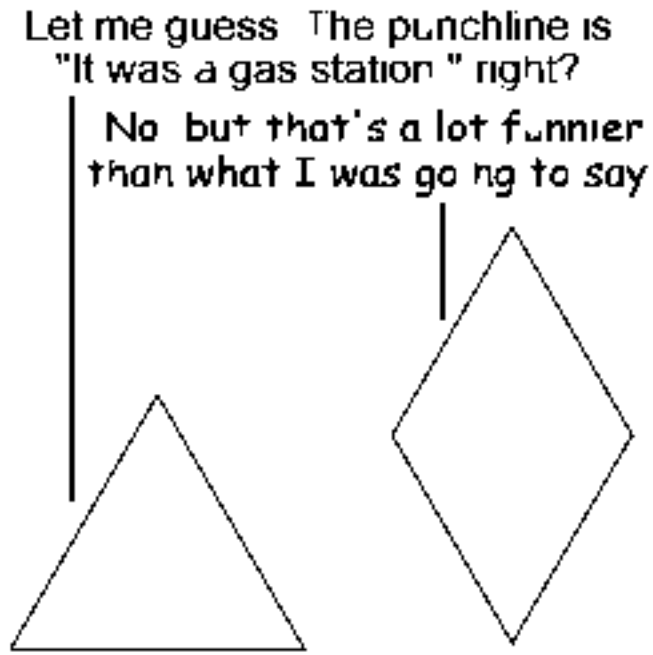


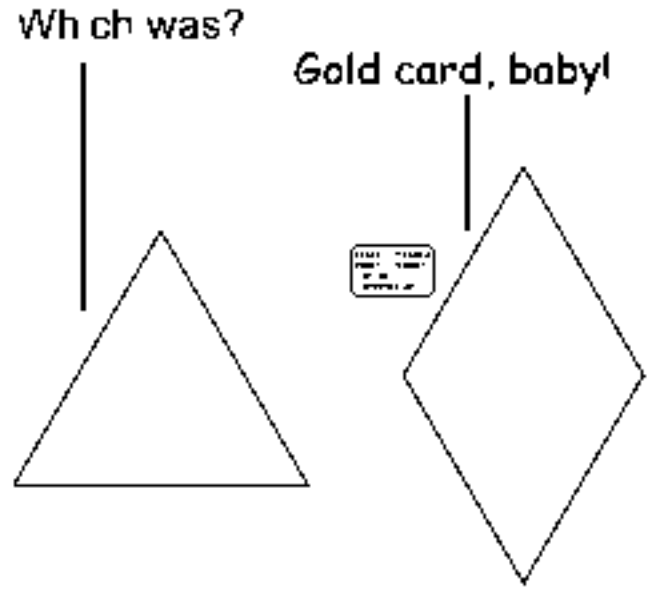




Triangle and Robert







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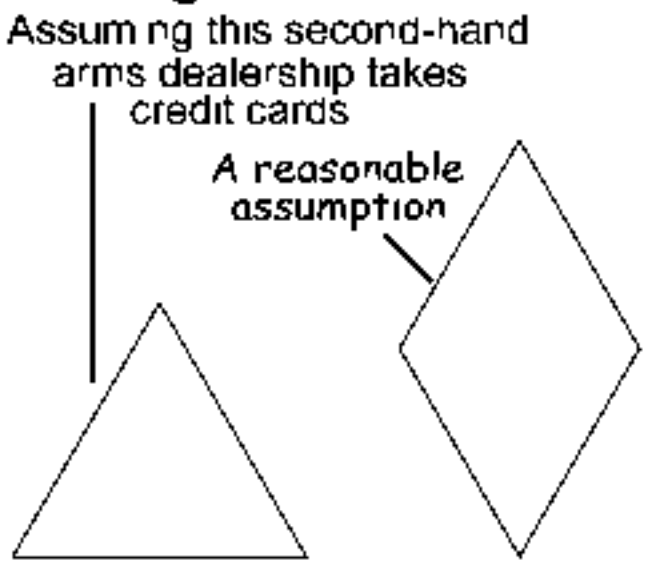

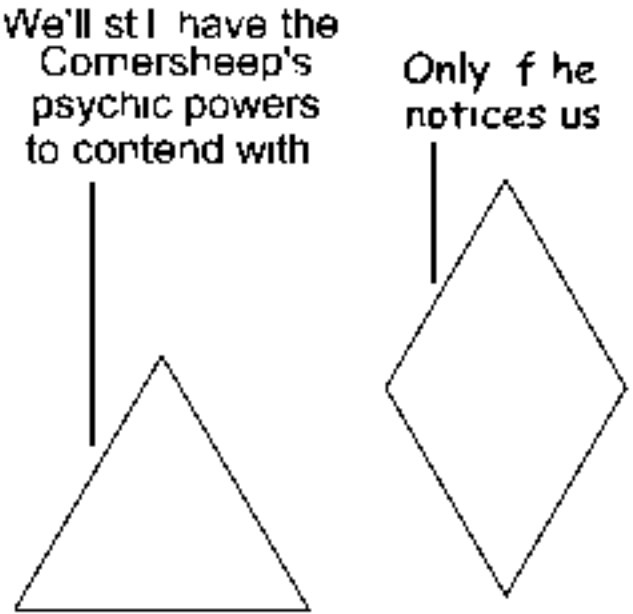

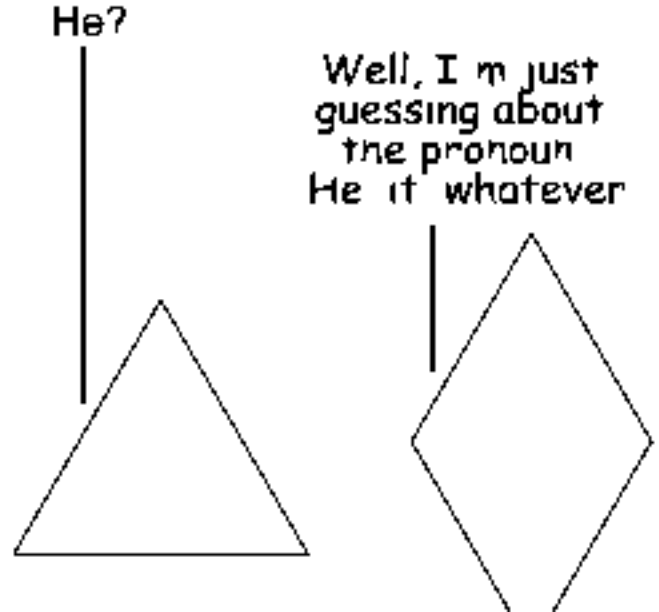

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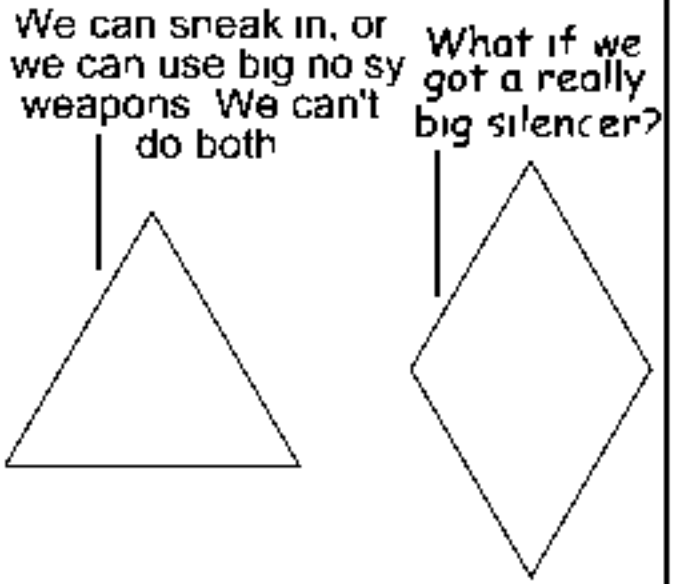
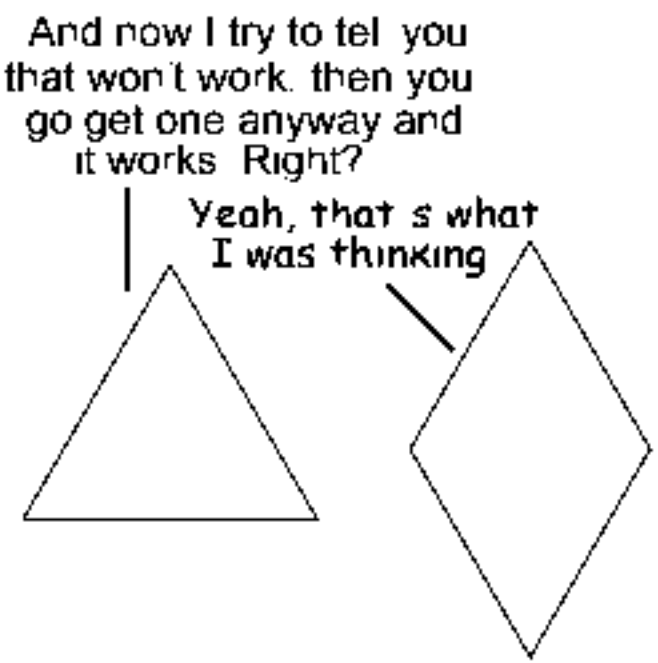
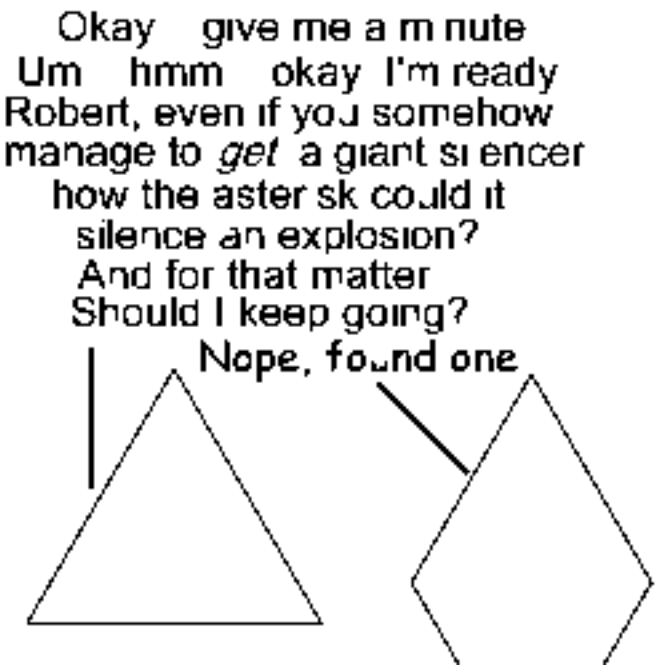
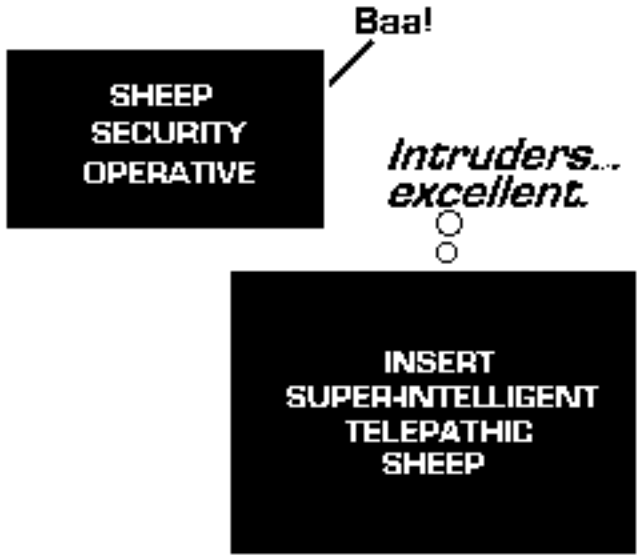
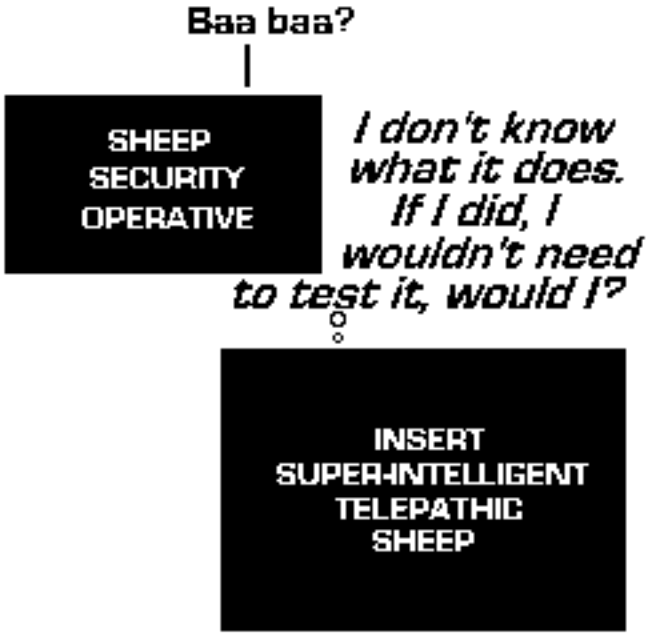


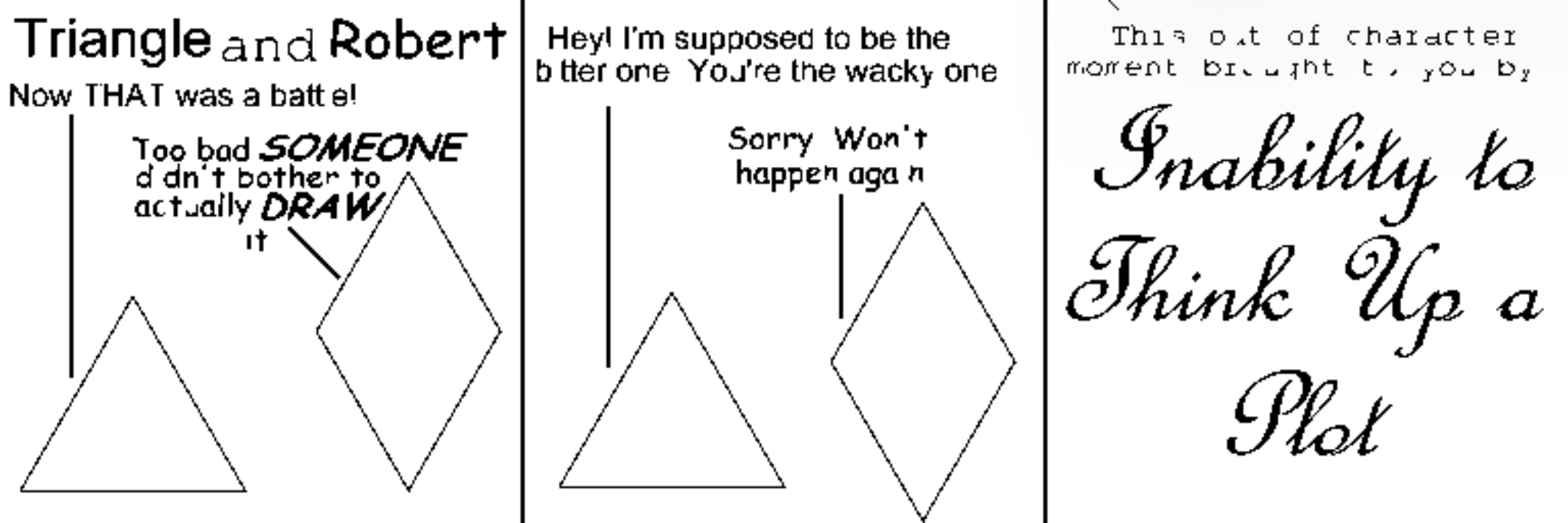




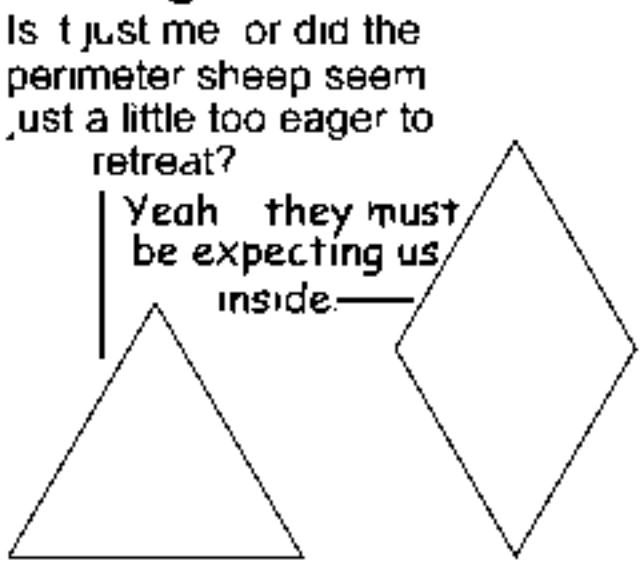
Triangle and Robert

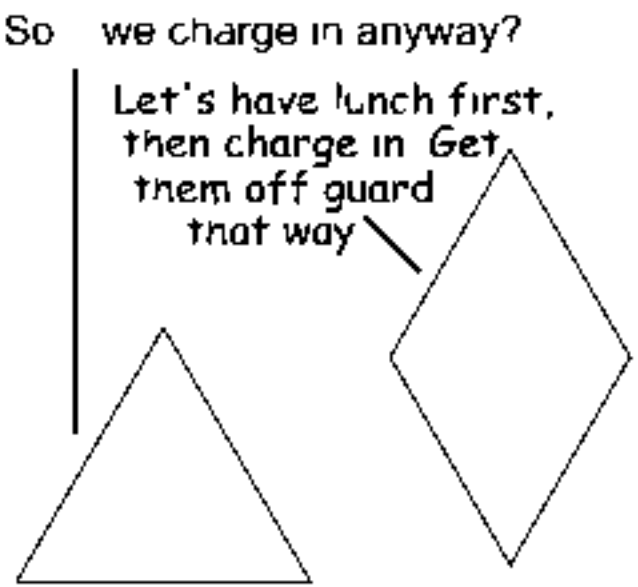


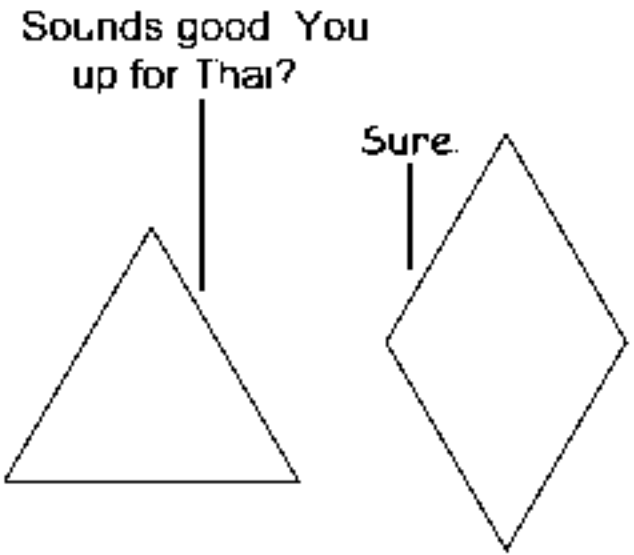



Triangle and Robert
Now THAT was a battle!
Too bad SOMEONE didn't bother to actually DRAW it
Hey! I'm supposed to be the better one. You're the wacky one
Sorry. Won't happen again
This out of character moment brought to you by
Inability to Think Up a Plot

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Where ARE they?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

This waiting around for my enemies to attack can't be good for my blood pressure.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

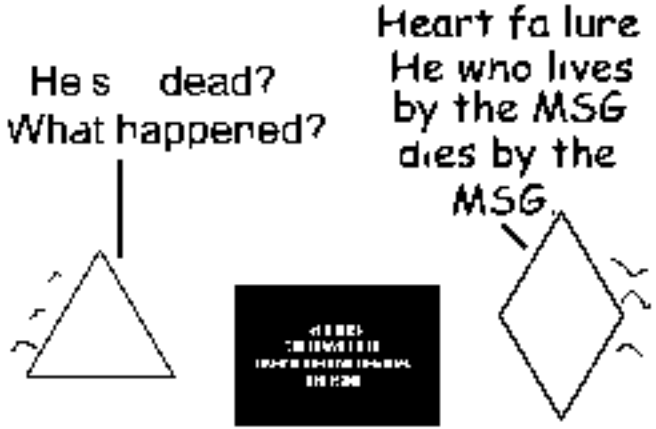
Uh-oh. Chest pains...

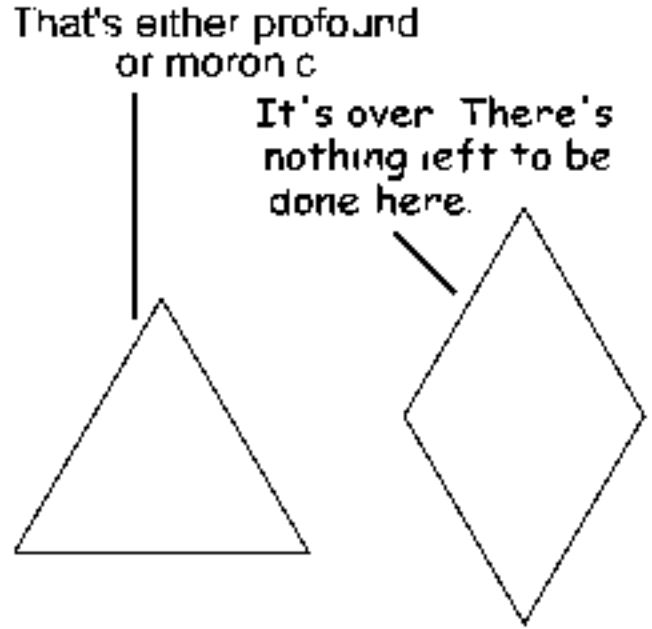
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

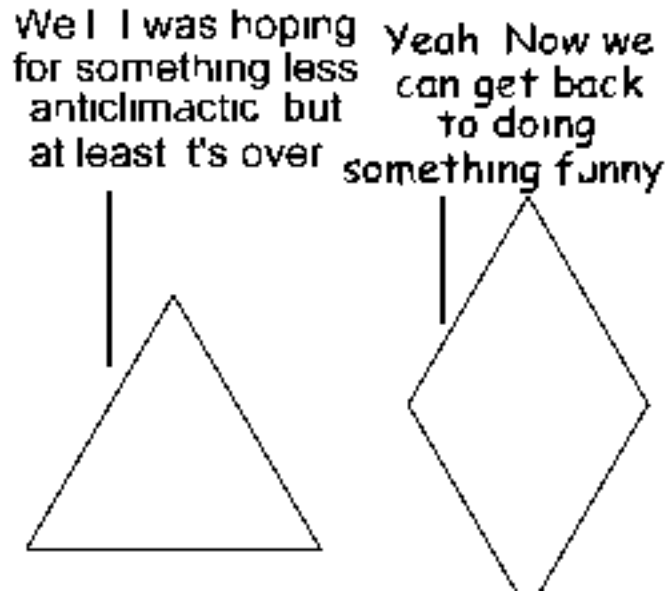
A few hours later

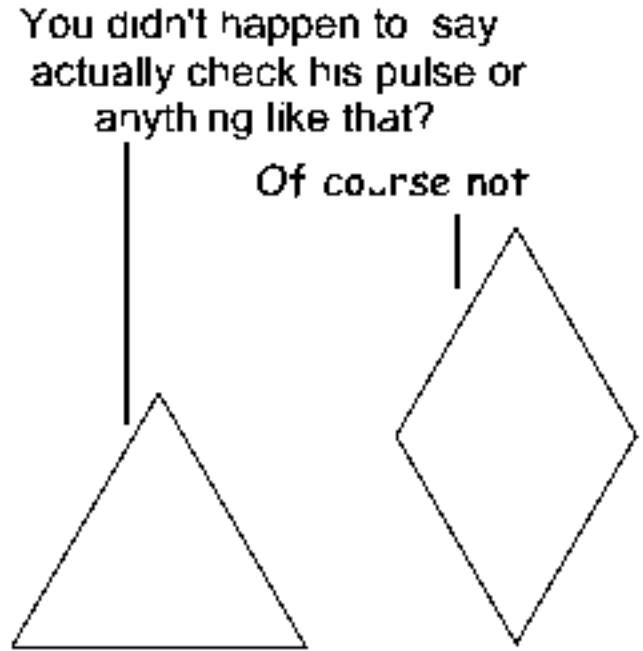
... erg.. gack...

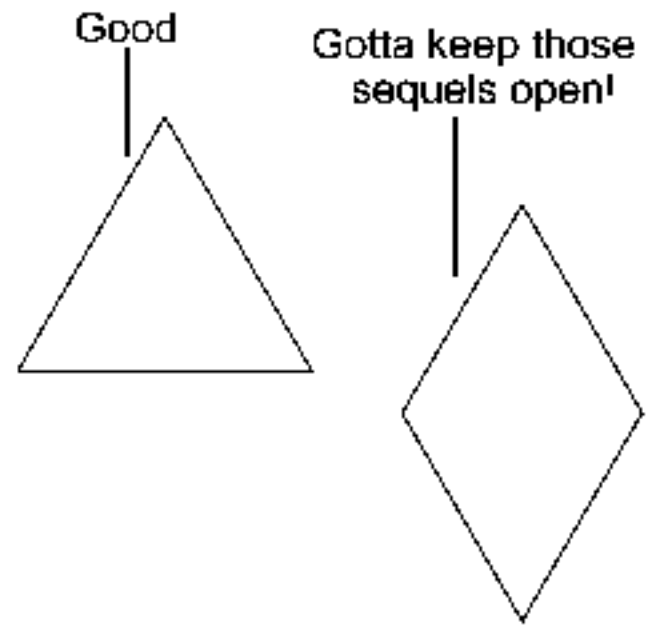




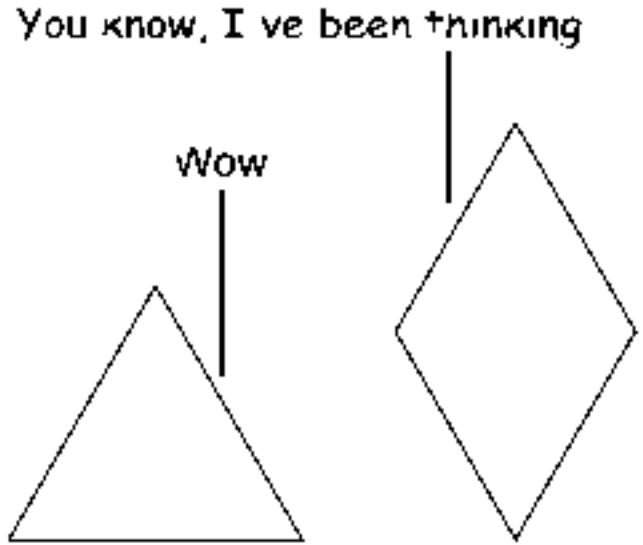
Triangle and Robert

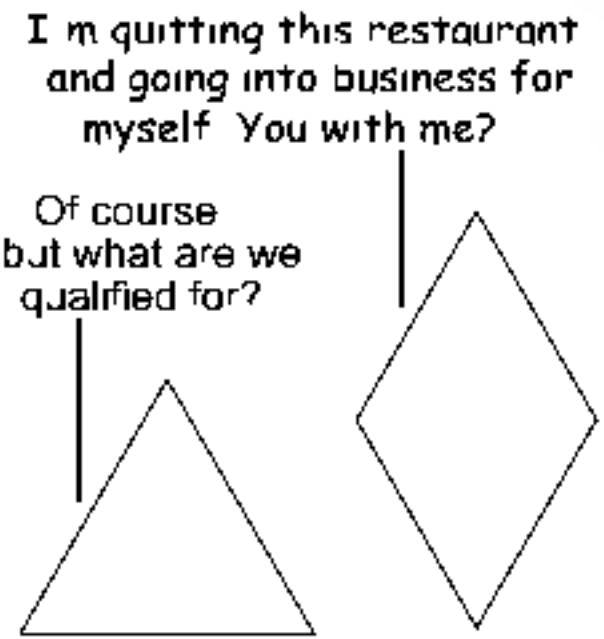


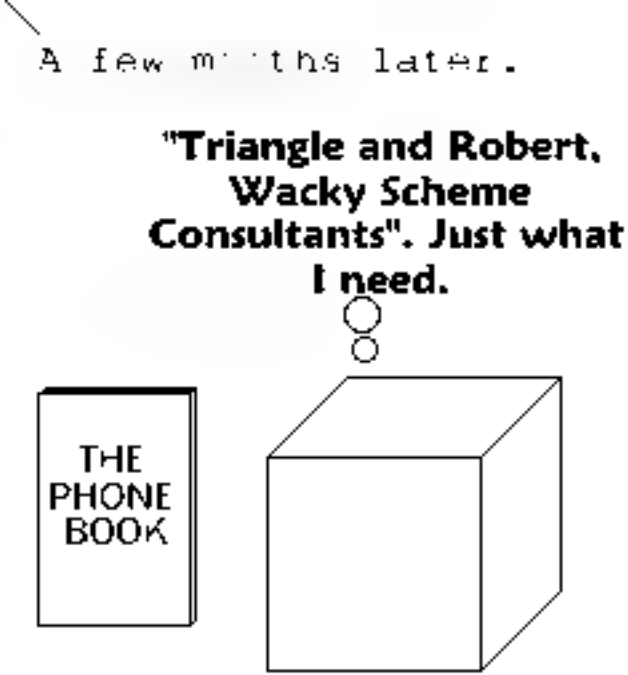




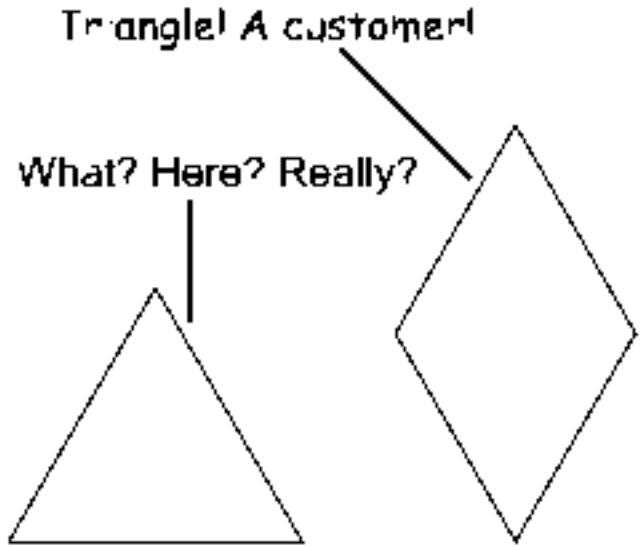
Triangle and Robert

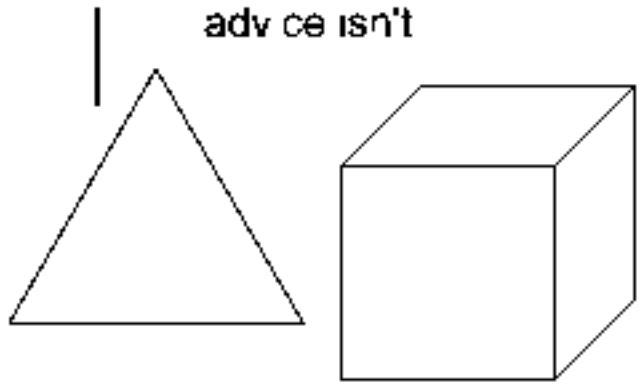


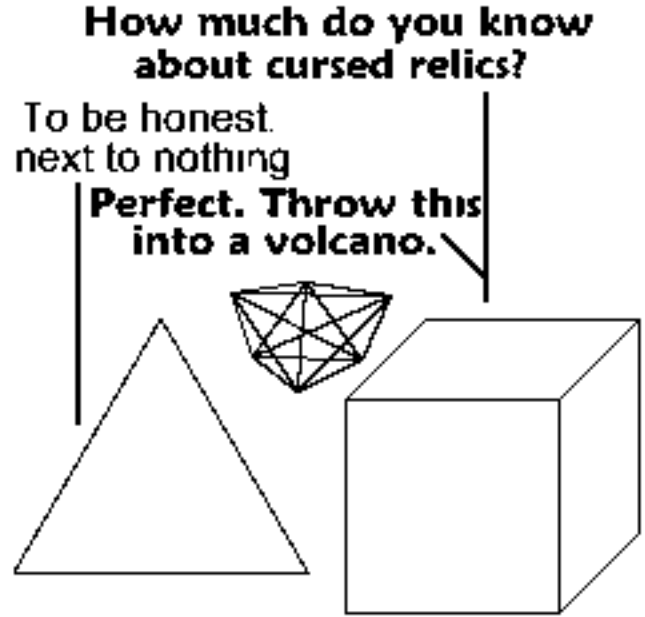




Triangle and Robert







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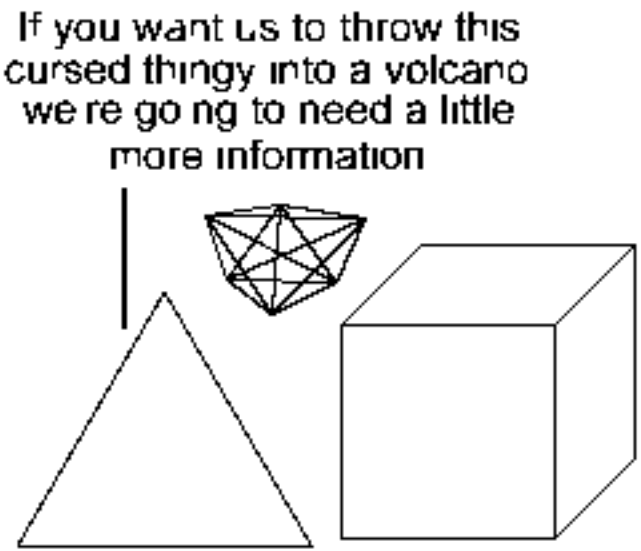

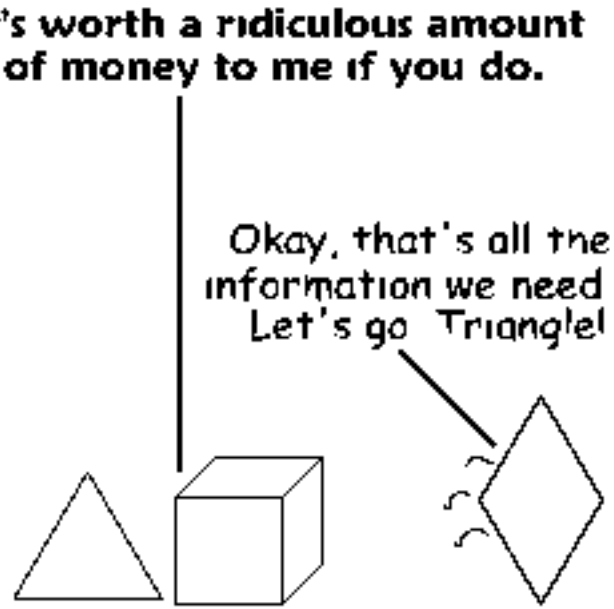

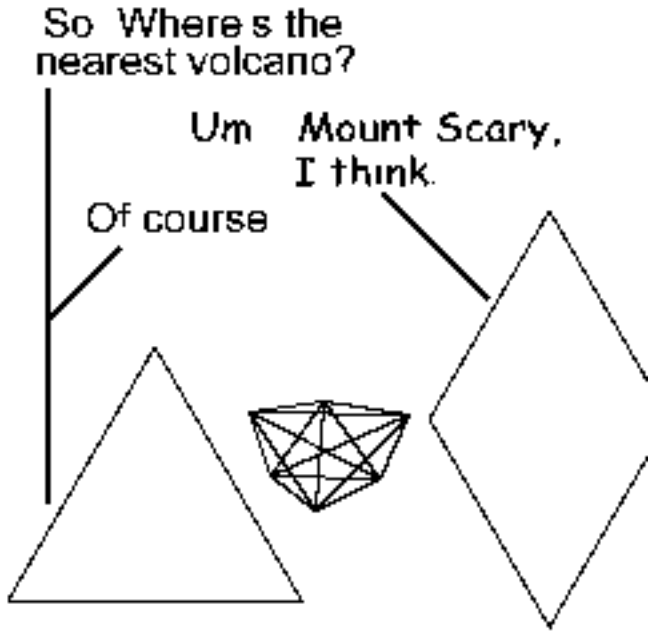

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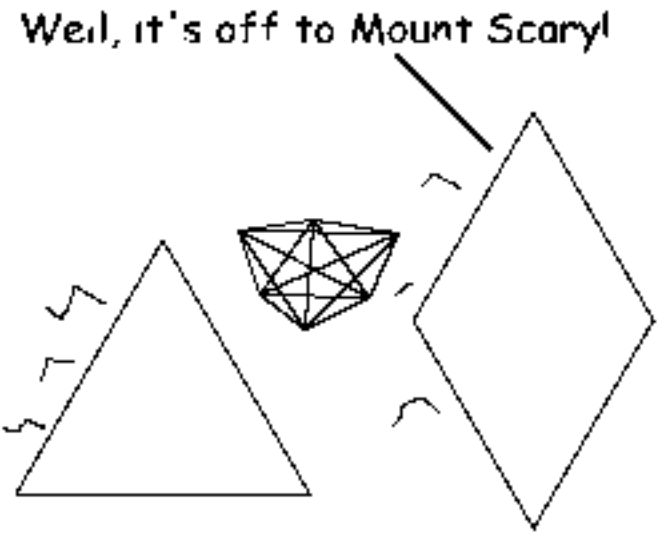
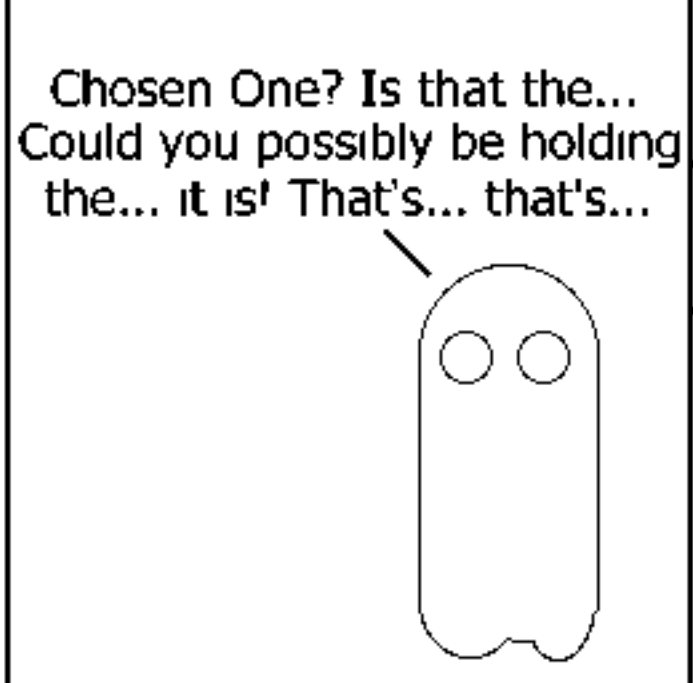
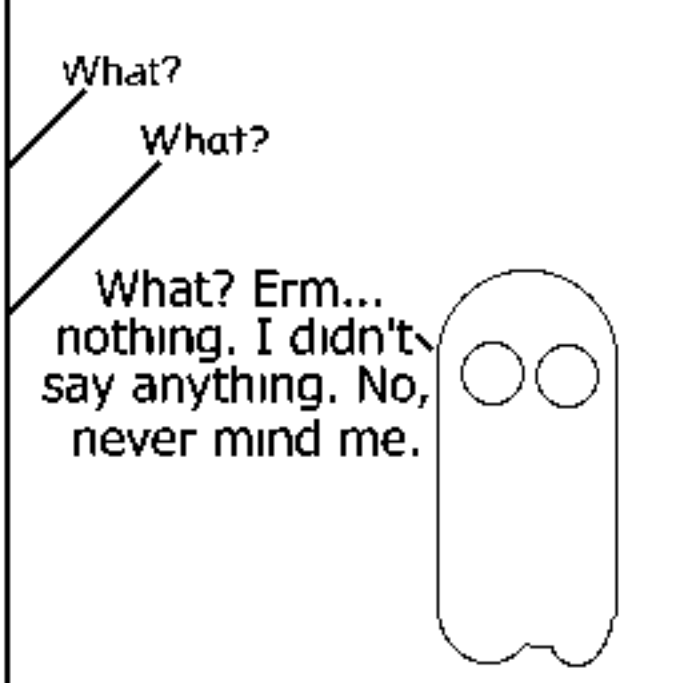
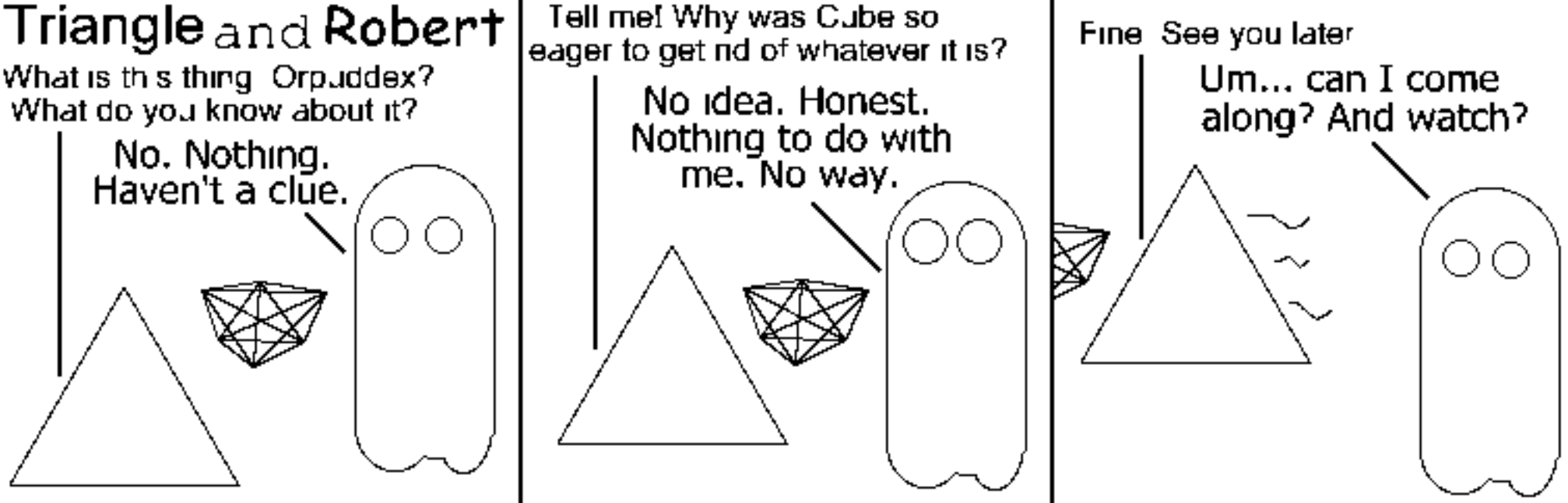


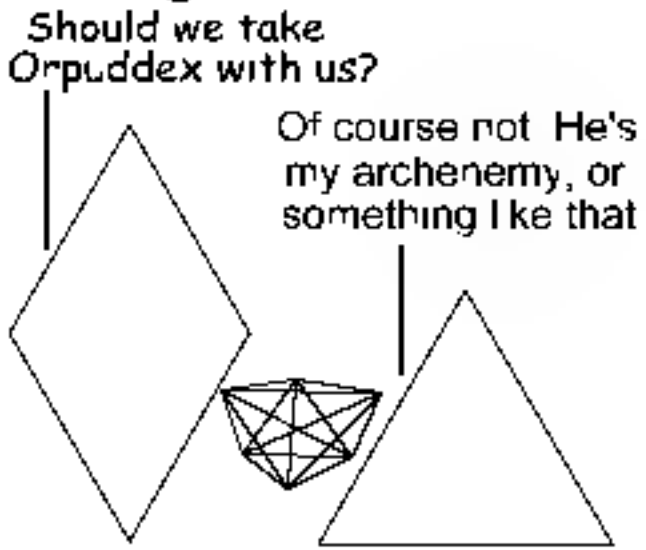


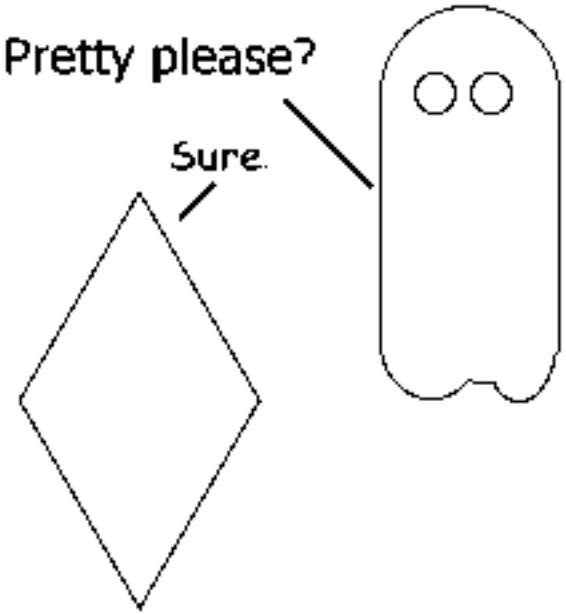


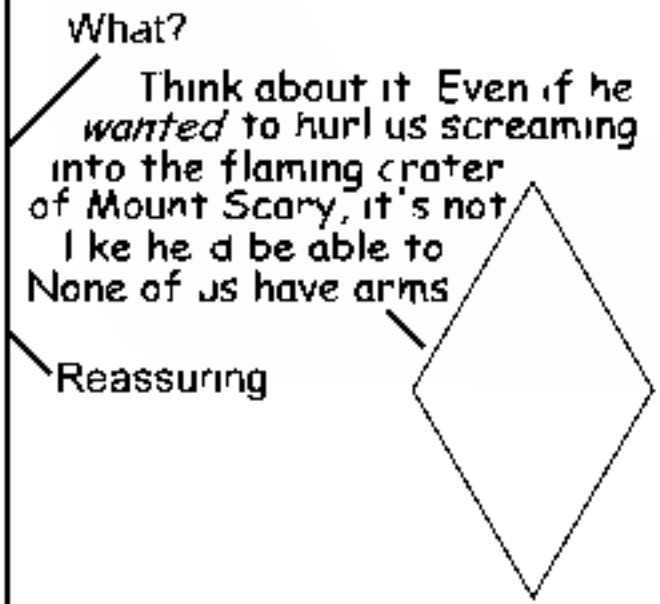
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

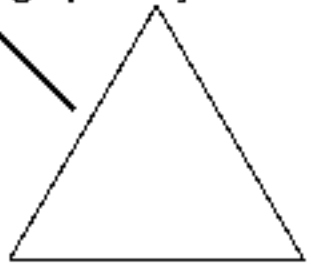






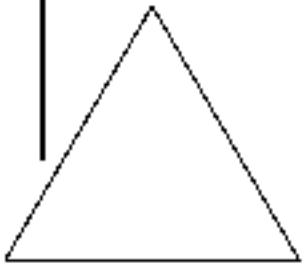
Triangle and Robert

Listen Author? I just want to let you know in advance, that the fact that we're going to throw a cursed relic into a volcano does *not* give you the right to do a Lord of the Rings parody



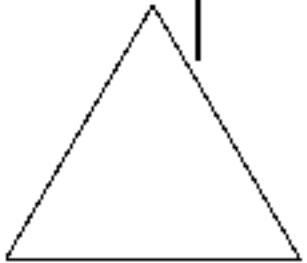
Of course not I wasn't planning on cre

Okay I just wanted to be sure

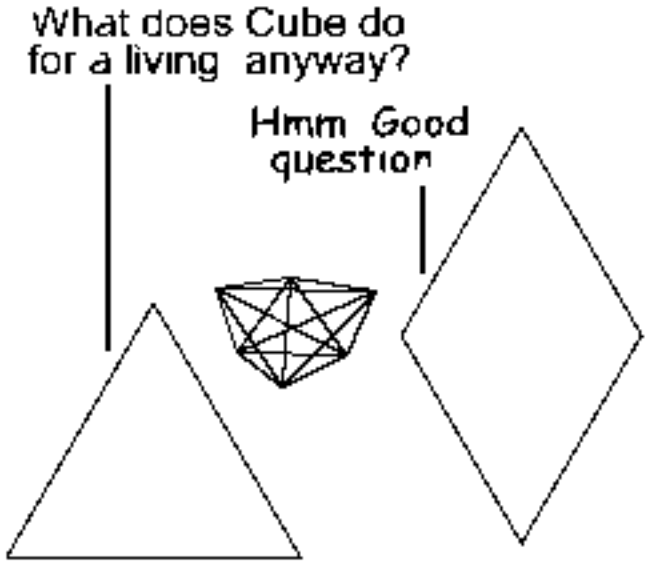


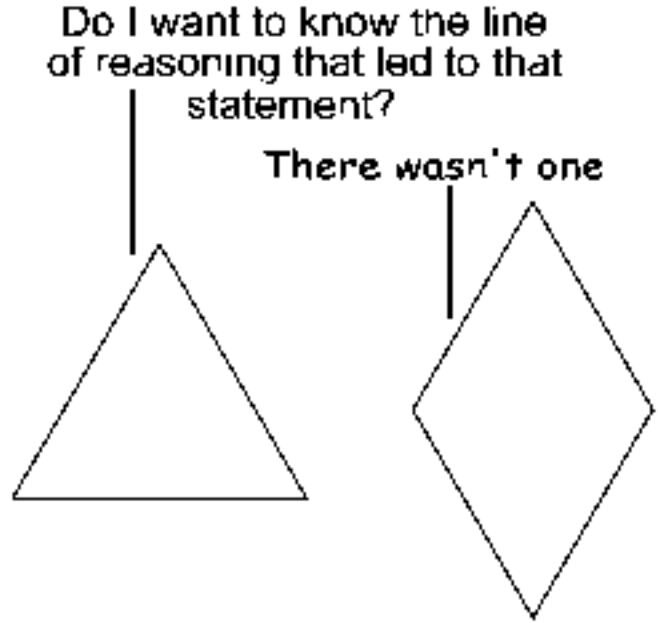
We hatesss rhombussess! Give usss our birthday presssent!

This better be a one-strip joke



Triangle and Robert

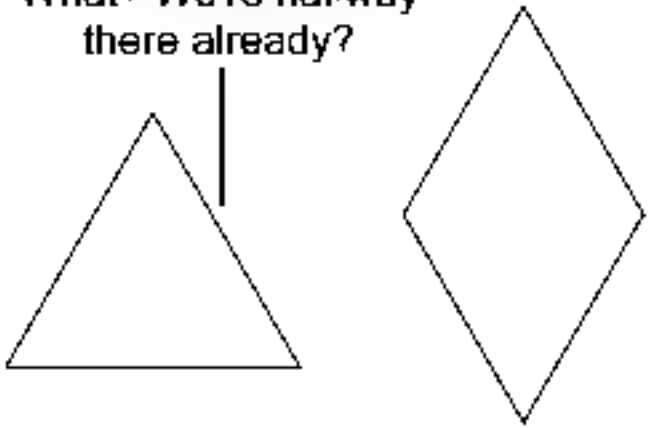




Triangle and Robert

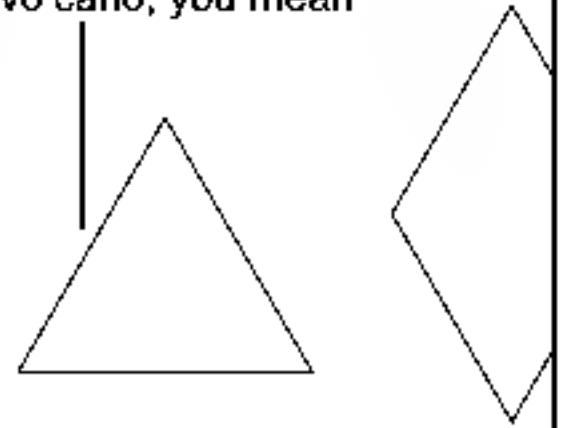
Halfwa, t the peak
f Mou t S ar .

What? We're halfway there already?



Yeah It's a rather small volcano

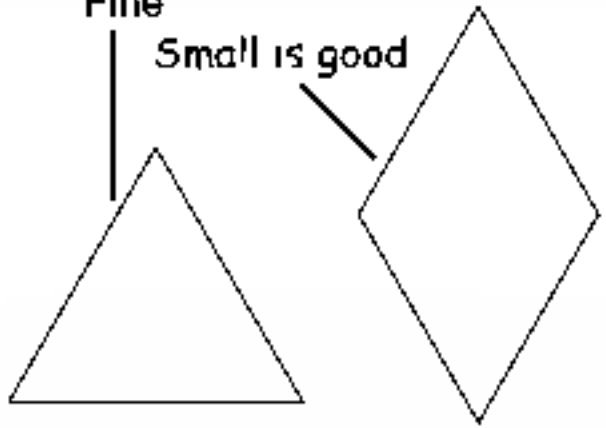
Rather pathet c vo cano, you mean



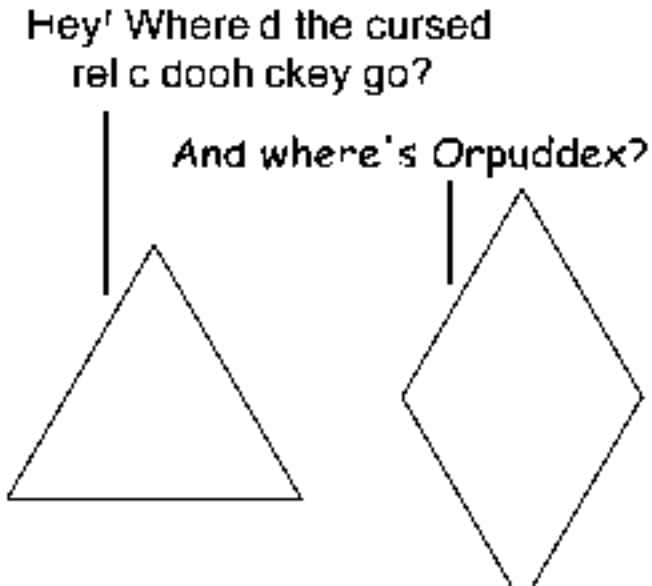
Either it's a small volcano If you spend the next half dozen strips climbing

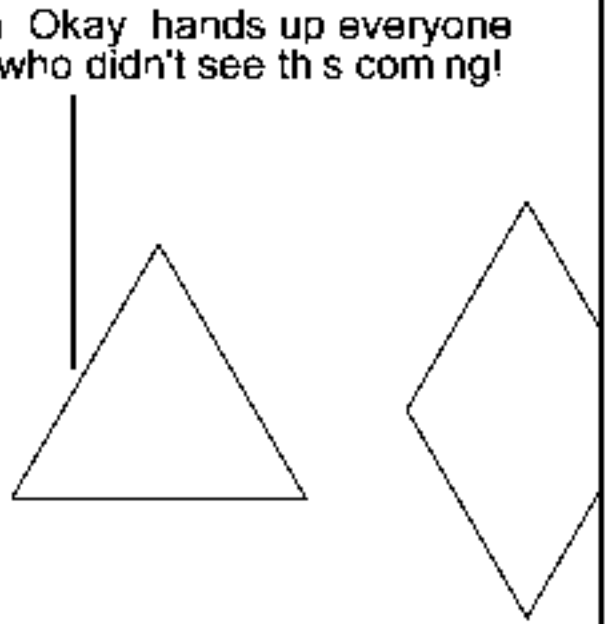
Fine

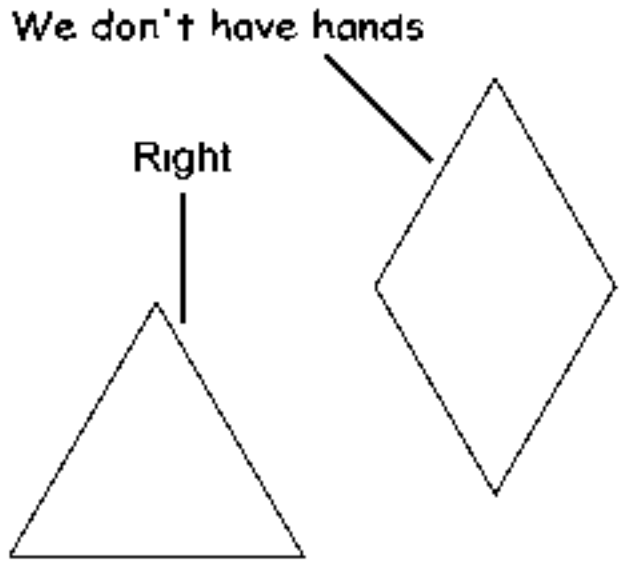
Small is good



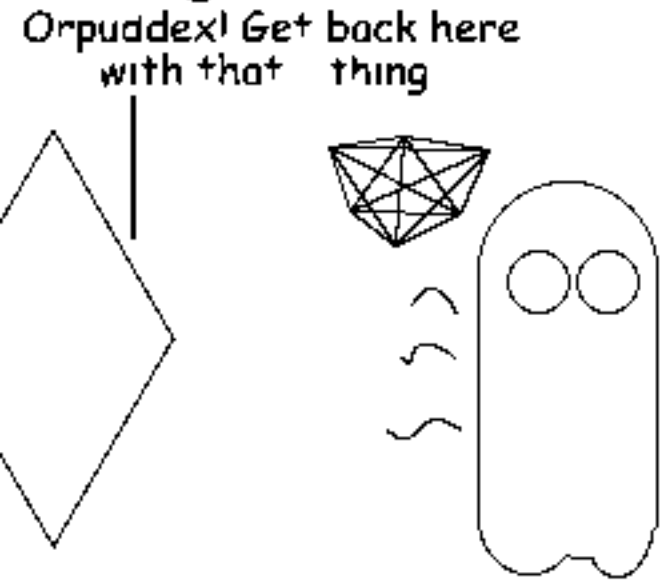
Triangle and Robert

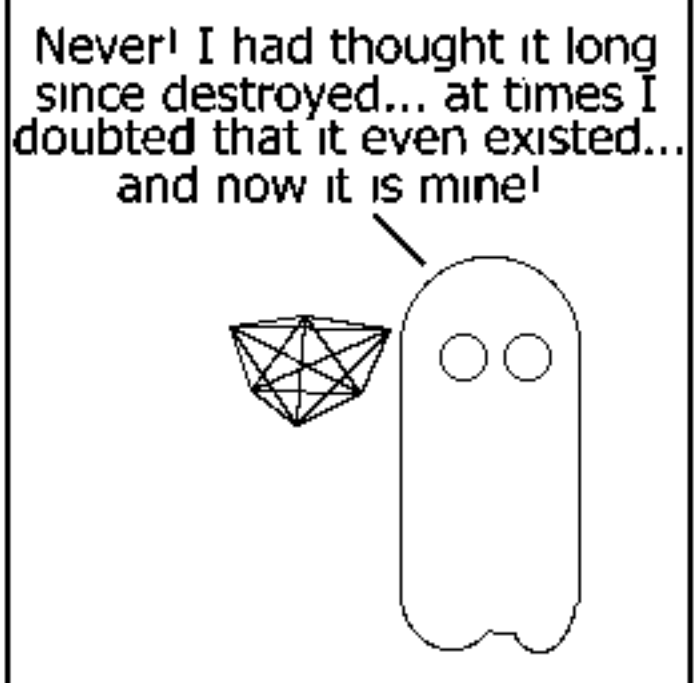


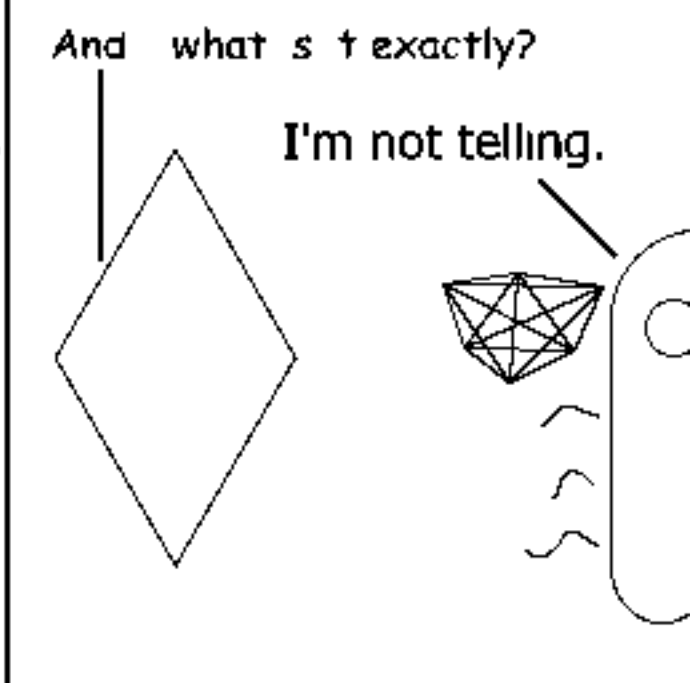




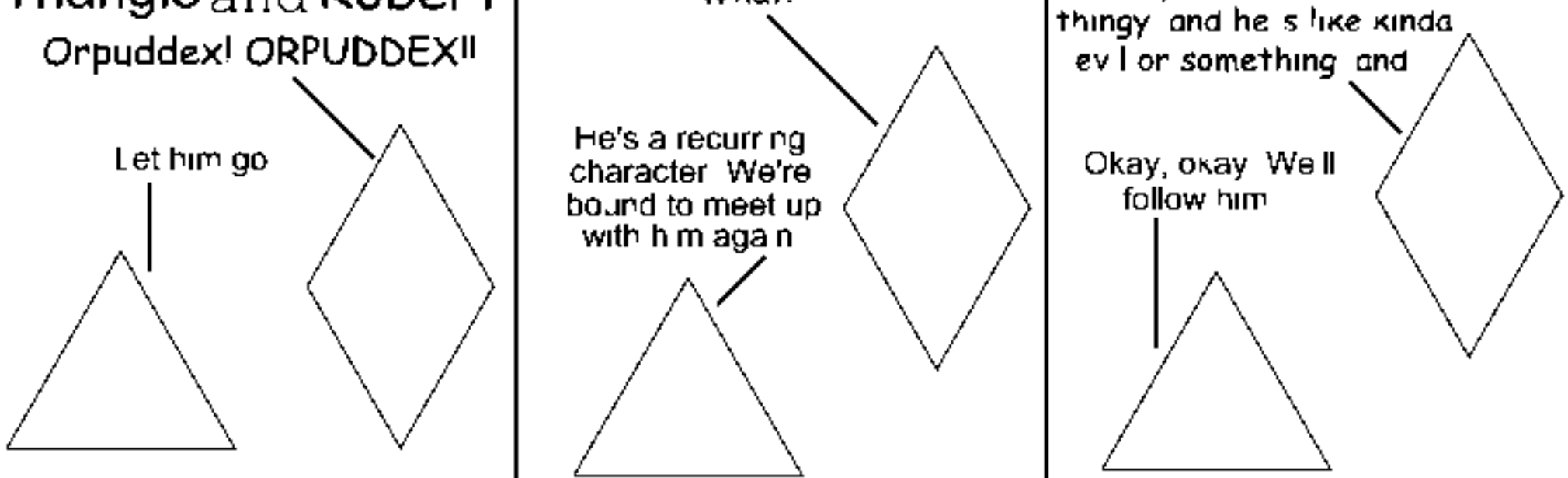
Triangle and Robert





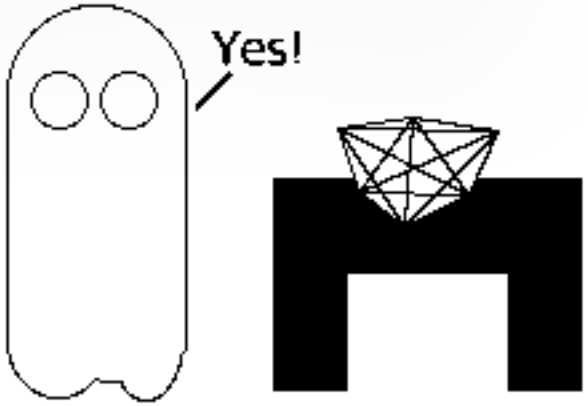


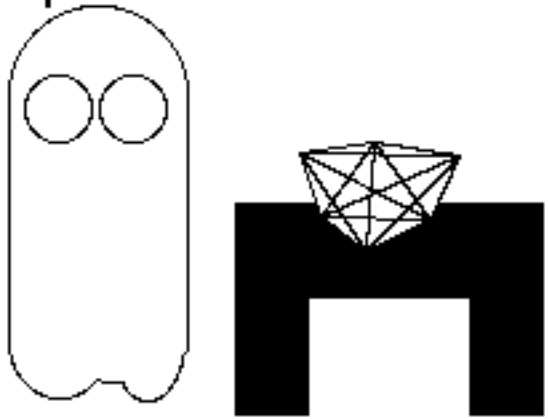
Triangle and Robert

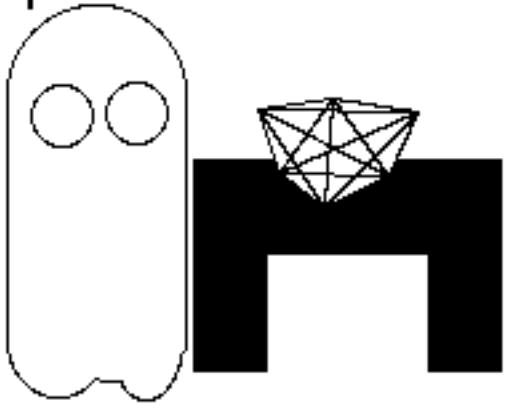


Triangle and Robert

At a crude altar high on the somewhat forbidding l pes f Mou t S ary .







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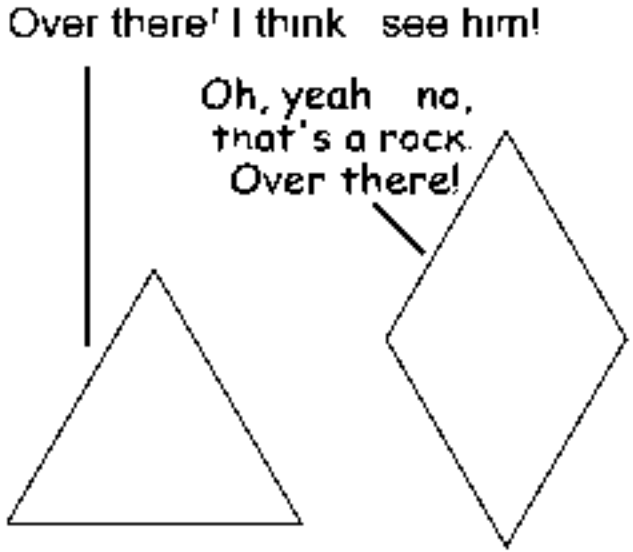

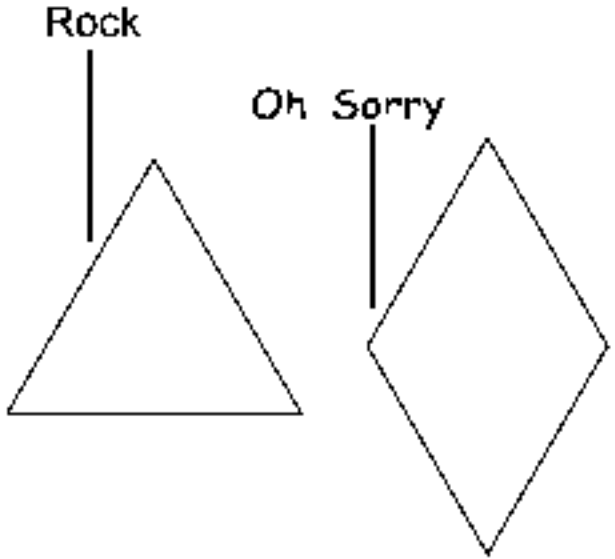

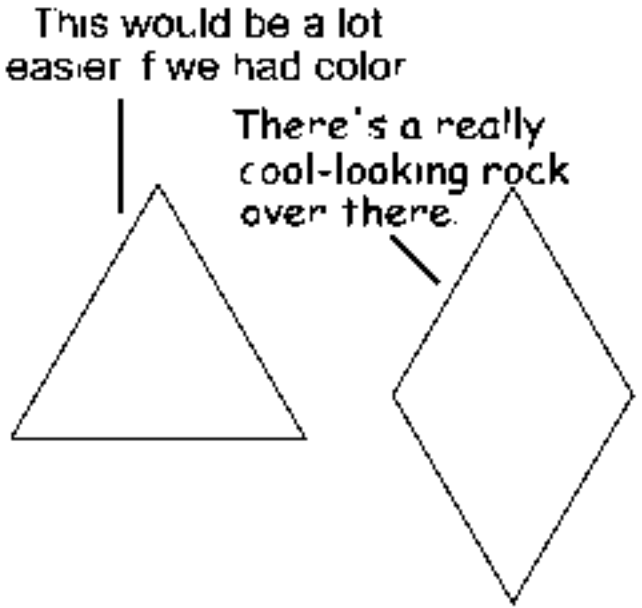

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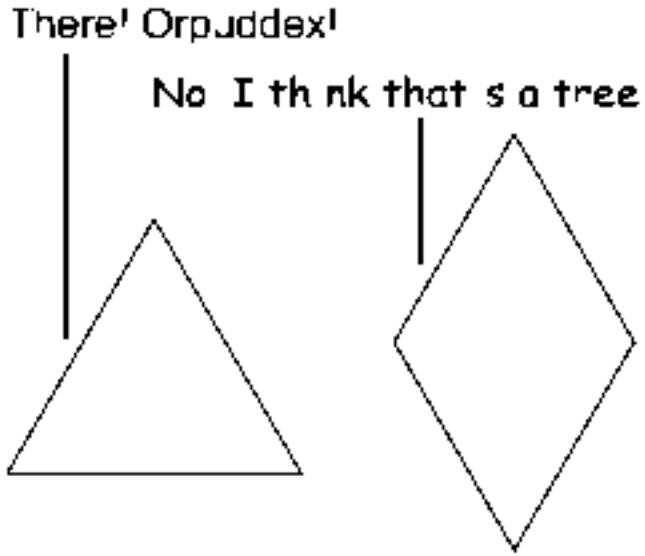

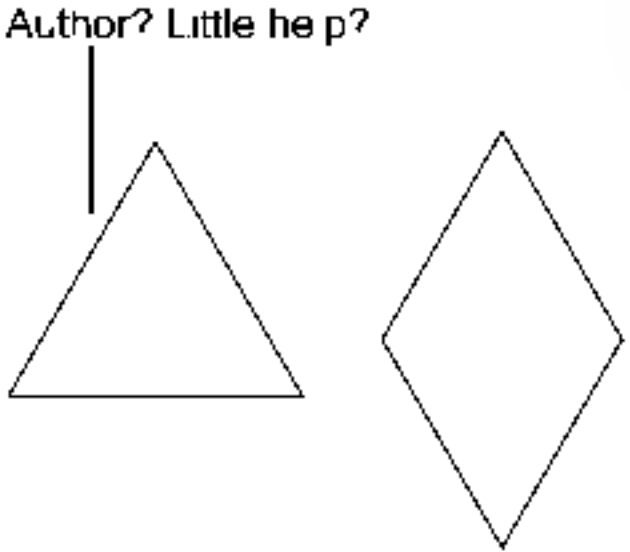

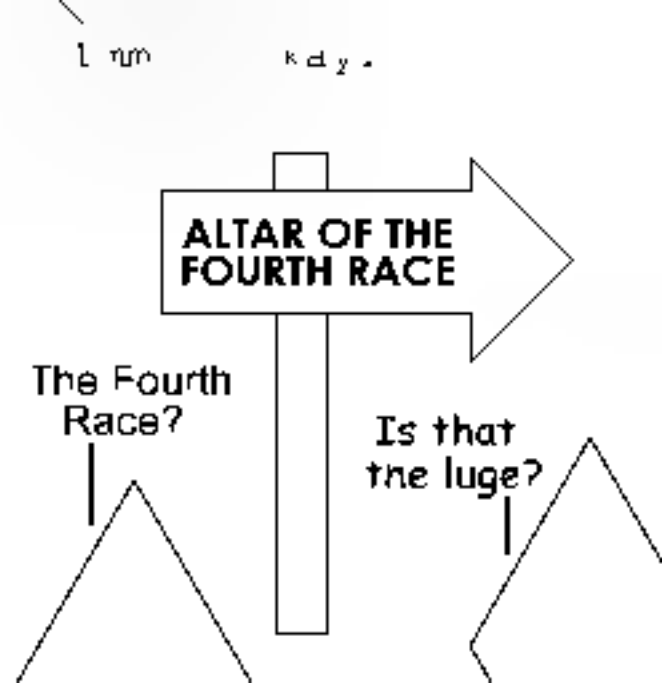

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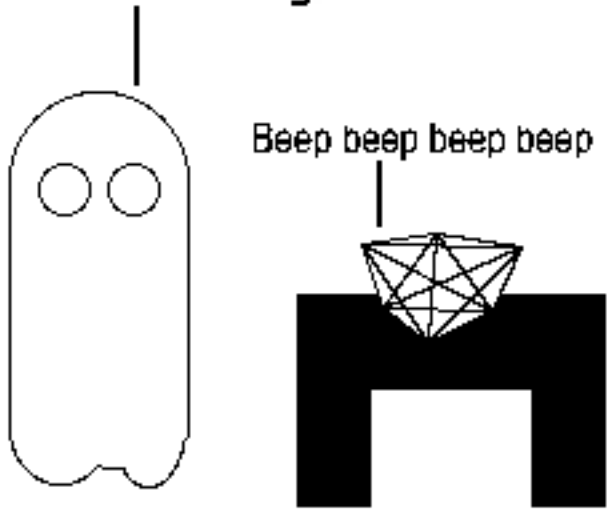

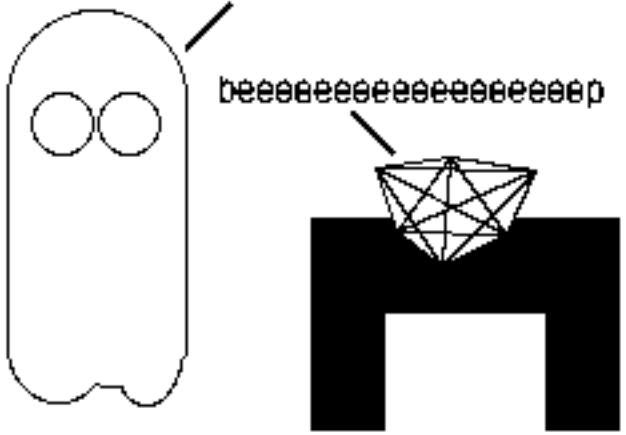

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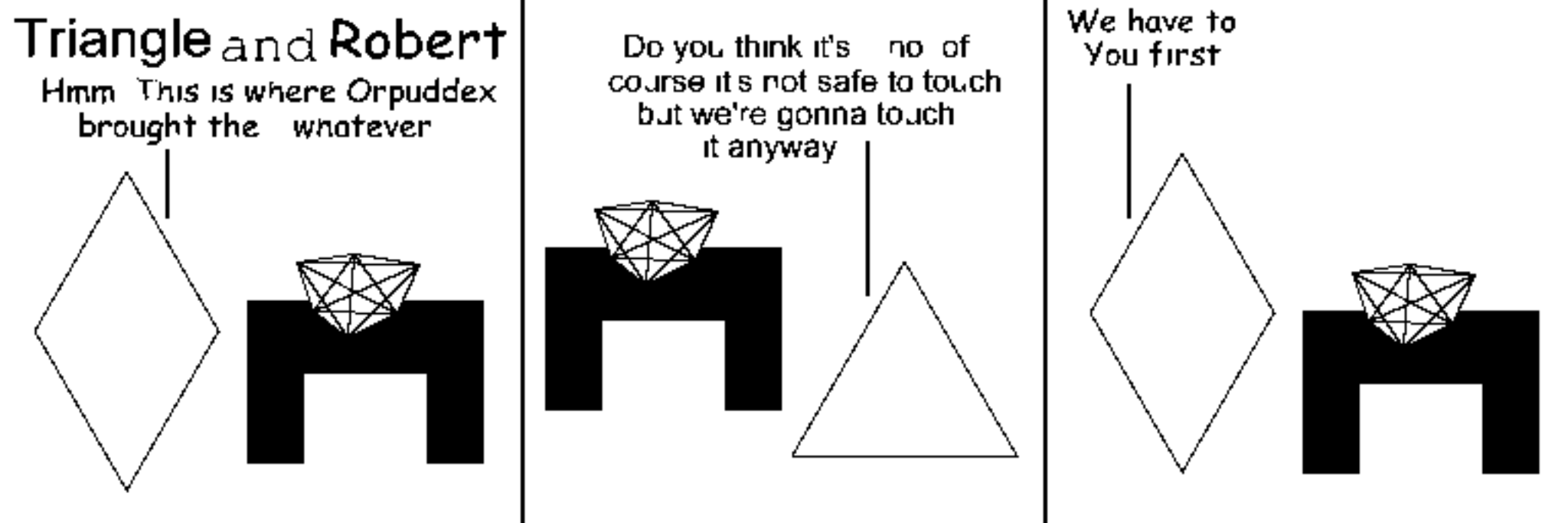
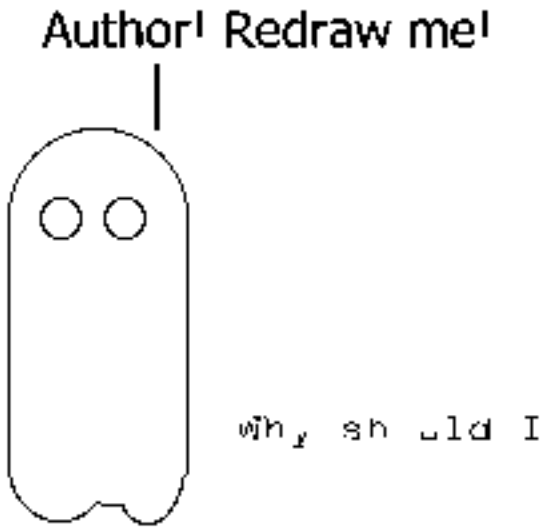


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



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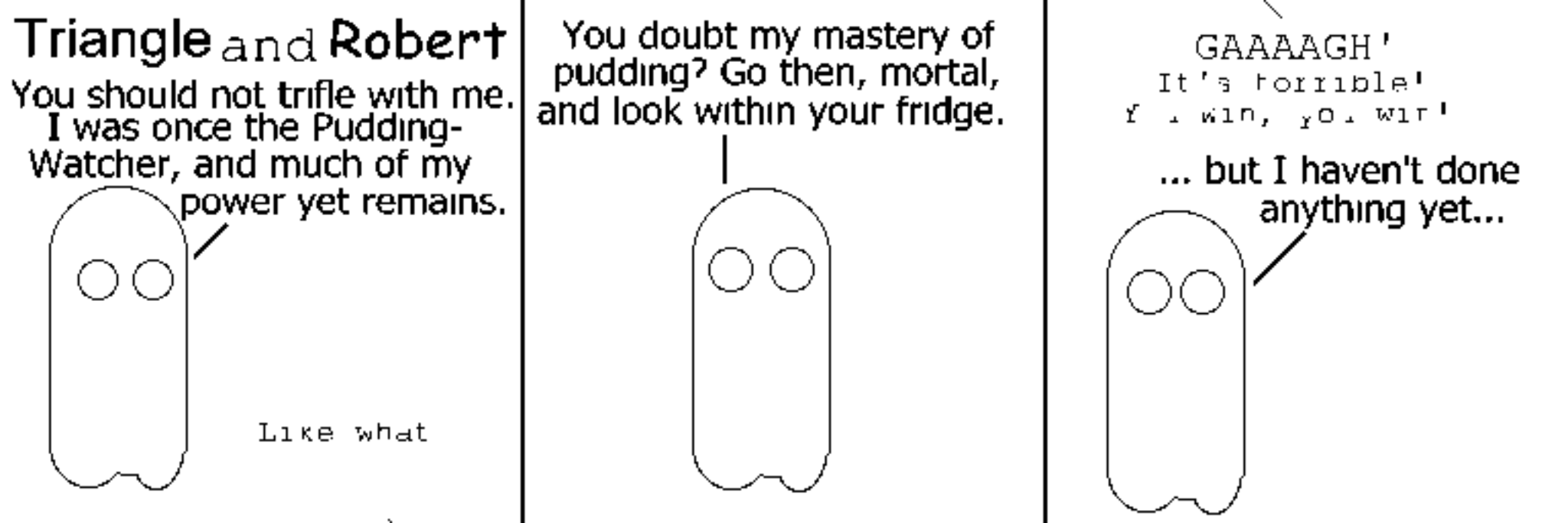

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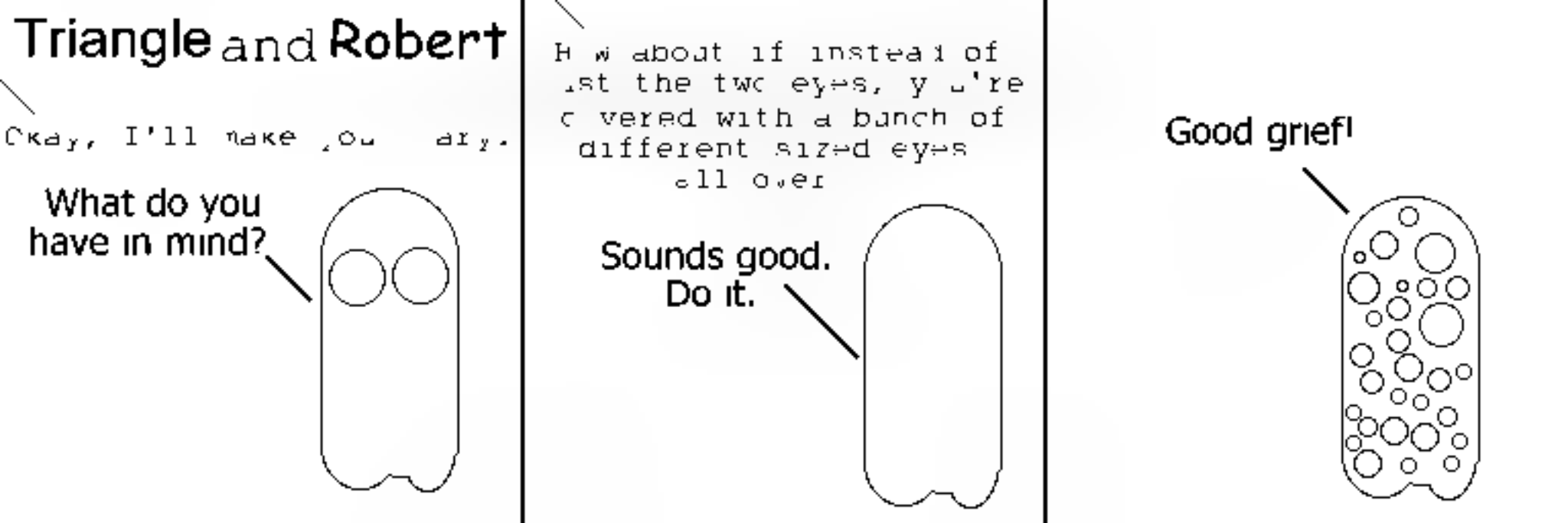

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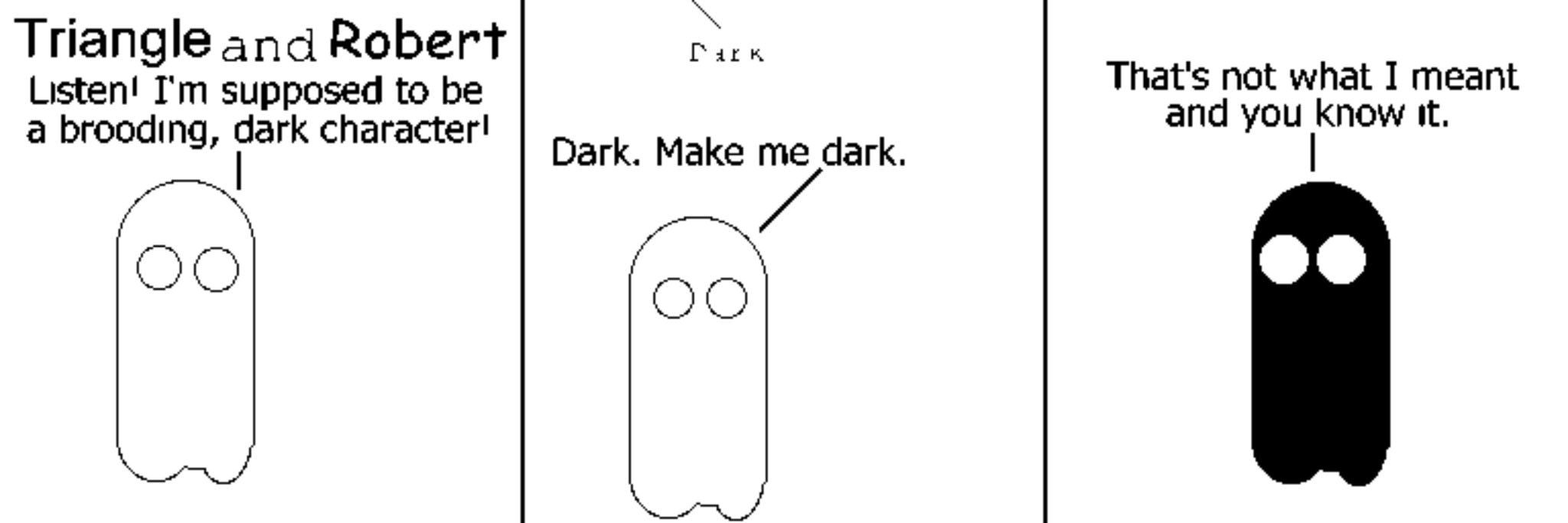
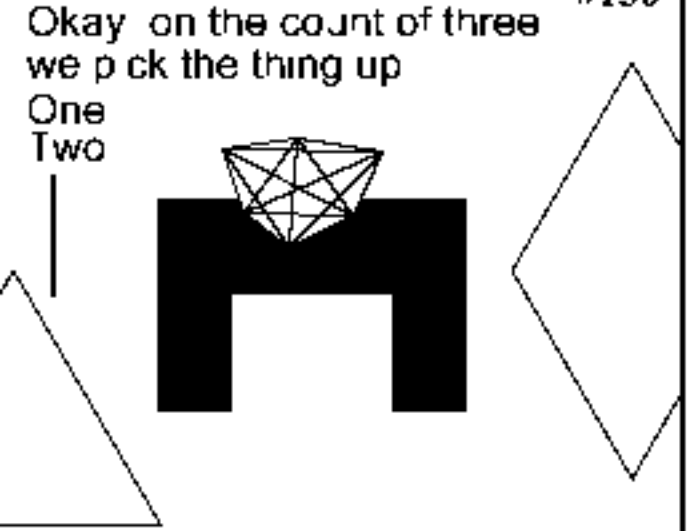
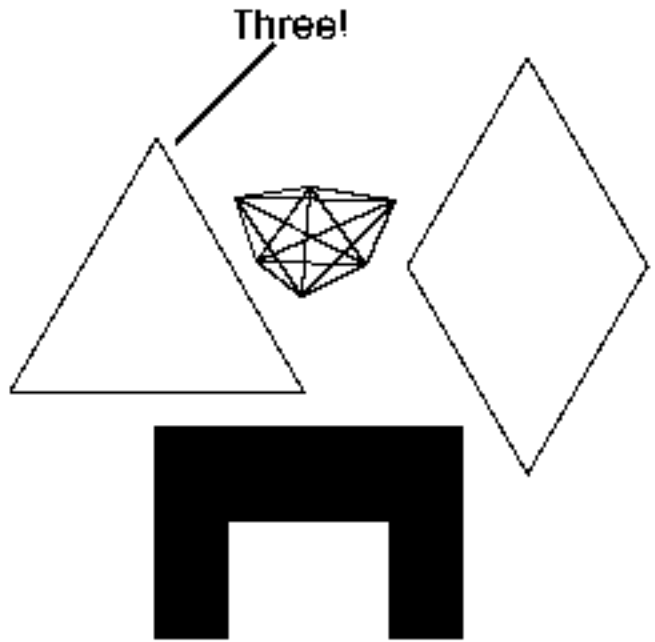
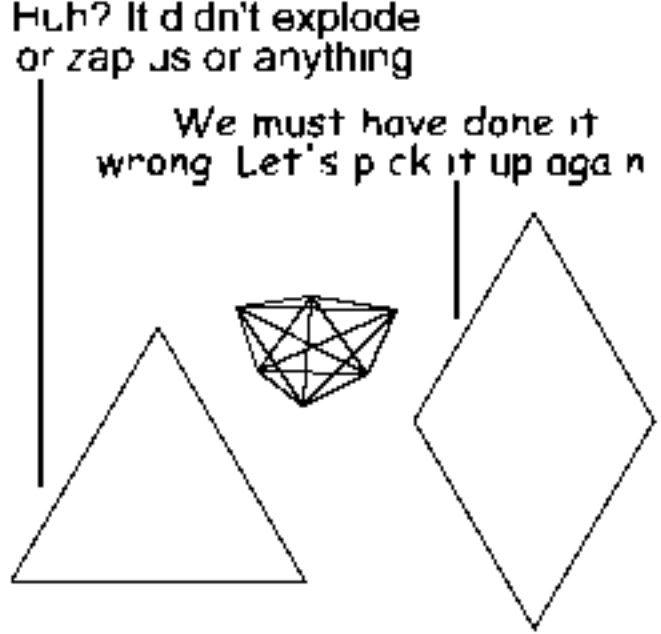


Triangle and Robert

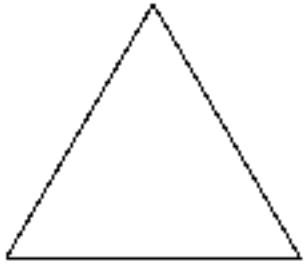
#150







Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
Triangle

Dimensions:
111 x 95 pixels

Font:
Ar al 12-point

Occupation:
Wacky scheme consultant

Favorite Book (Fiction):
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, by Joanne Greenberg

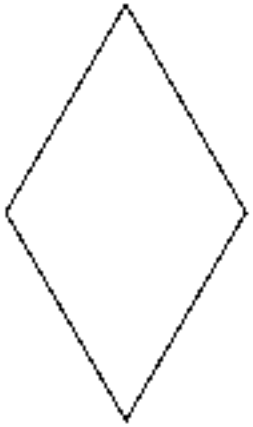
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
Being and Noth ngness by Jean-Paul Sartre

Favorite Movie:
Brazil

Personal Quote:
" was thinking we could just get regular non-zany jobs and start putting money in a savings account."

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Wear sunscreen

Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
Robert T W Rhombus

Dimensions:
91 x 157 pixels

Font:
Com c Sans MS 12 point

Occupation:
Wacky scheme consultant

Favorite Book (Fiction):
The Hitchh ker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams

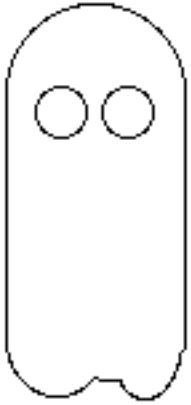
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
Madcap H j nks for Idiots from Utter Imbeciles Press

Favorite Movie:
The Adventures of Baron Munchausen

Personal Quote:
What's funnier, ghosts or pudding?"

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Wear clean underwear

Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
Orpuddex

Dimensions:
68 x 149 pixels

Font:
Tahoma 14-point

Occupation:
Unemp oyed (last job. Pudding-Watcher)

Favorite Book (Fiction):
Rendevous With Rama, by Arthur C. Clarke

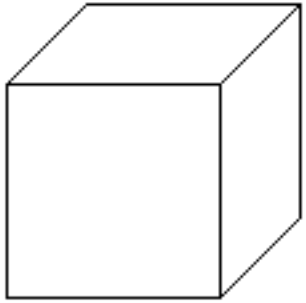
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
The Pudding Club Book 100 Luscious Recipes from the Pudding C ub

Favorite Movie:
Time Bandits

Personal Quote:
"Fear me FEAR ME! I am Orpuddex, guardian of the Pudding Factory of the Dead! FEAR ME "

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Wear pudding.

Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
Cube

Dimensions:
111 x 111 pixels

Font:
Matandra GD 12-point Demi Bold

Occupation:
Ice-cream man. That's all. Just an ice-cream man.

Favorite Book (Fiction):
The Stainless Steel Rat, by Harry Harrison

Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
The Joy of Ice Cream, by Matthew Klein

Favorite Movie:
The Fisher King

Personal Quote:
I never say anything interesting.
I'm an ice-cream man. That's it.

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
No comment.

Triangle and Robert Character Profile

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Name:
The Cornersheep

Dimensions:
152 x 106 pixels

Font:
Eurostile 14-point Bold Italic

Occupation:
Supervillain

Favorite Book (Fiction):
The Adolescence of P-1, by Thomas J. Ryan

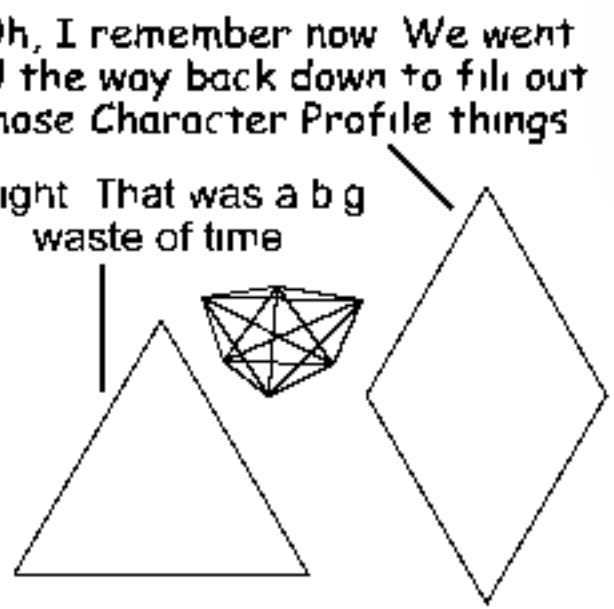
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
All Creatures Great and Small, by James Herriot

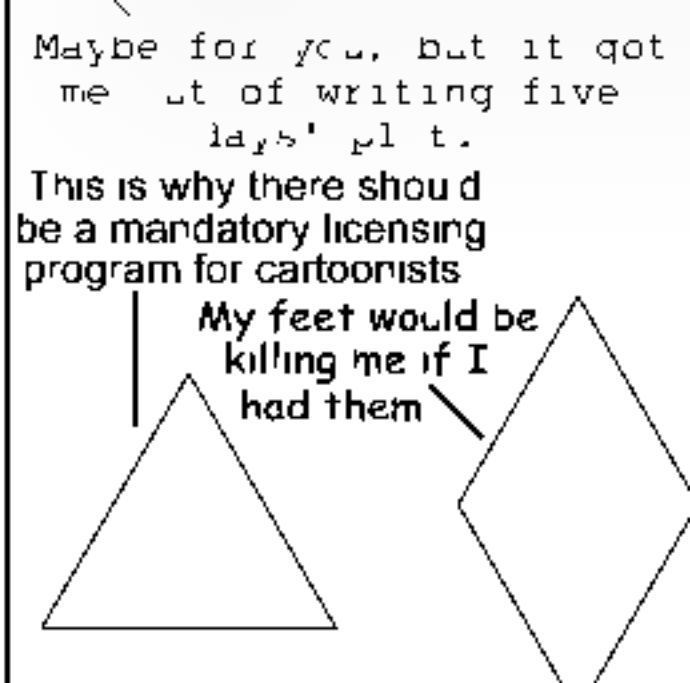
Favorite Movie:
12 Monkeys

Personal Quote:
"Oh yeah, you're ALL gonna taste it soon!"

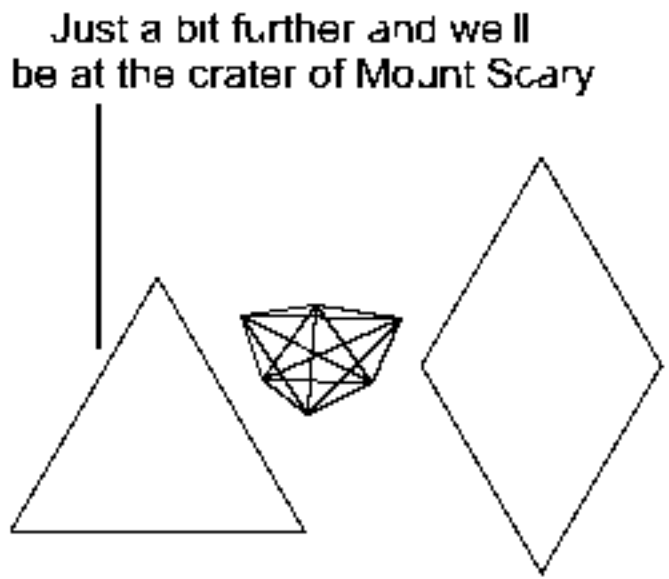
If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Wear synthetic fleece.

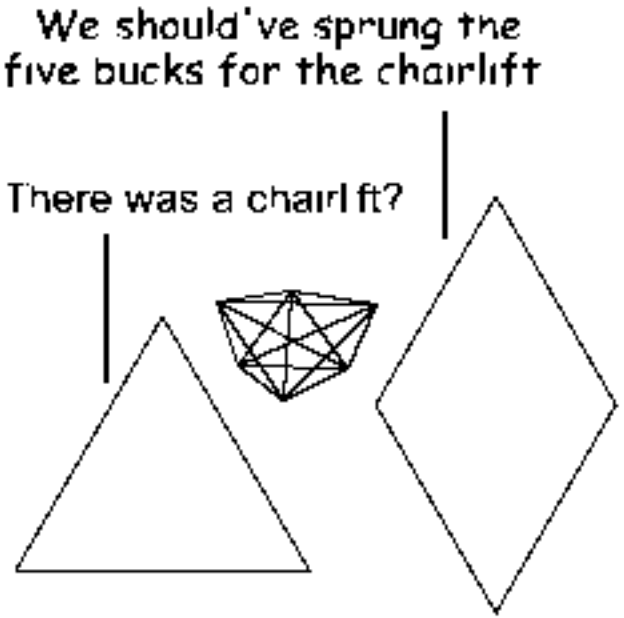
Triangle and Robert

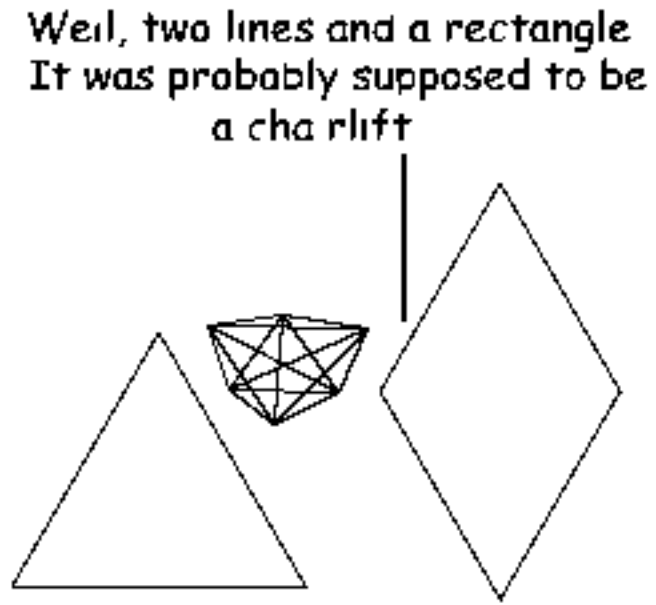




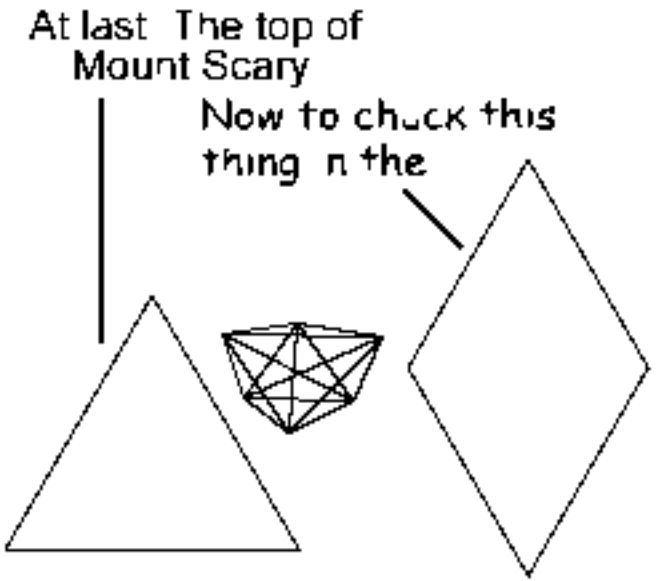
Triangle and Robert

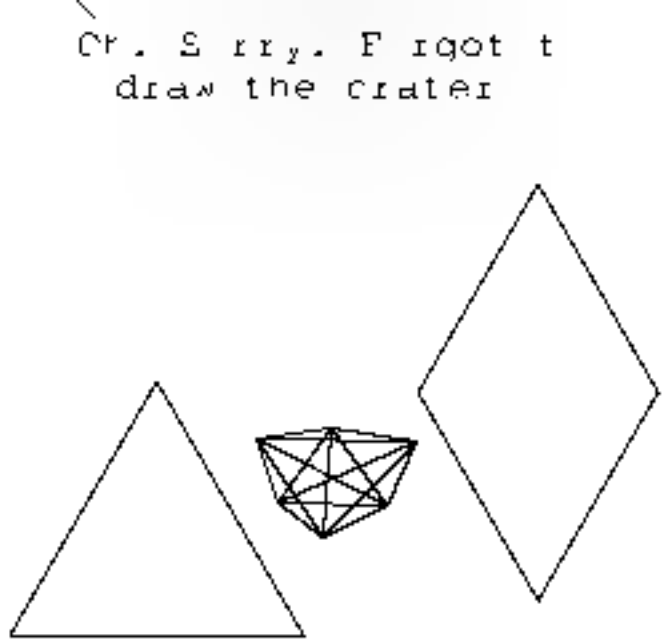


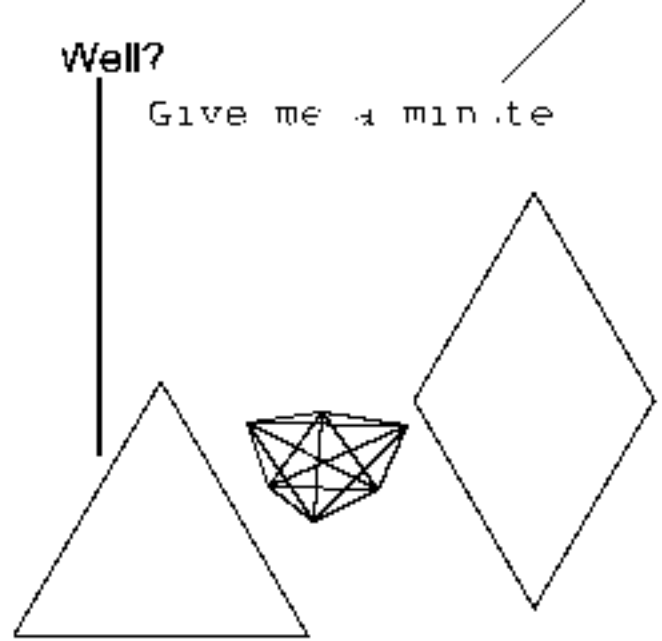




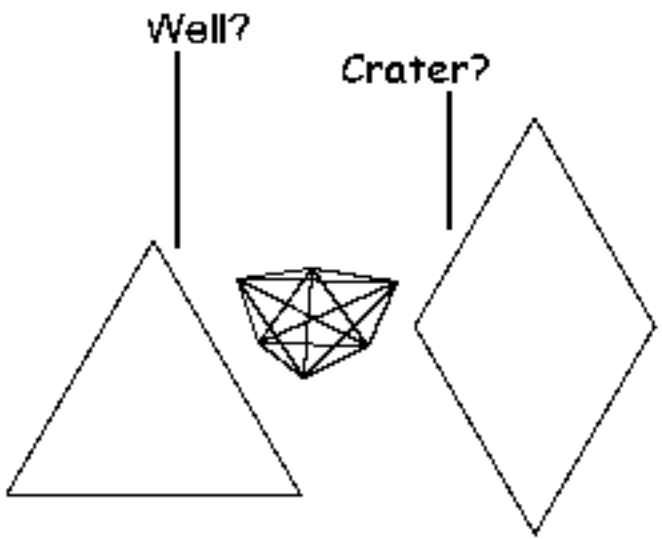
Triangle and Robert

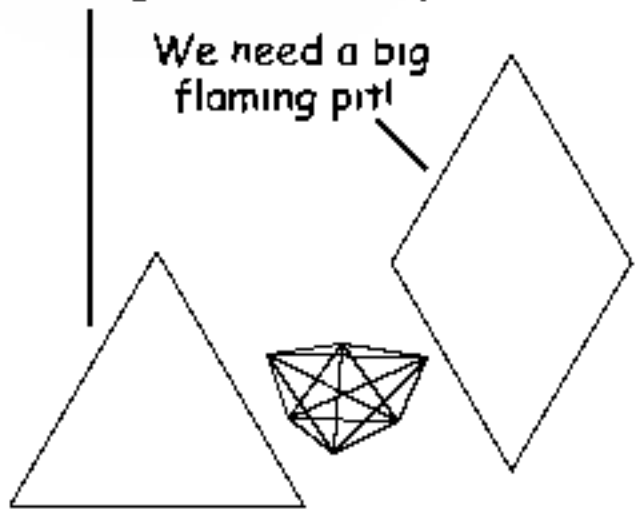


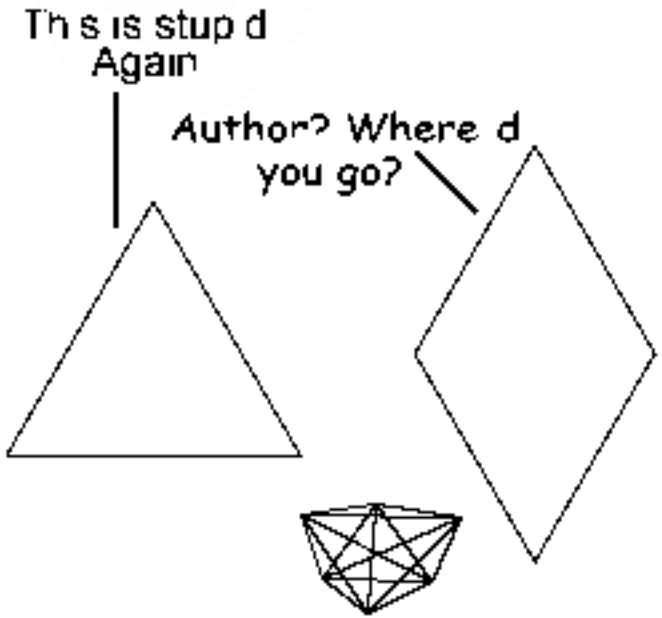




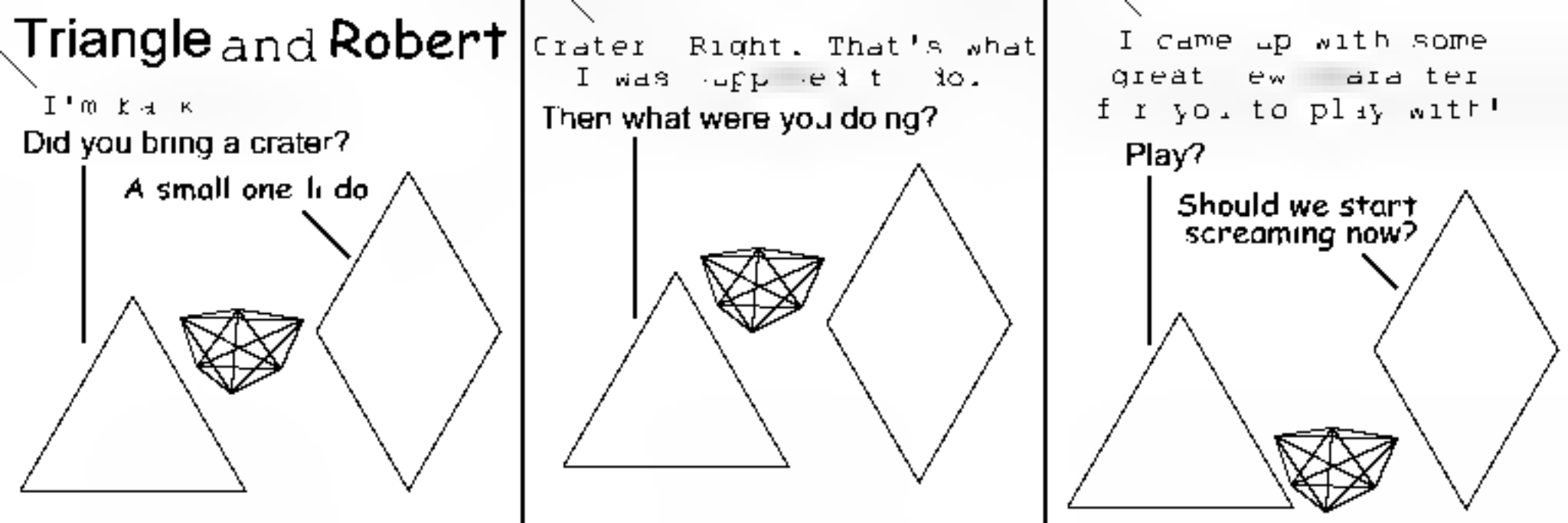
Triangle and Robert



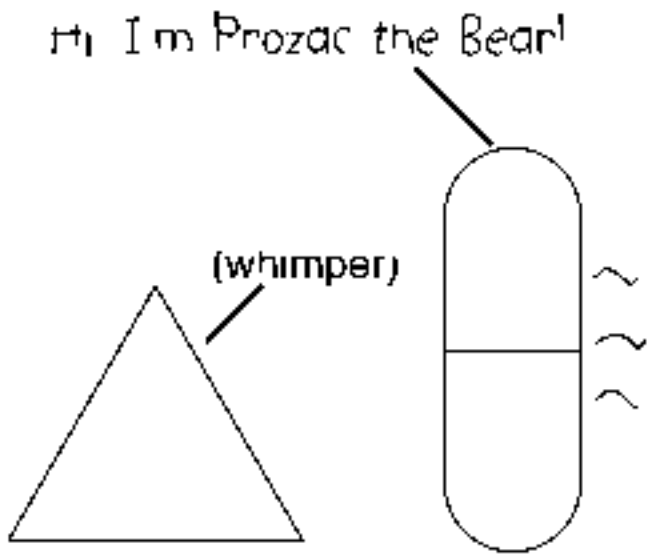


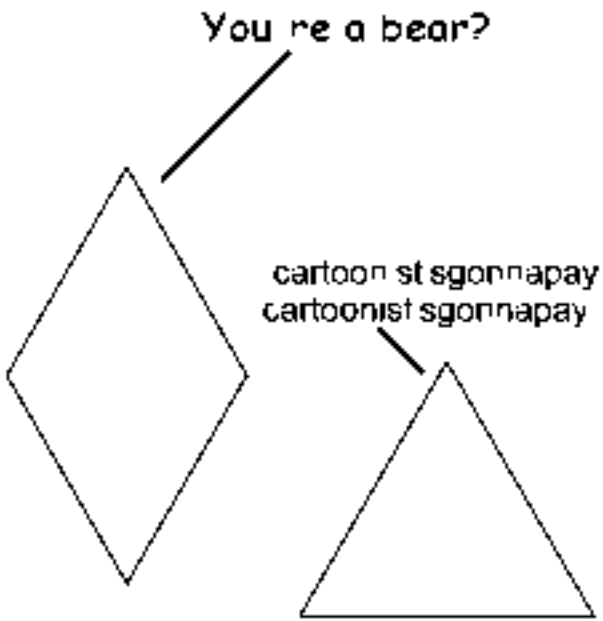


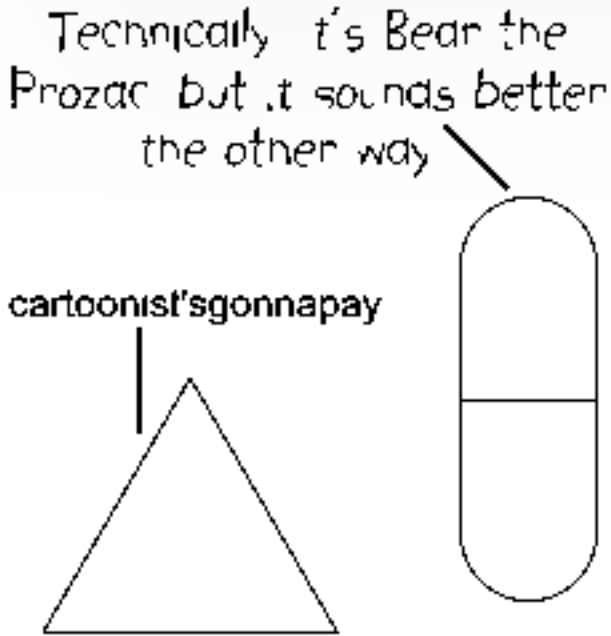
Triangle and Robert



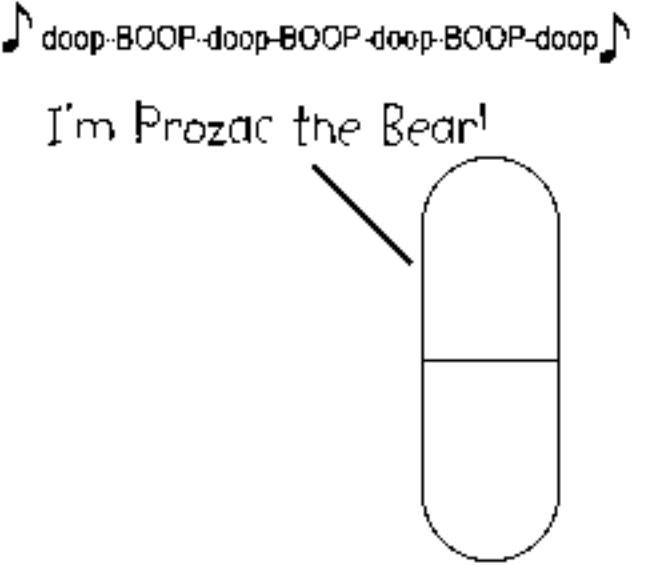
Triangle and Robert

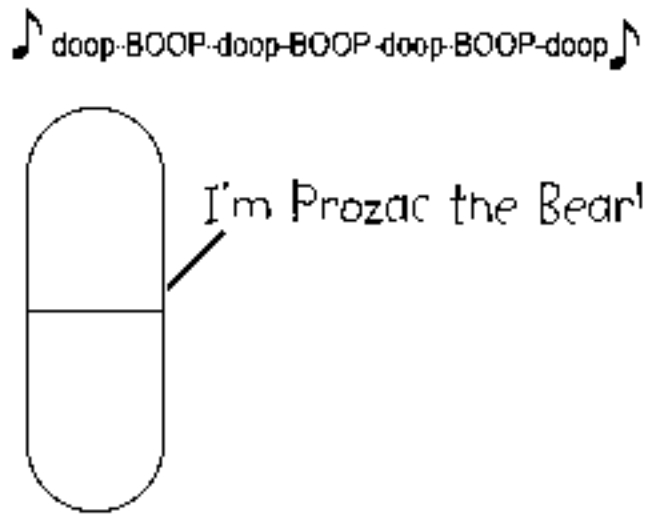




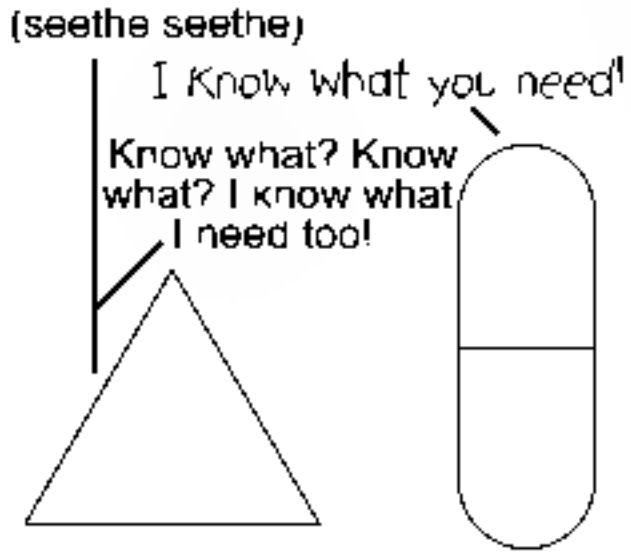


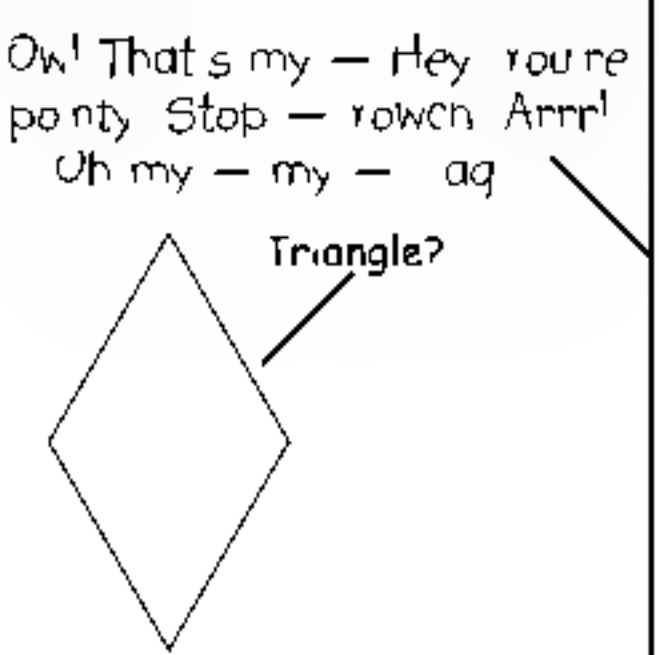
Triangle and Robert

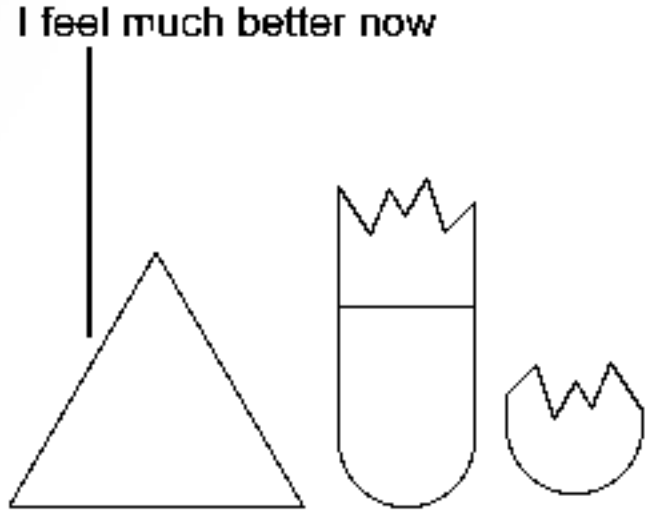




Triangle and Robert



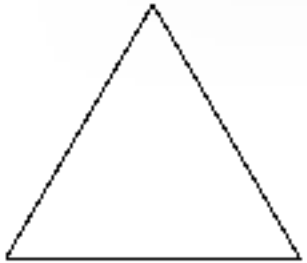


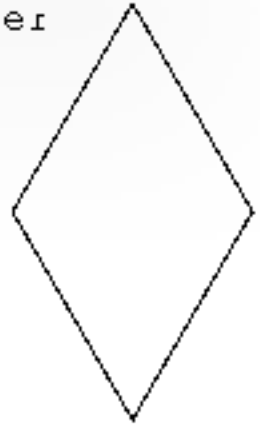


Triangle and Robert

Okay, s Prozac the Bear wasn't what I expe ted. Let's introduce the next new haracter

MR. SOAP

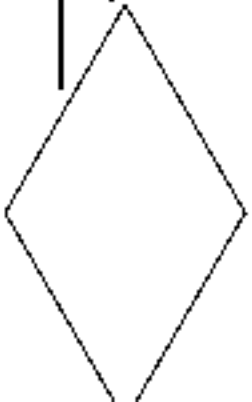




A talk ng bar of soap?

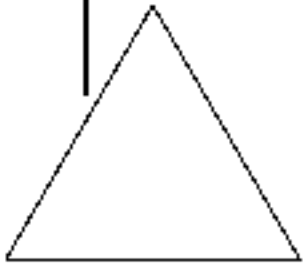
Talk rg Er. r

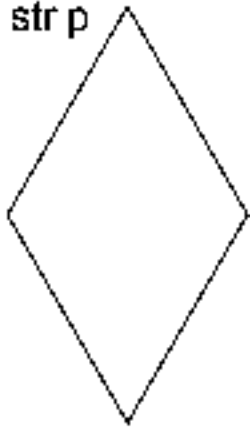
Not talking? A mime made of soap?



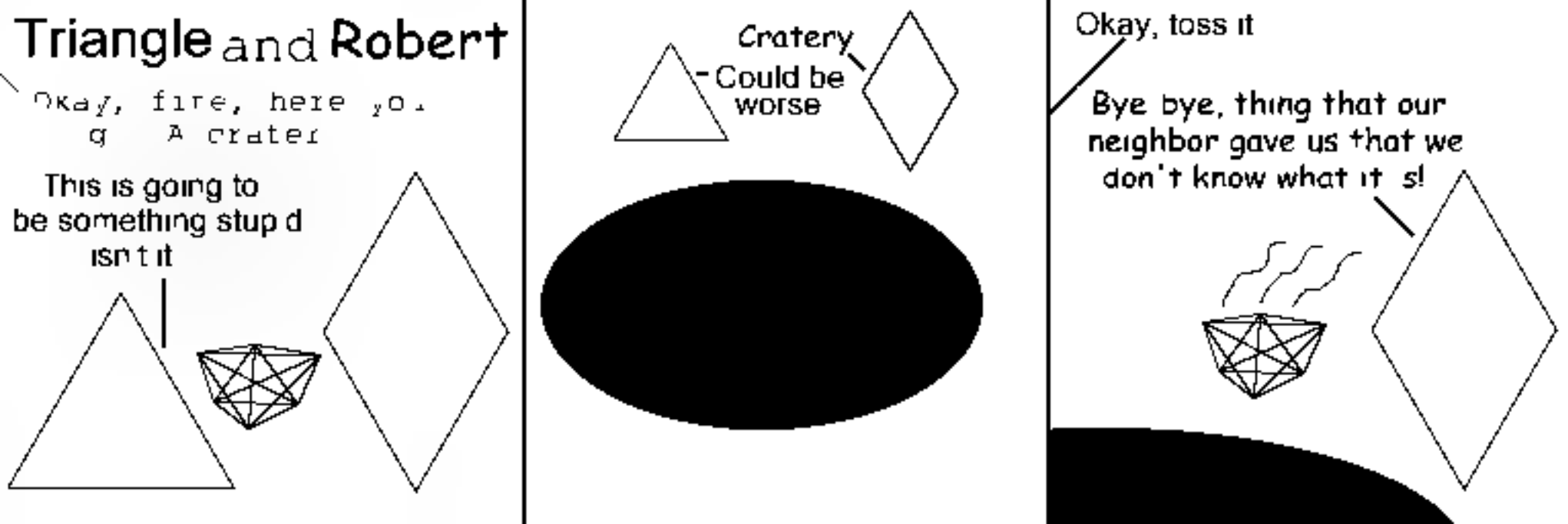
Um, no . just a bar of s ap Here's an idea, we'll skip that one for now

Maybe the bar of soap should draw the comic str p

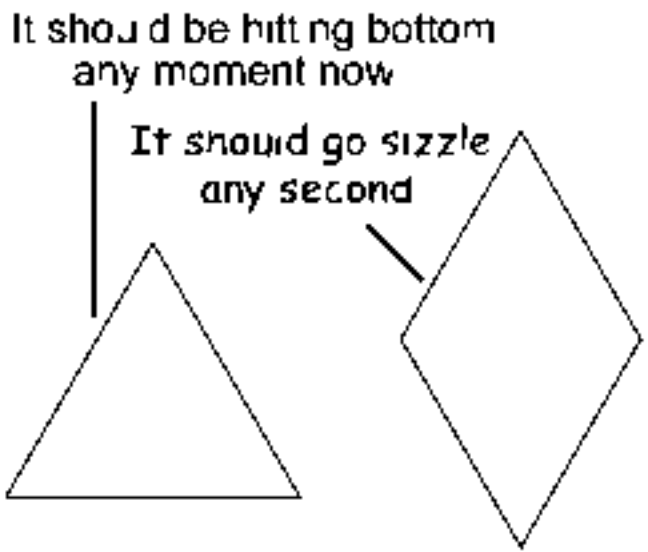




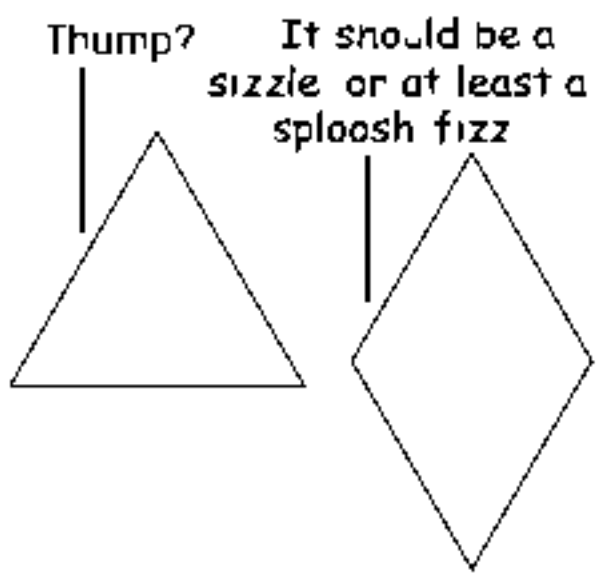
Triangle and Robert

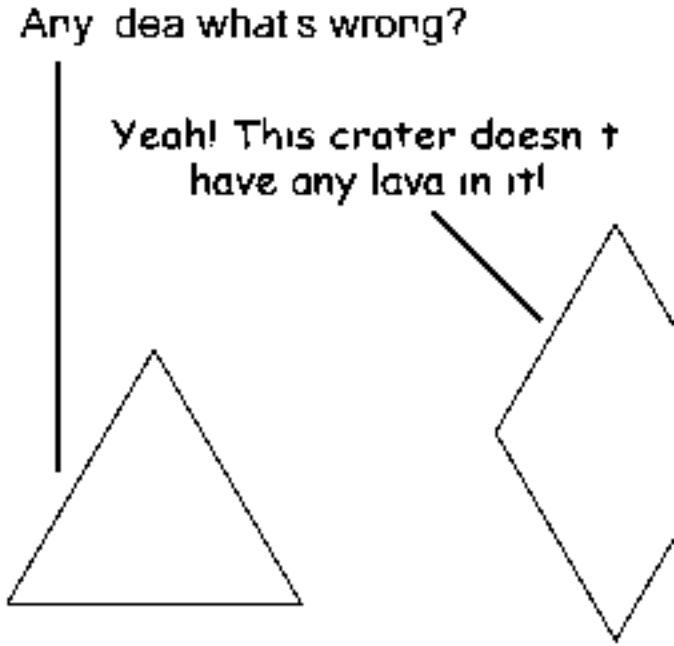


Triangle and Robert

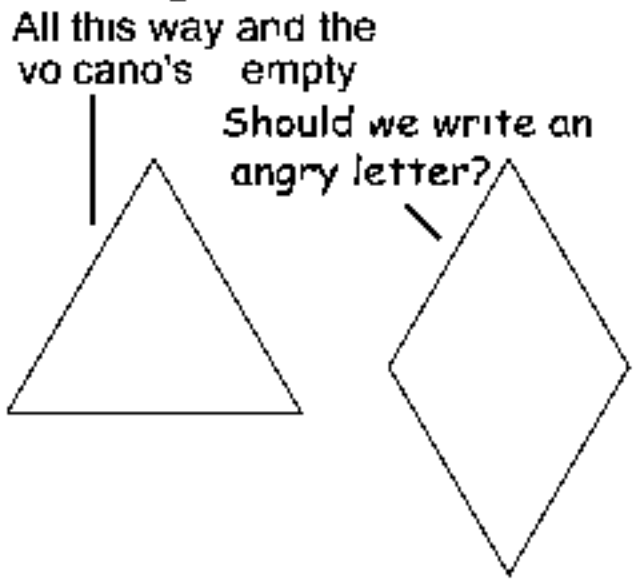


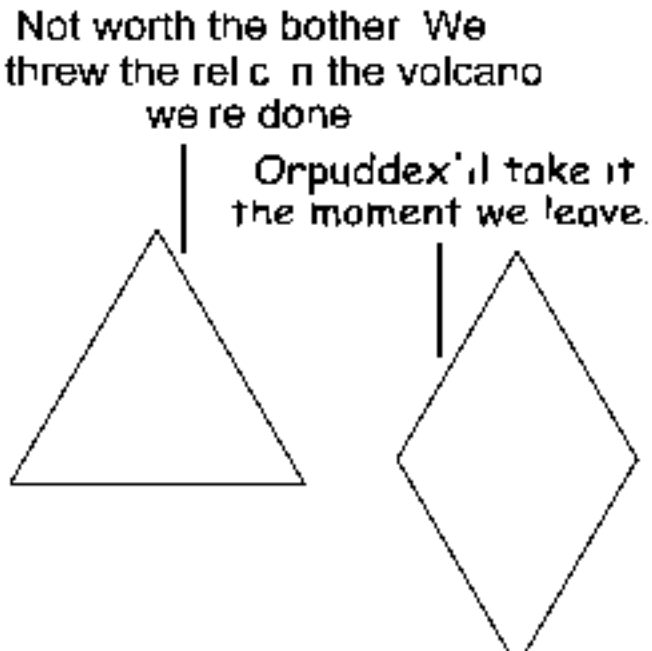
THUMP

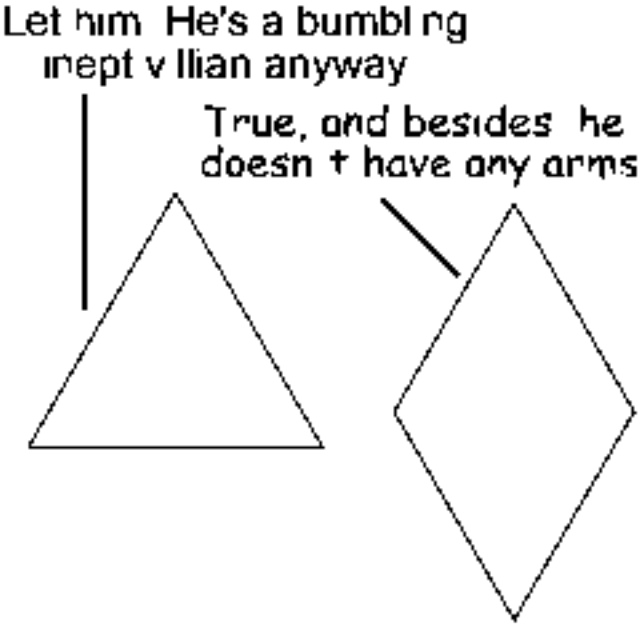




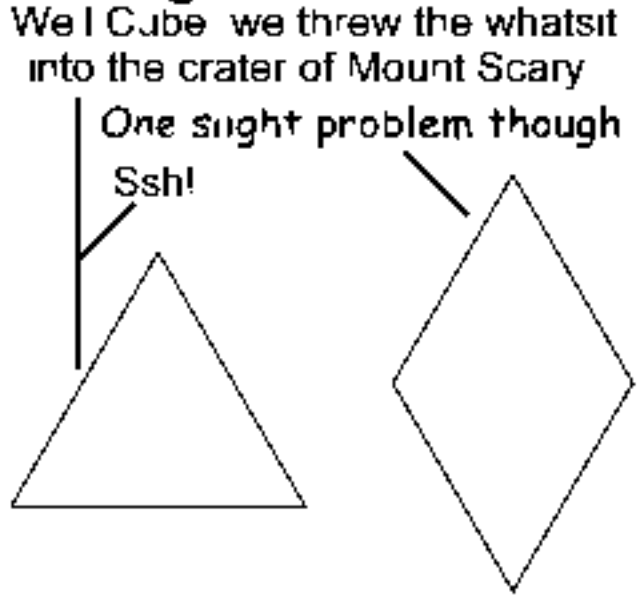
Triangle and Robert

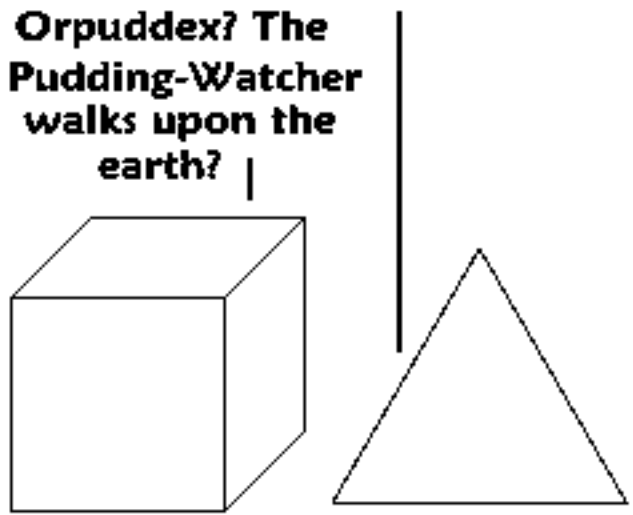


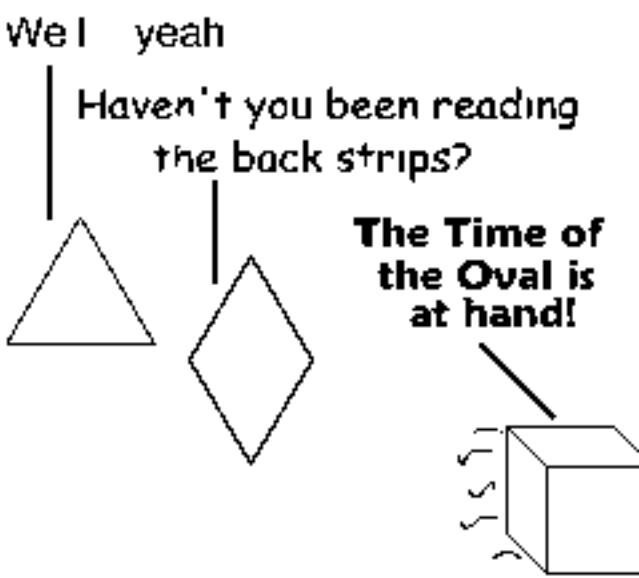




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

What did Cube mean by the Time of the Oval?

No idea. If it's important we'll learn more about it later.

You know, that last job wasn't really consulting work. We're supposed to be wacky scheme consultants, but

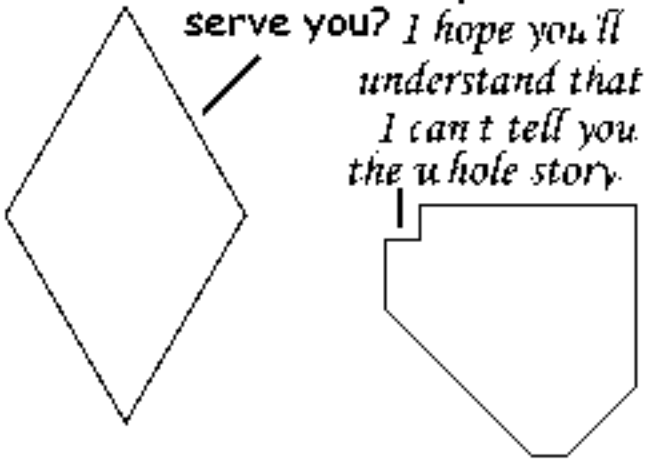
Yeah! And it wasn't wacky either!

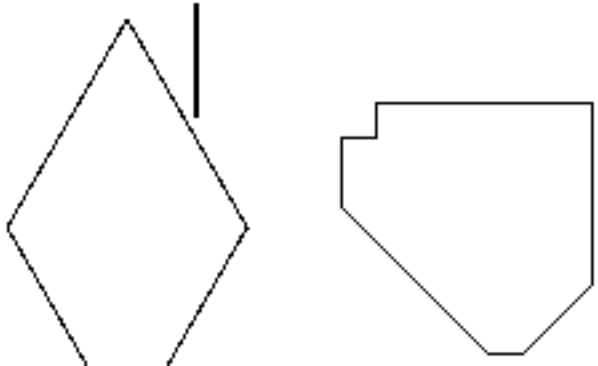
For that matter it barely qualified as a scheme.

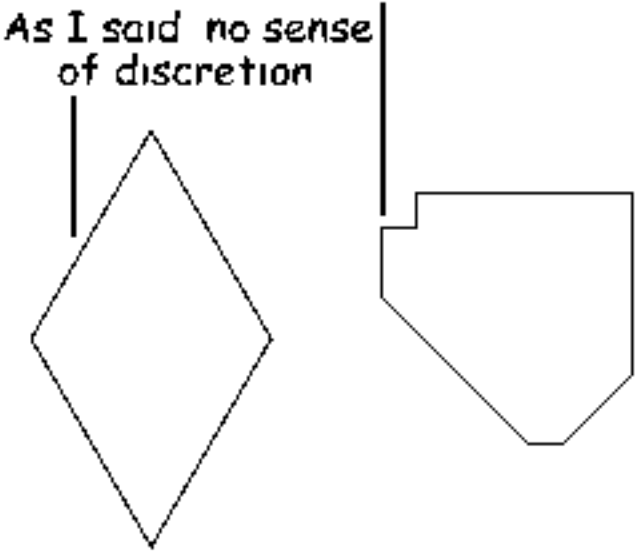
Oh, yeah, the pay was great.

Paid well though.

Triangle and Robert

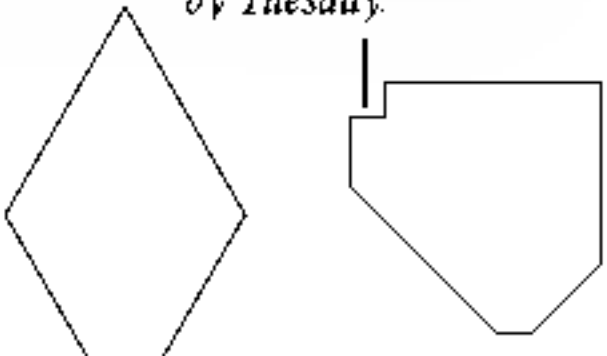






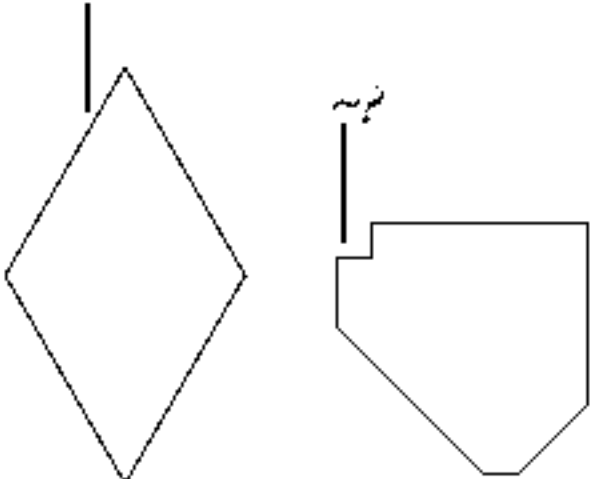
Triangle and Robert

To cut a long story so short it'll fit in one panel and not make any sense whatsoever, I need two-thirds of the Senate to autograph my fish by Tuesday.

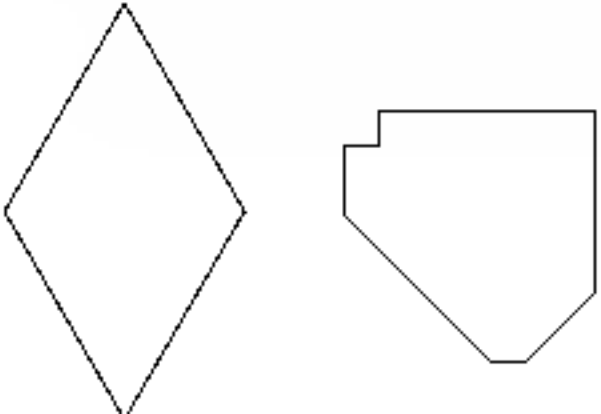


Now that's wacky!

We'll do it~



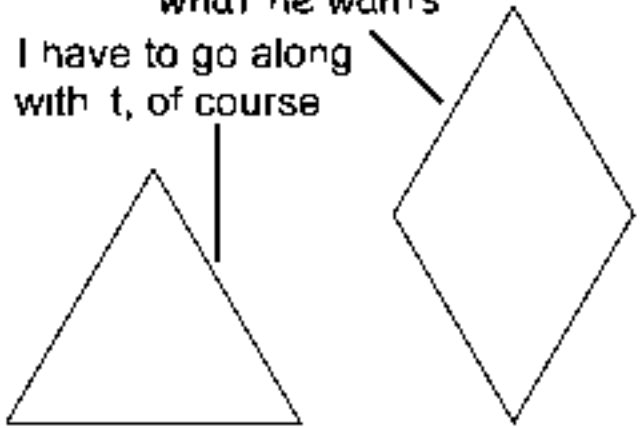
Sir, I was so excited about you having a new case I mistyped. That was supposed to be an exclamation point.



Triangle and Robert

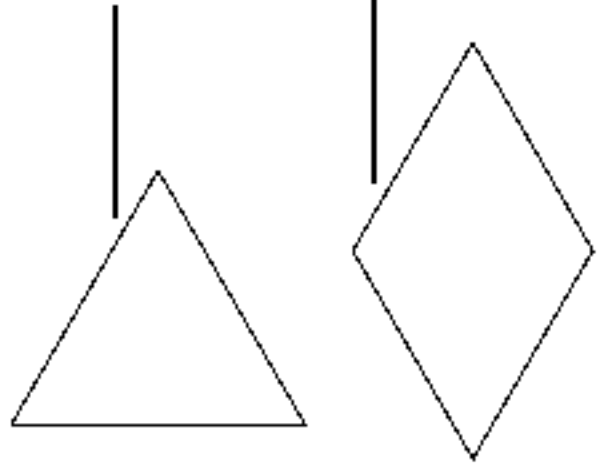
Well, Triangle I've come up with a six step plan to give this client what he wants

I have to go along with it, of course



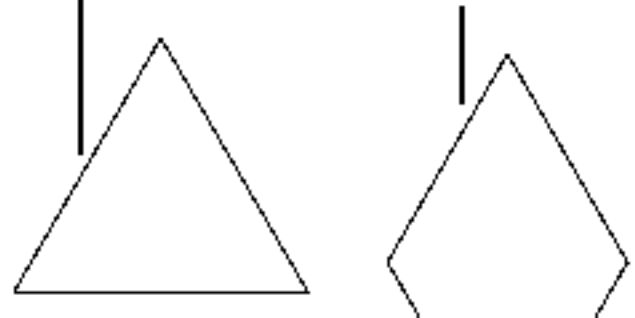
Step one Convince the fish it's a ballet instructor Step two

HOLD IT!

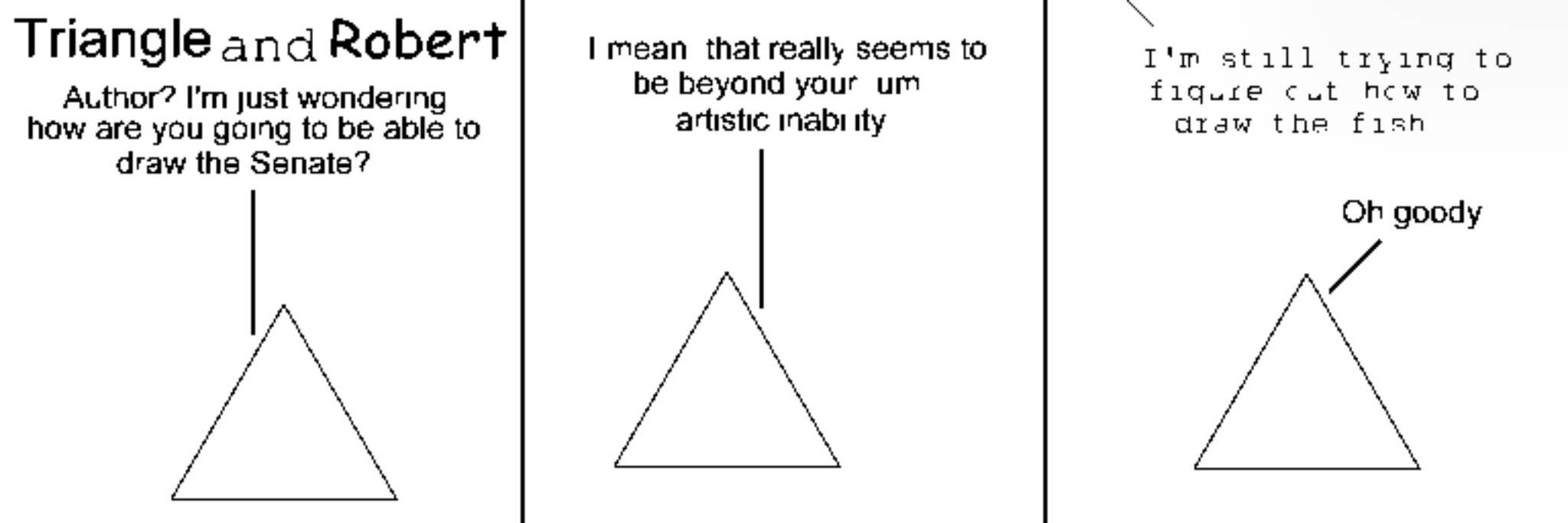


Why don't you tell me the plan step by step as we go That way the shock will be spread out and I'll be less likely to spontaneously combust

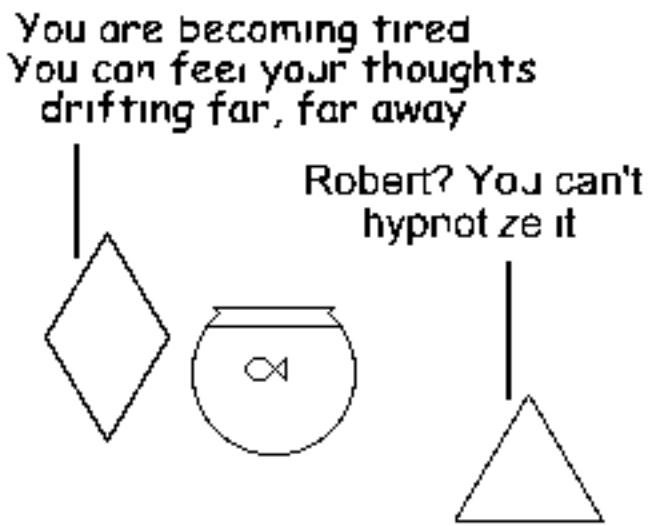
Actually, you spontaneously combusting WAS step two, but I can change that

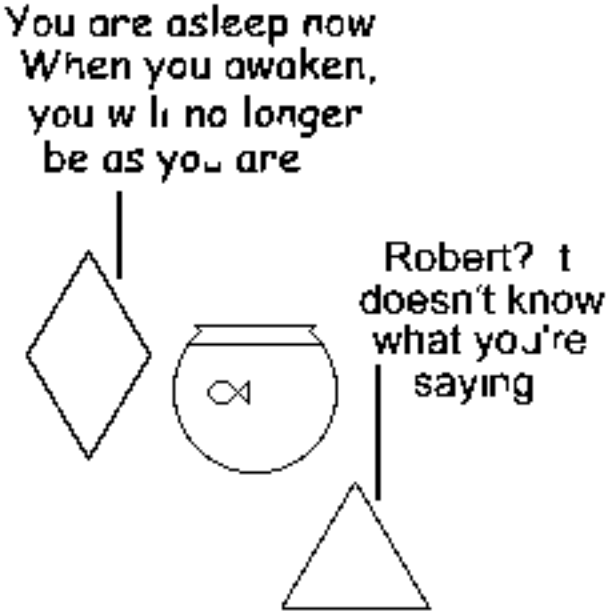


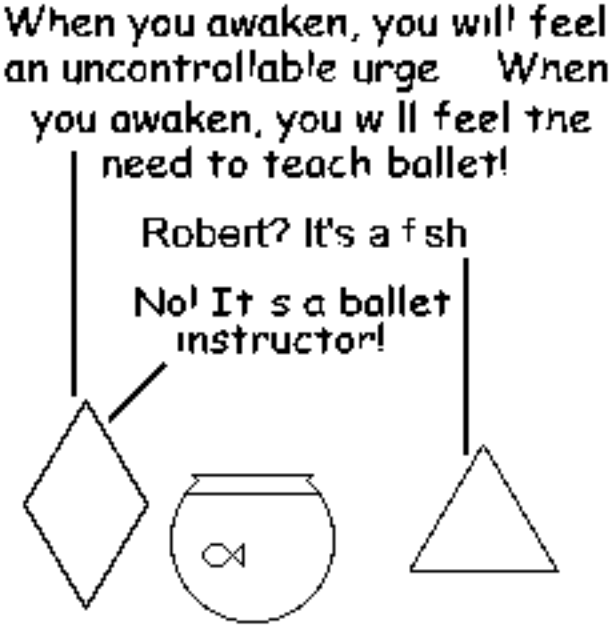
Triangle and Robert



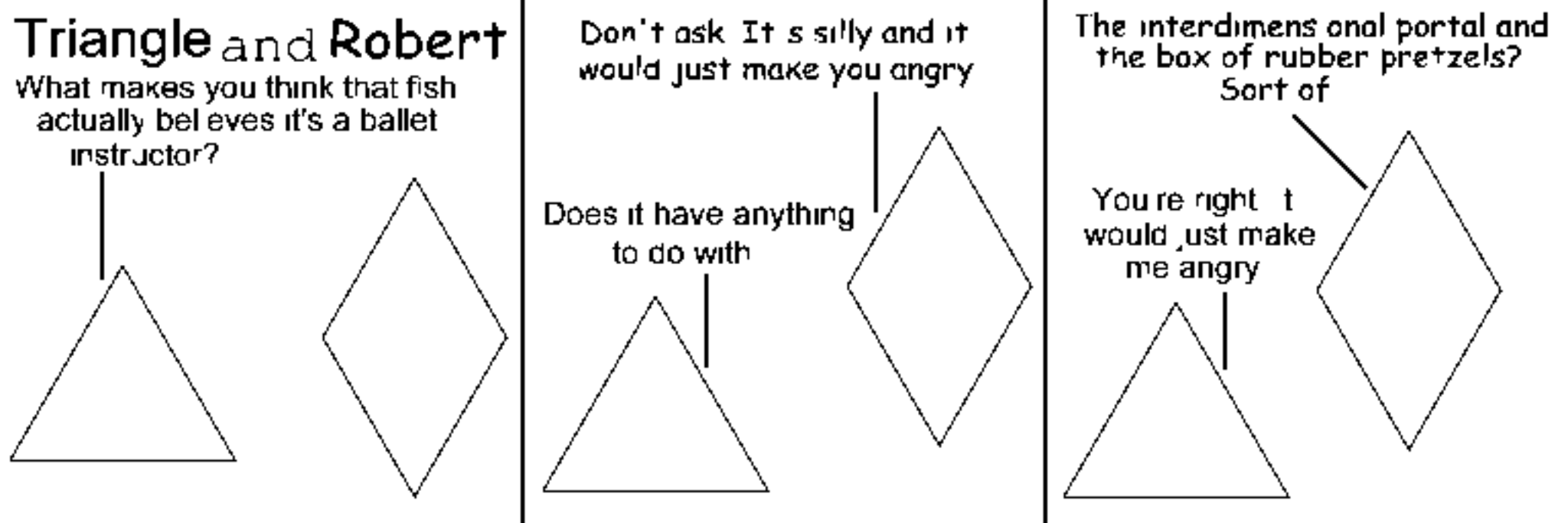
Triangle and Robert



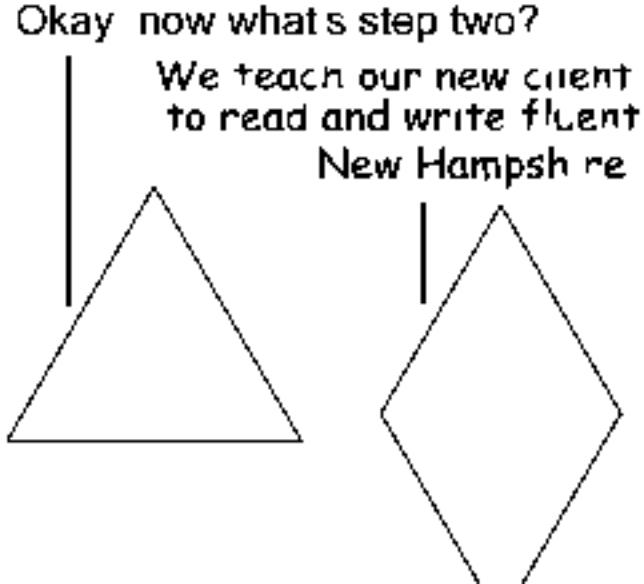


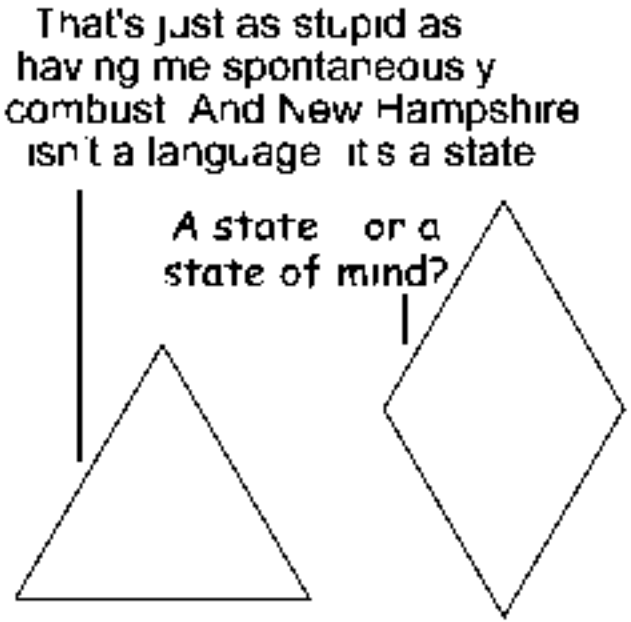


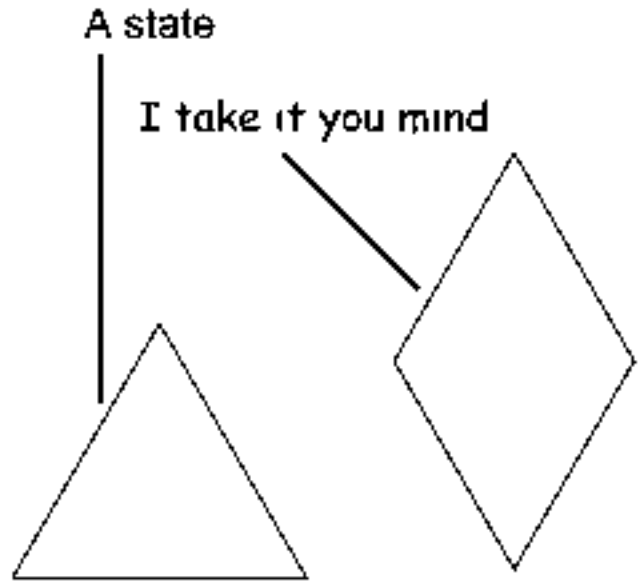
Triangle and Robert



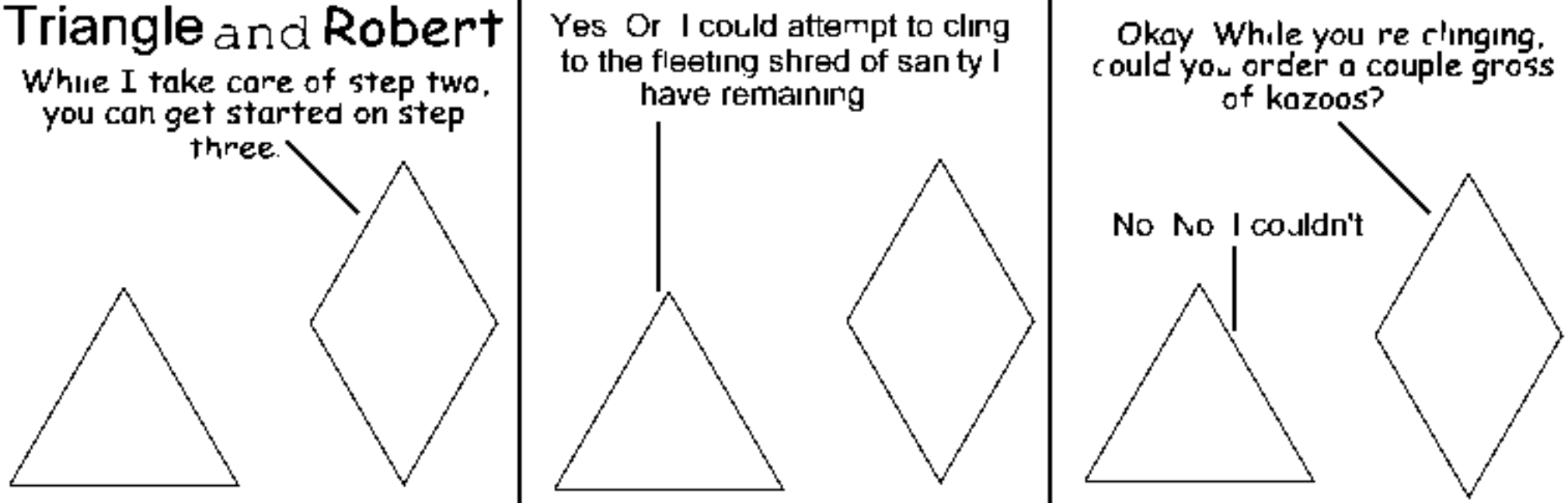
Triangle and Robert



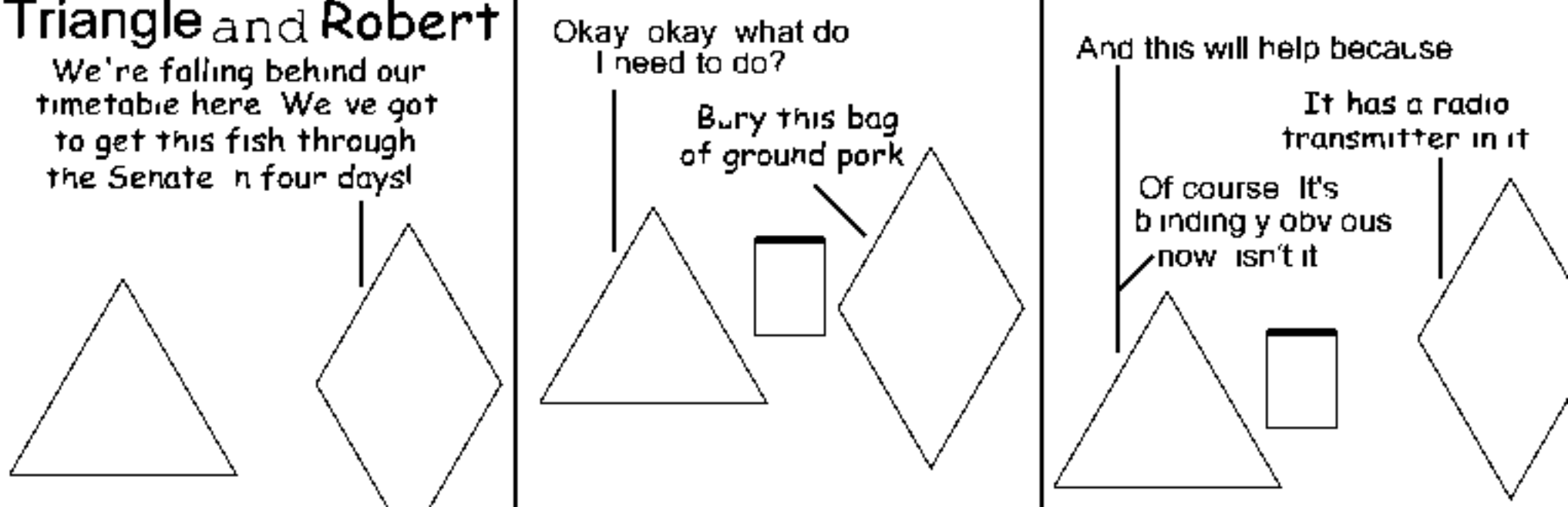




Triangle and Robert

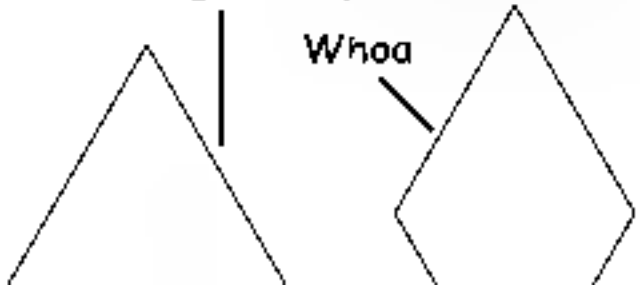


Triangle and Robert

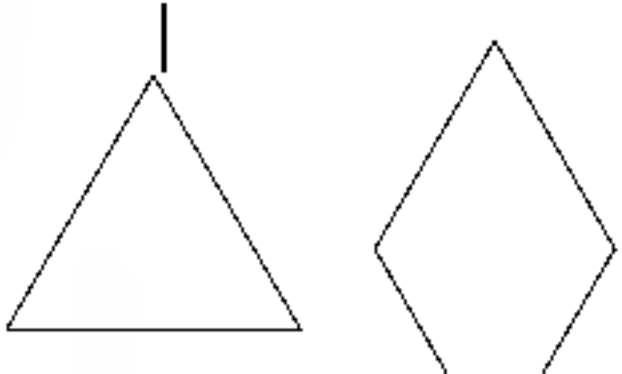


Triangle and Robert

No 'm not ordering a couple gross of kazoos 'm not burying a bugged bag of ground pork 'm not going to dress as a giant strawberry and this idea with the dry ice sculpture of Richard Vernon goes beyond moronic



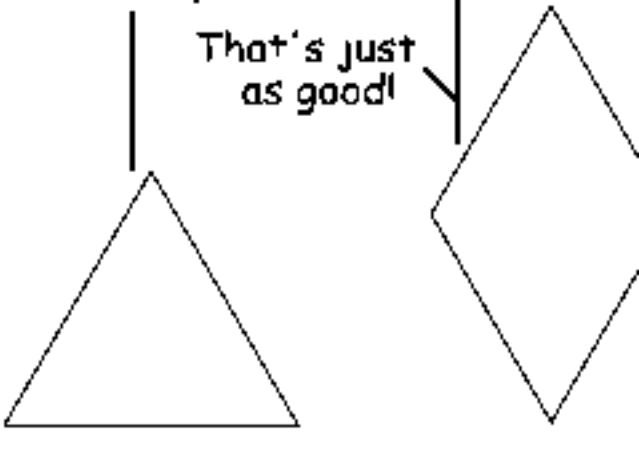
This so-called "plan" of yours is a concatenation of random allegedly "wacky" steps with little humor value no plot value, and a vast but unfortunately negative degree of utility



But but it's wacky!

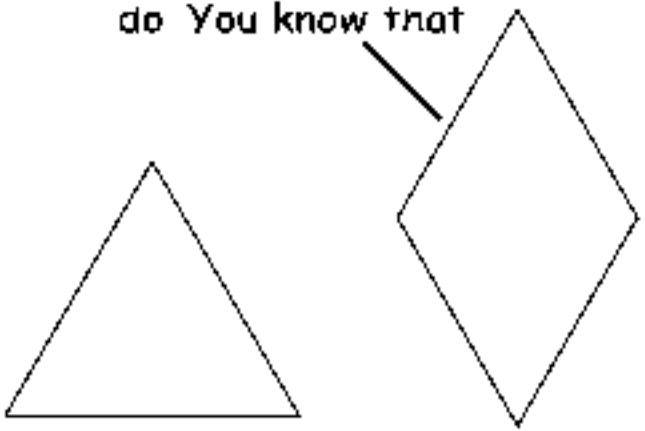
No It's absurd and pointless

That's just as good!



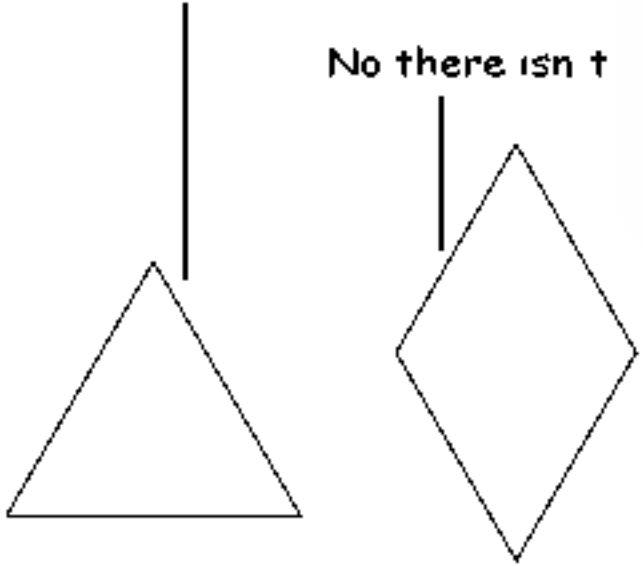
Triangle and Robert

We agreed to go into this business together. This is what wacky scheme consultants do. You know that.



There's a difference between wacky and absurd.

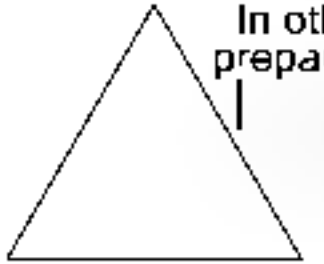
No there isn't.



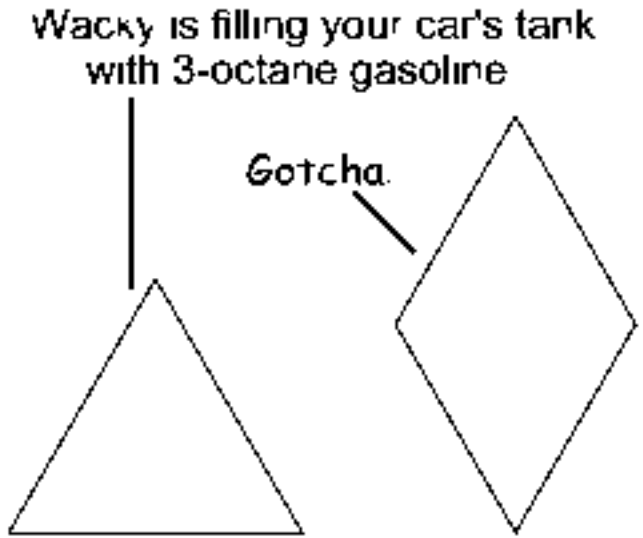
But Robert was wrong. There is indeed a difference between wacky and absurd, and we'll be exploring that difference in a new series starting next strip.

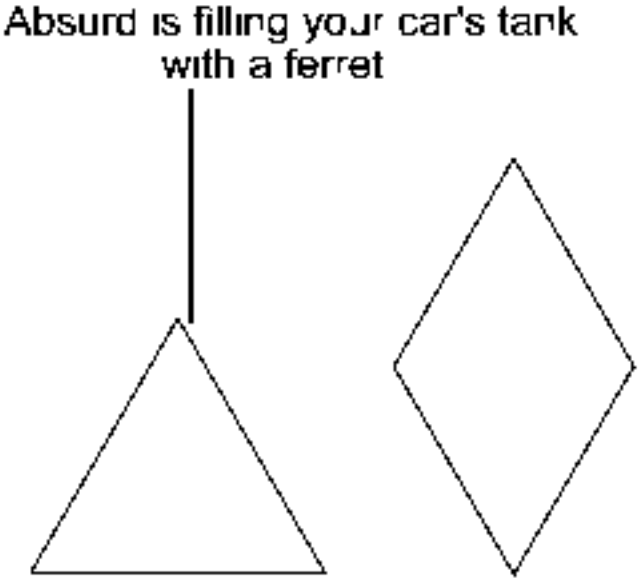
In other words, prepare for padding.

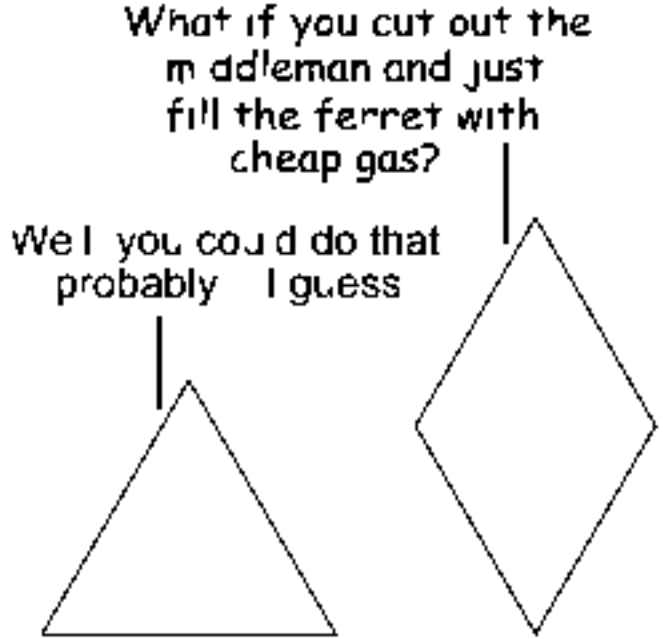
You know me so well.



Triangle and Robert







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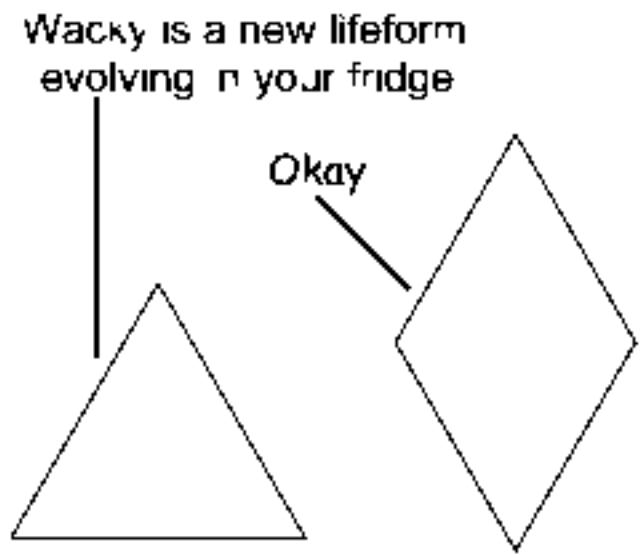

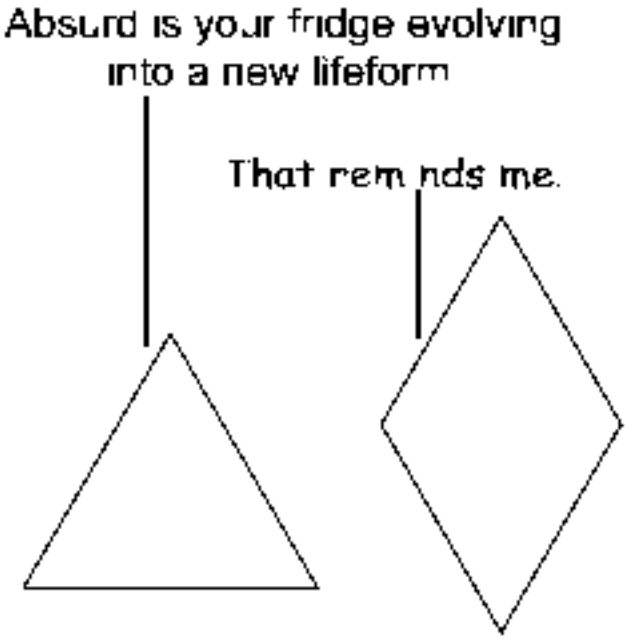

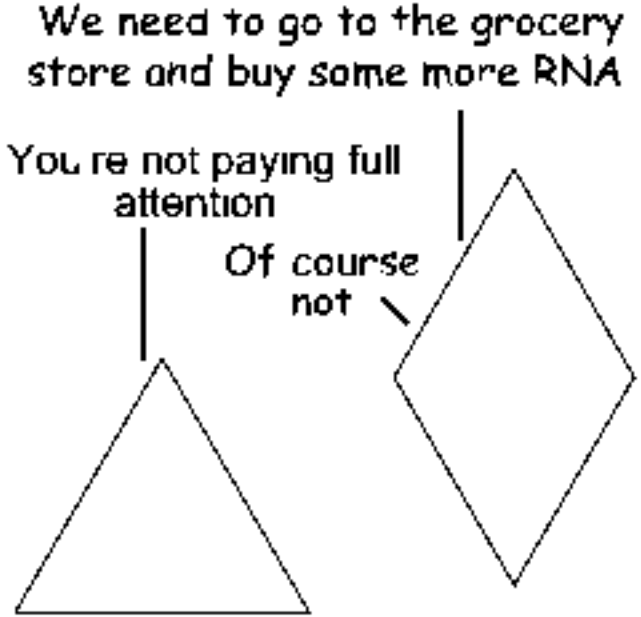

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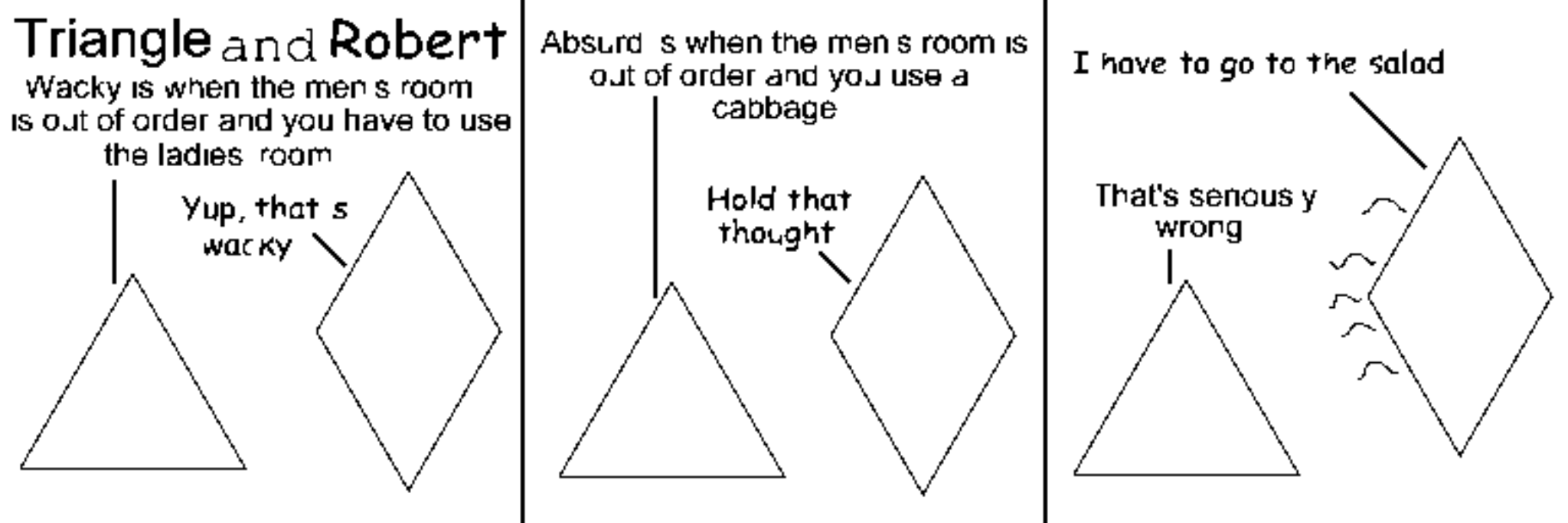

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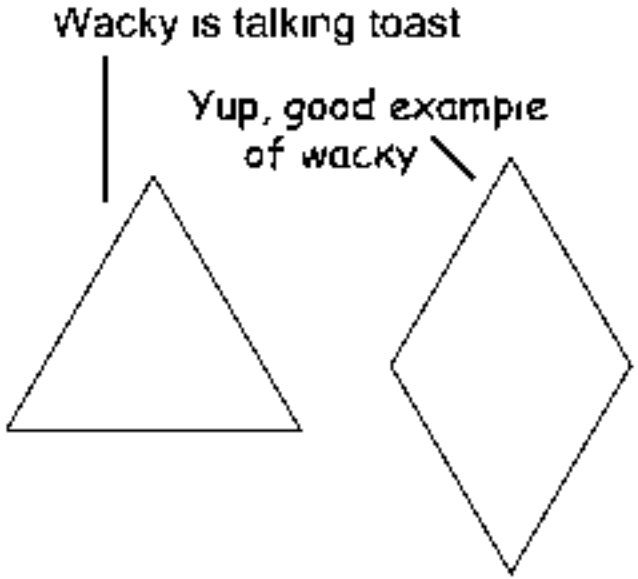

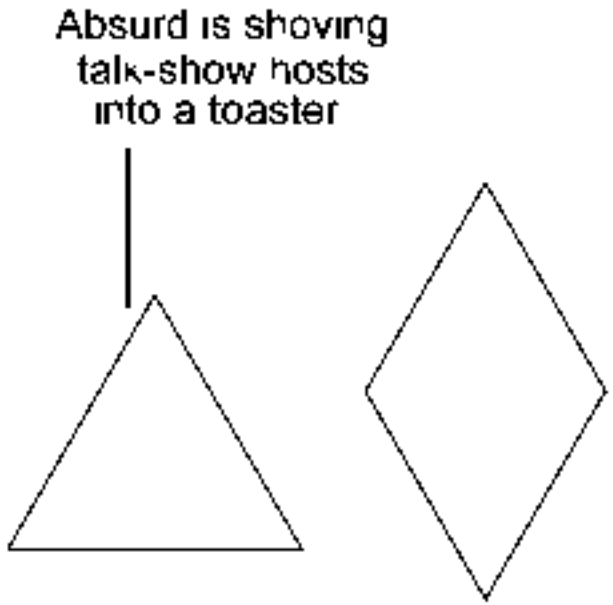

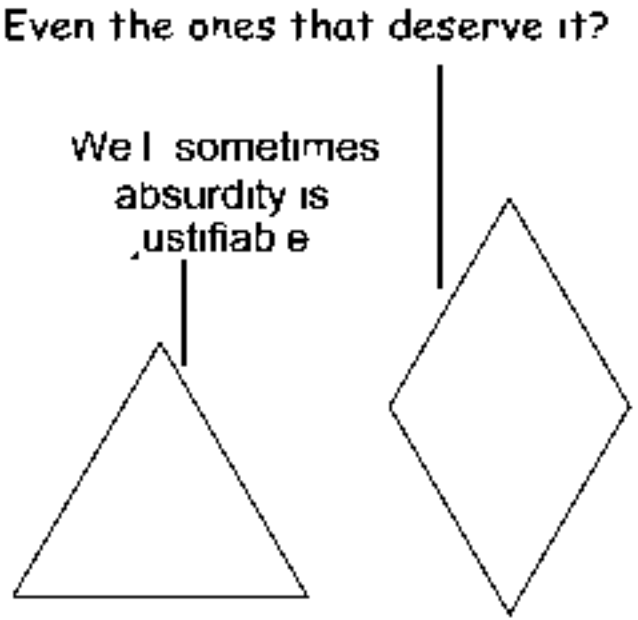

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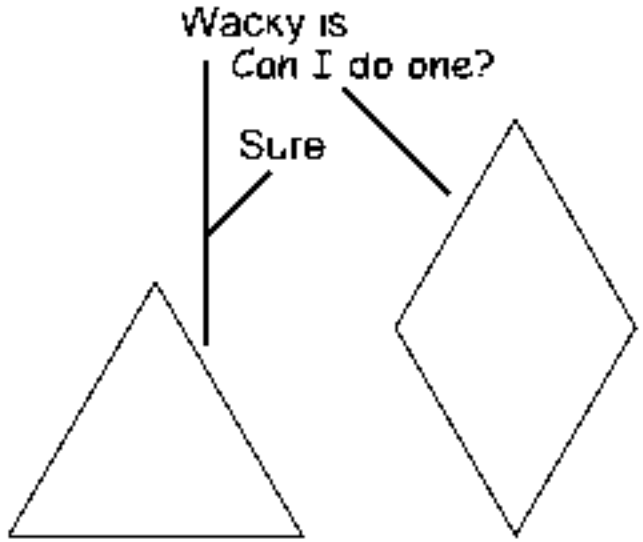

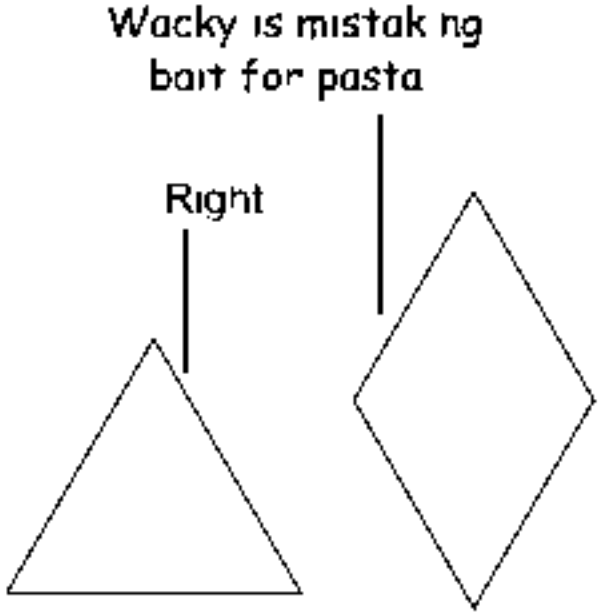

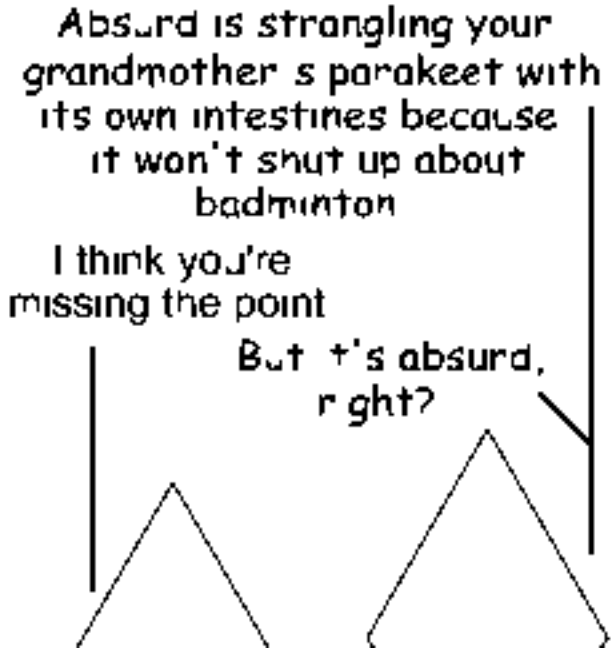

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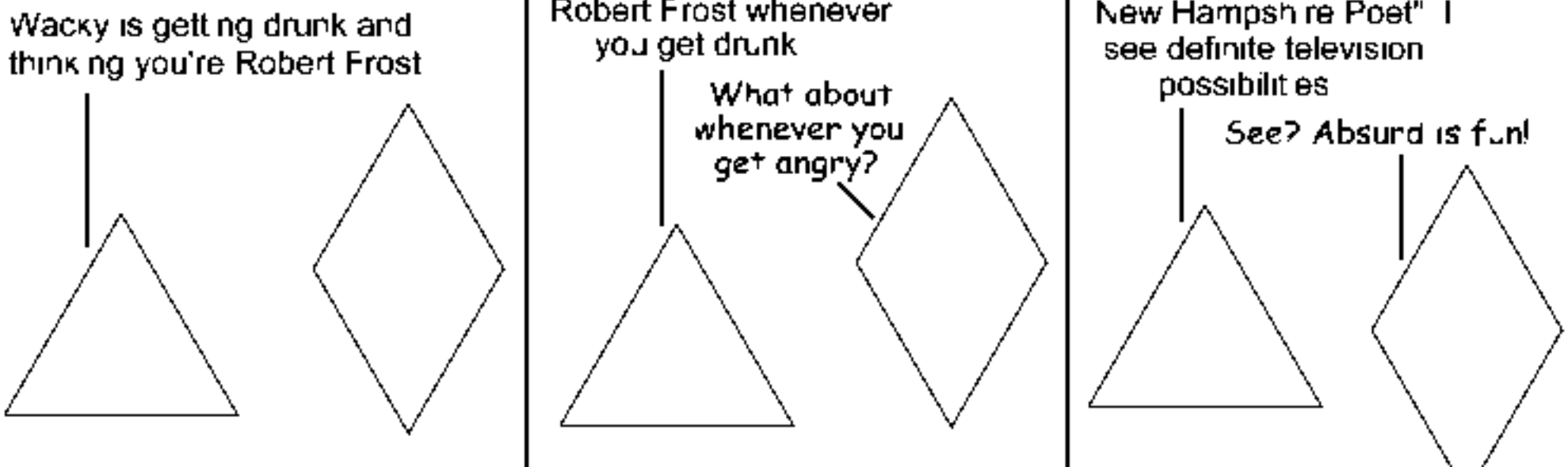

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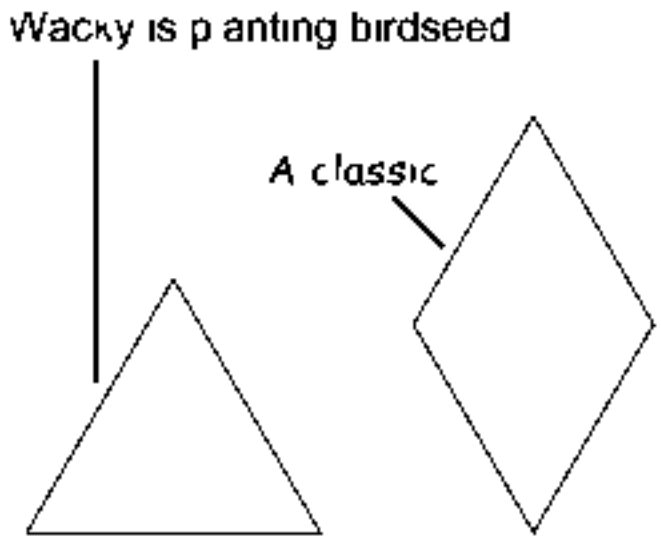

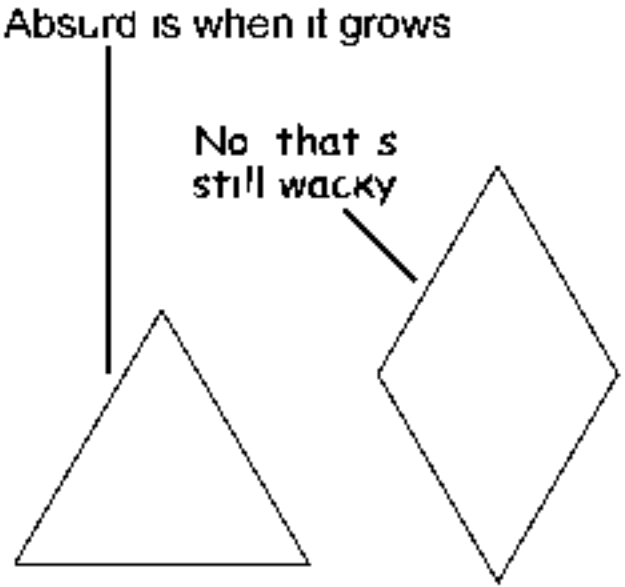

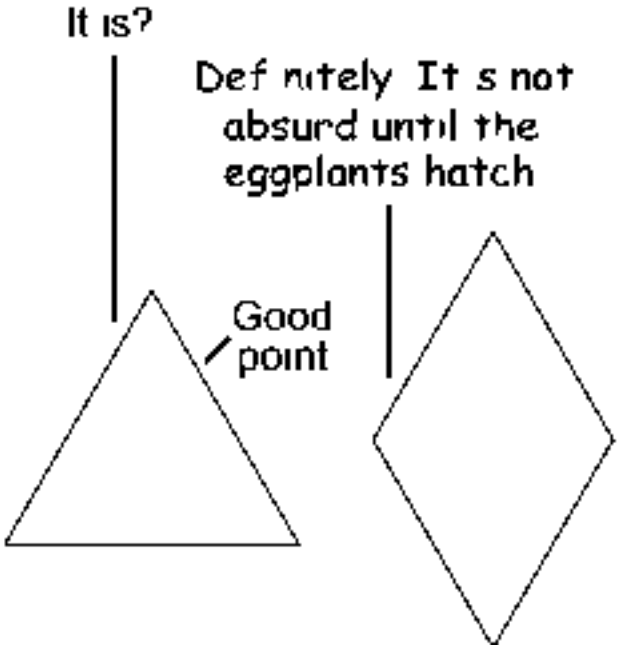

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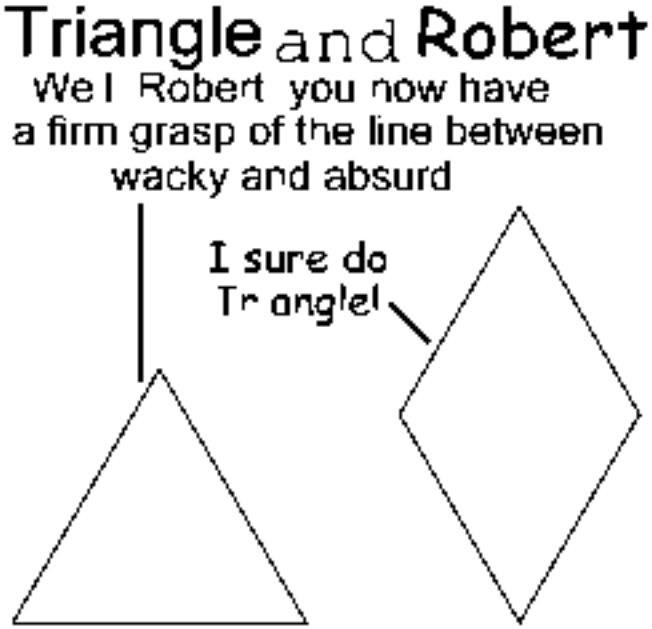

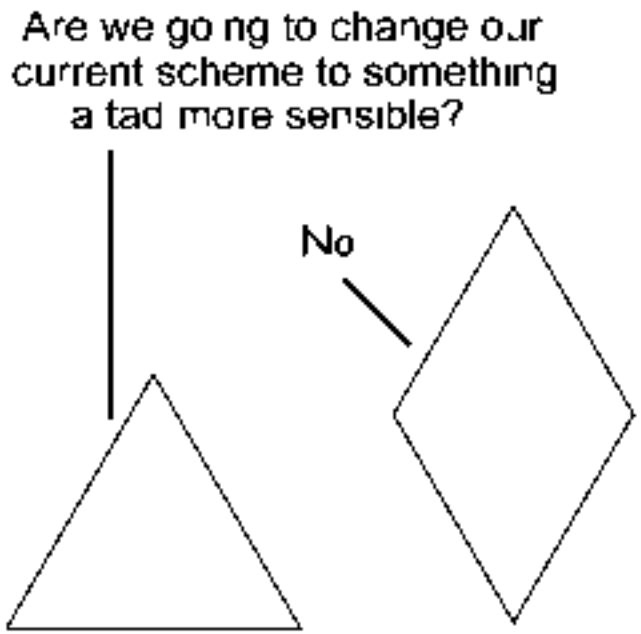

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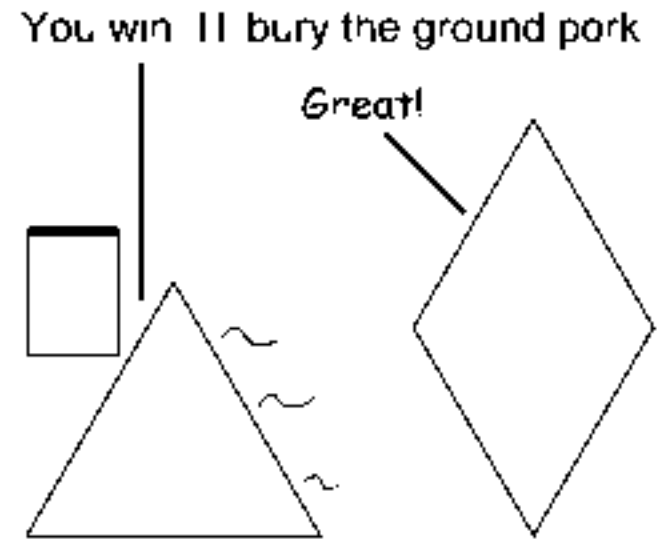

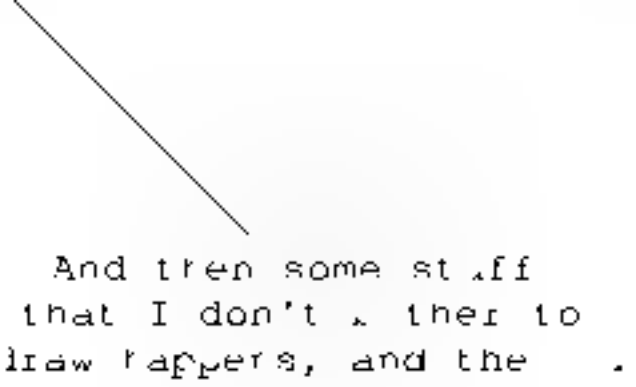

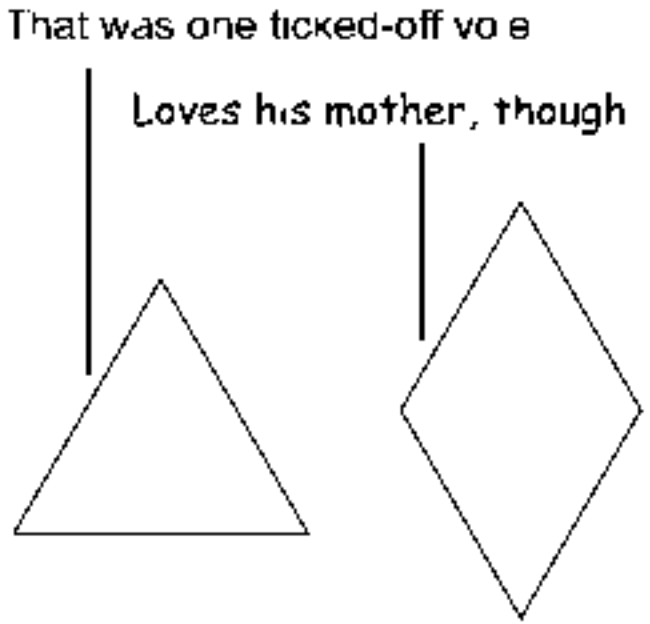

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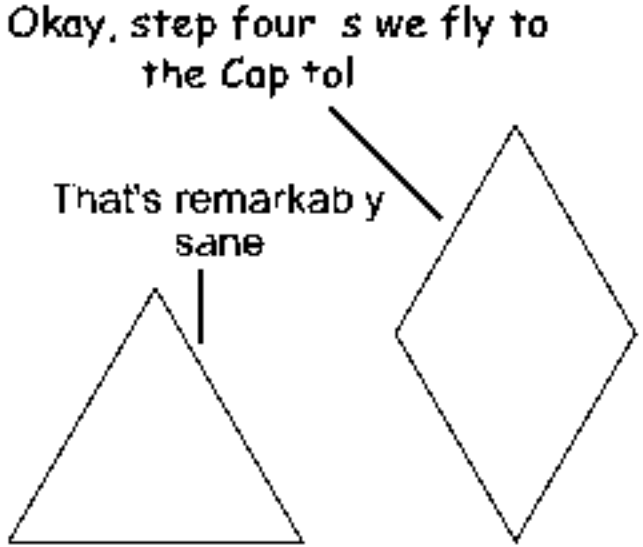

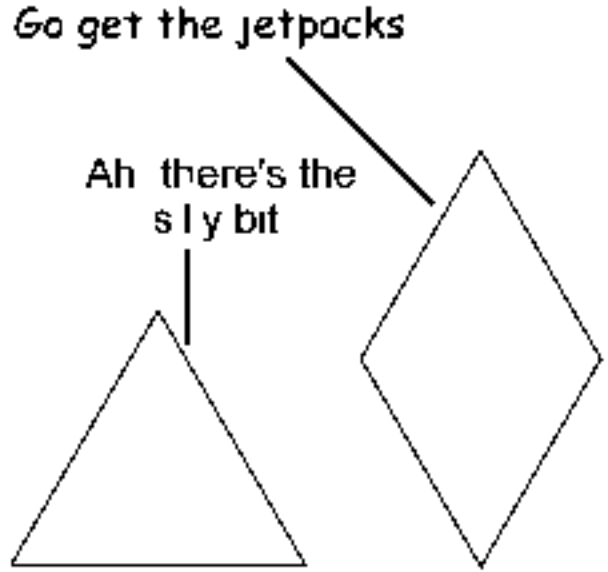

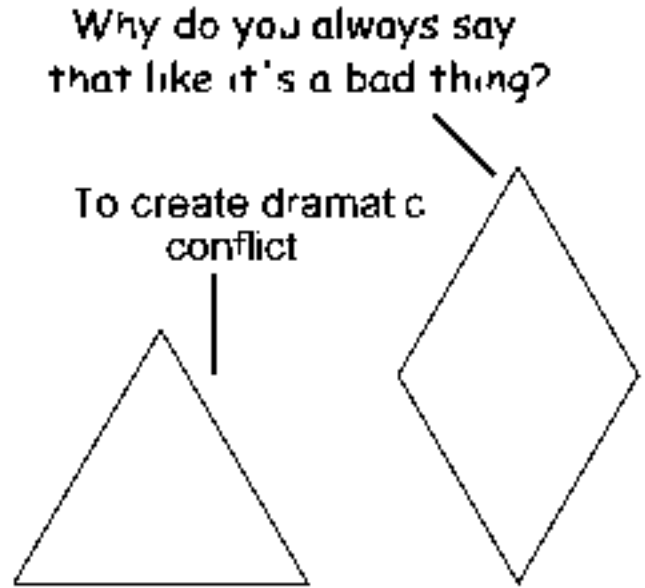

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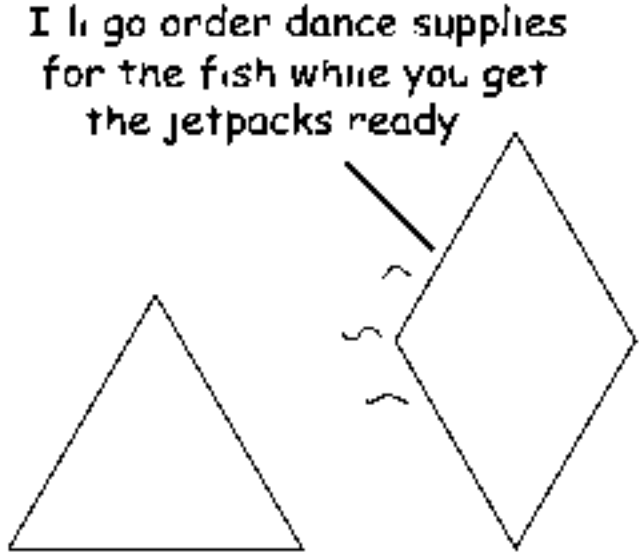

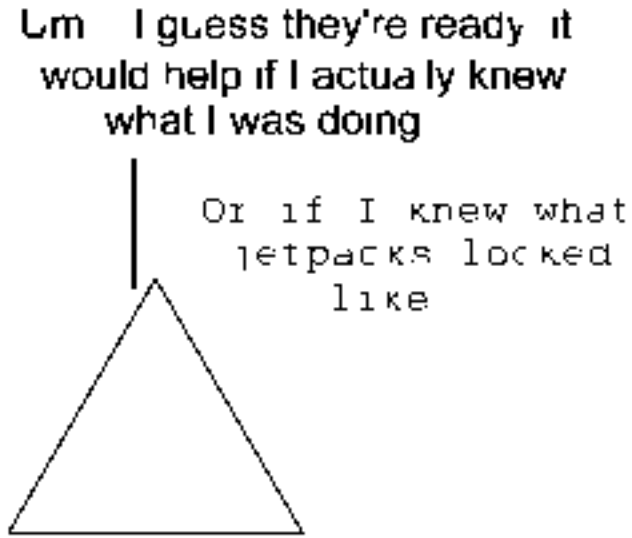

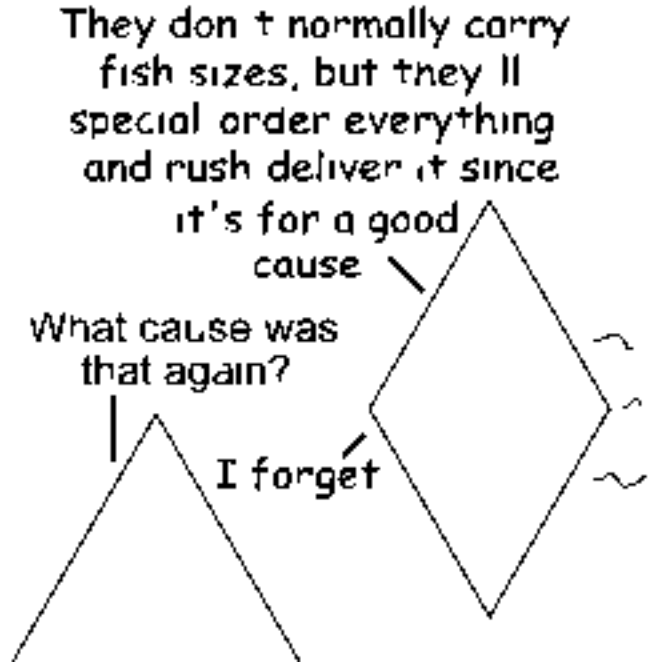

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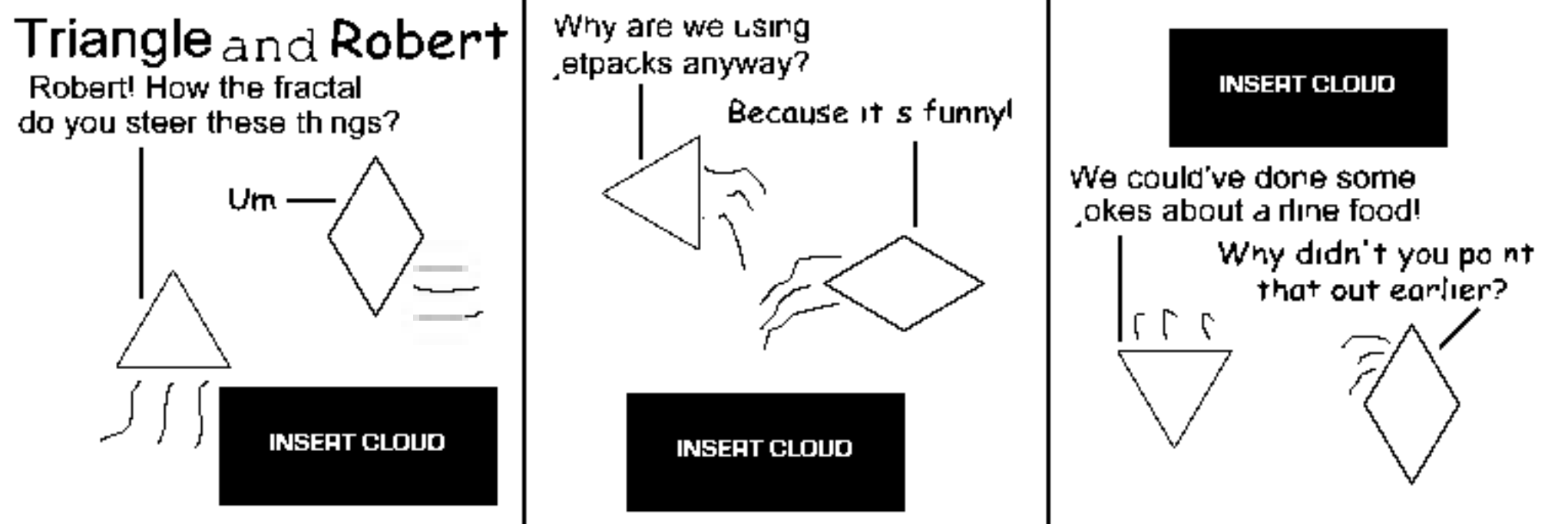

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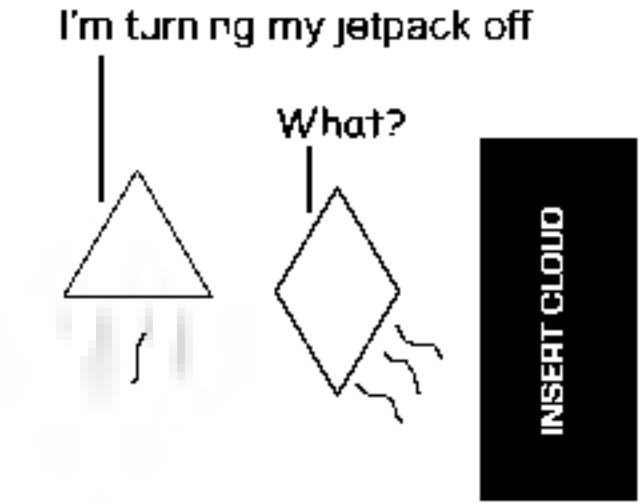
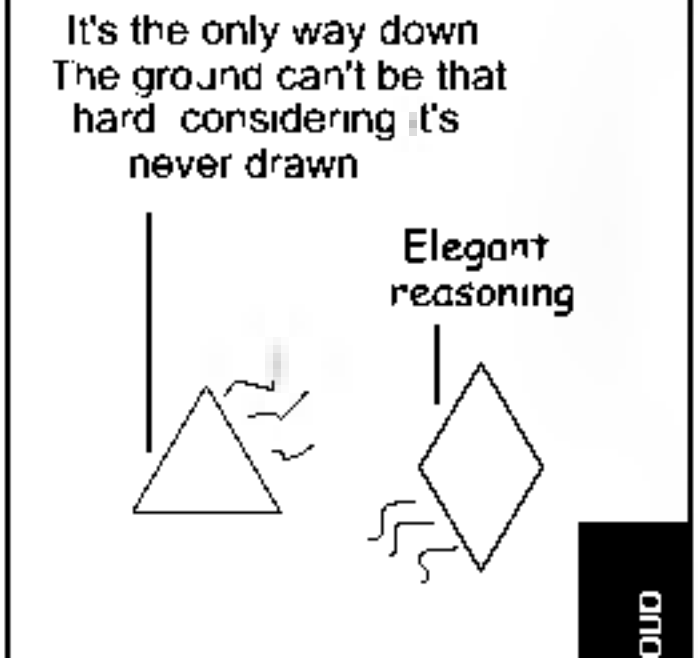
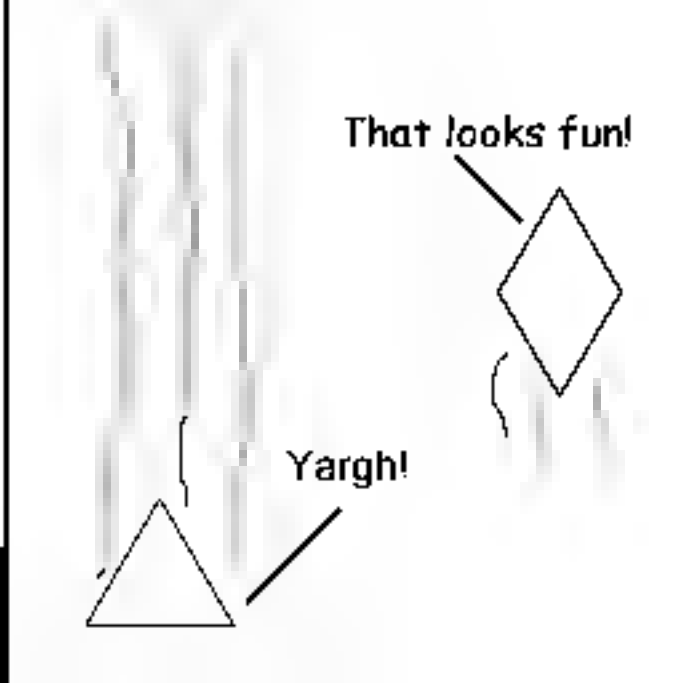
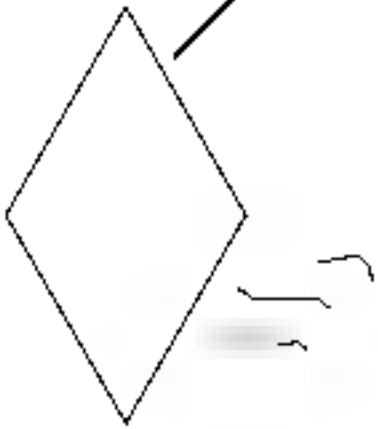




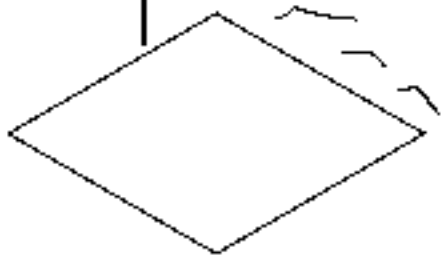


Triangle and Robert

I can still see Triangle down below He's falling pretty fast



I wonder how high we are It s hard to tell without the ground being drawn

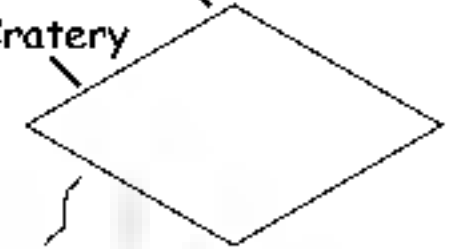


THUMP!

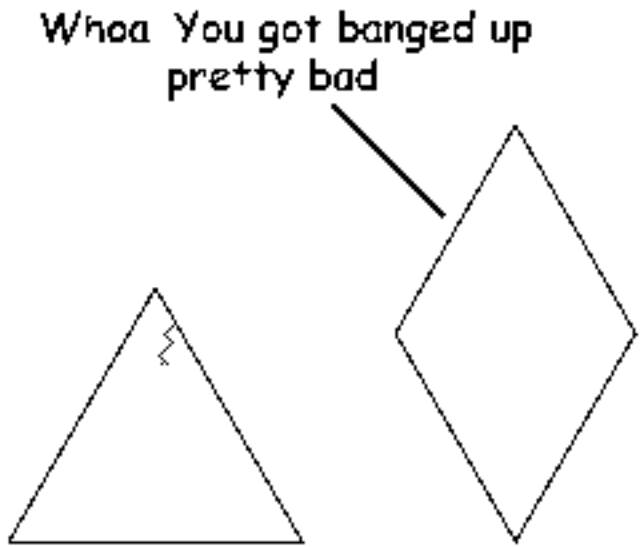
Triangle? Are you okay? Can you hear me?

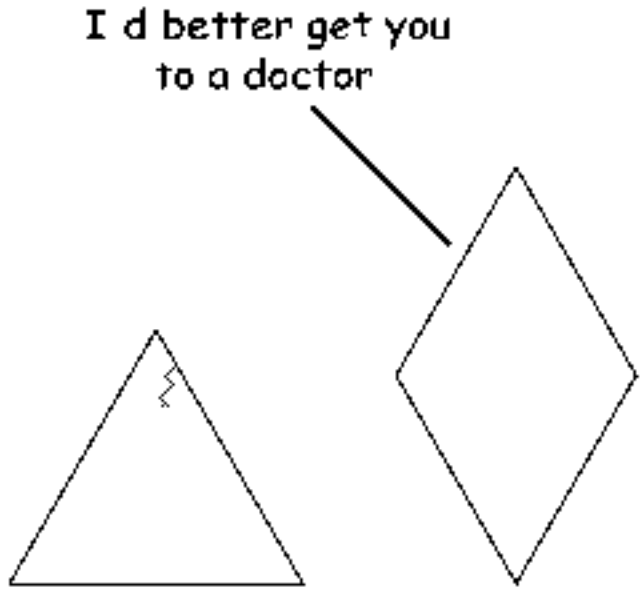
zoollewurdlezoollewurdle

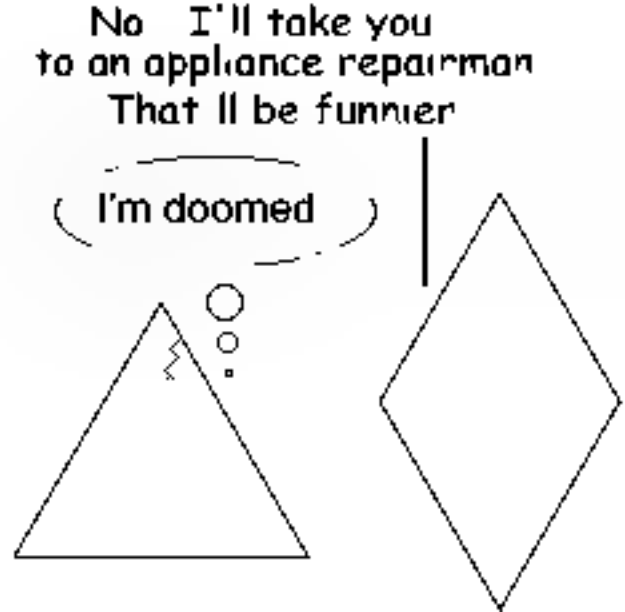
Cratery



Triangle and Robert



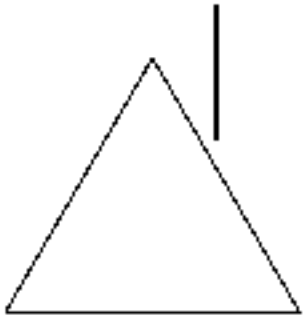




Triangle and Robert

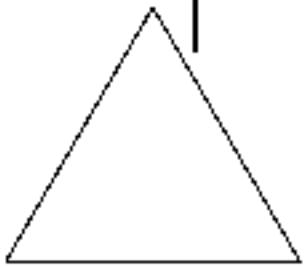
TRIANGLE.

What who are you? Where am I?



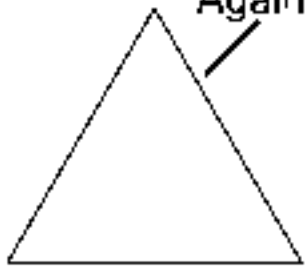
BETWEEN WORLDS. YOU HAVE DIED.

Darn

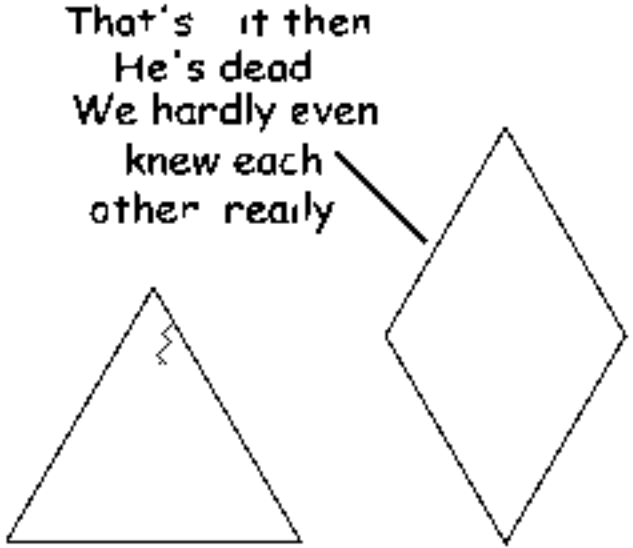


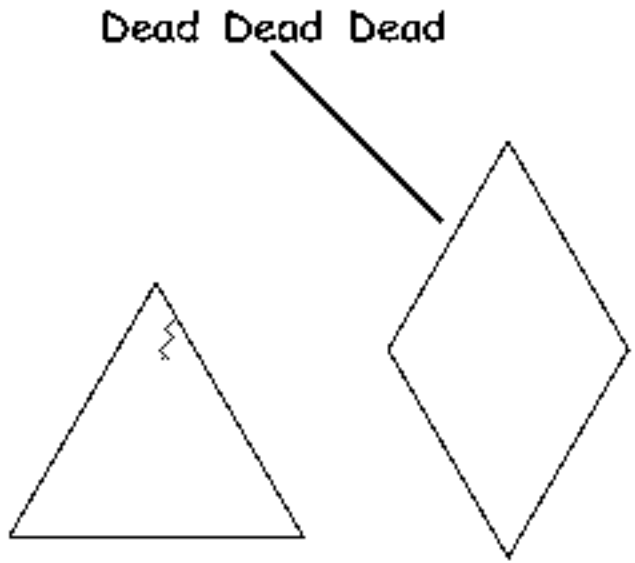
THE FALL INJURED YOU FATALLY. THE RHOMBUS TAKING YOU TO AN APPLIANCE REPAIRMAN DIDN'T HELP ANY EITHER.

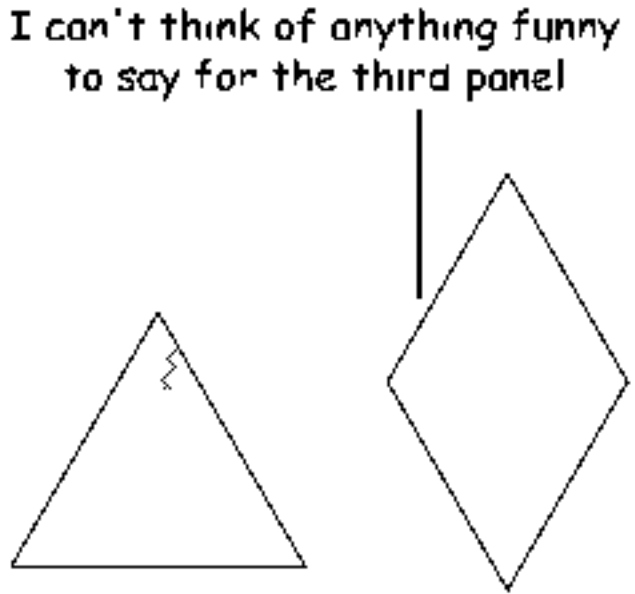
Again darn



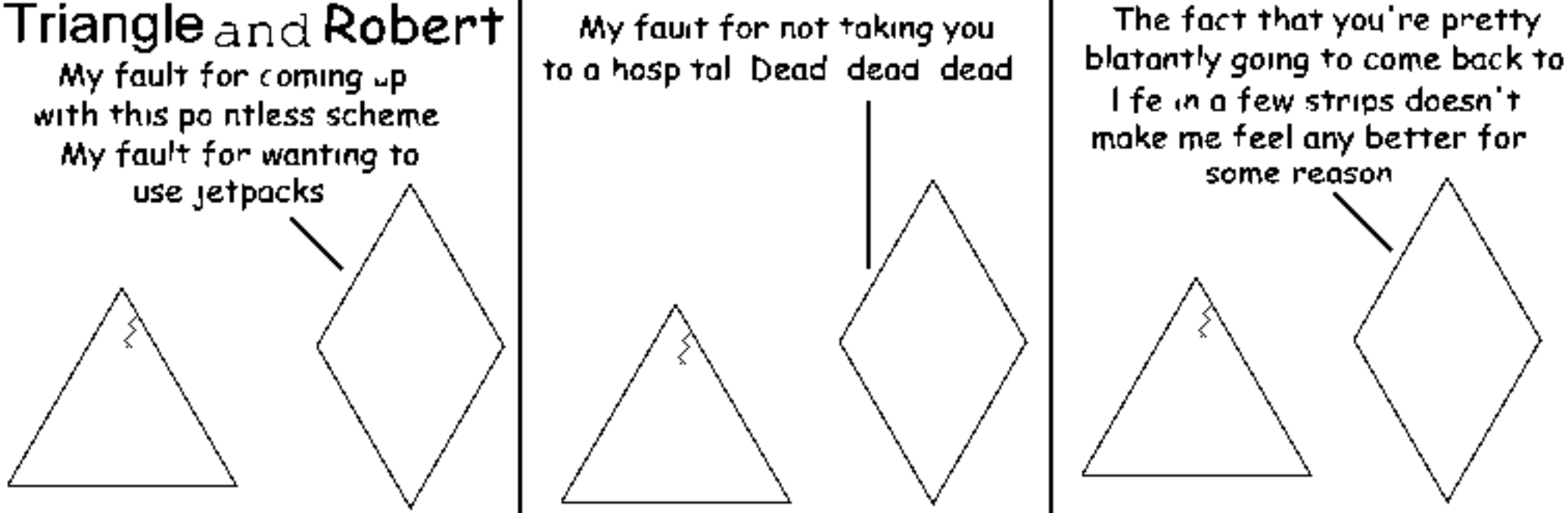
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



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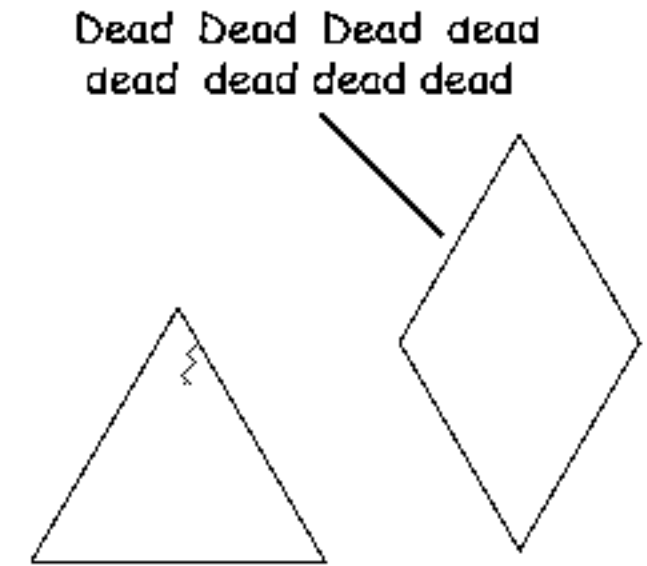

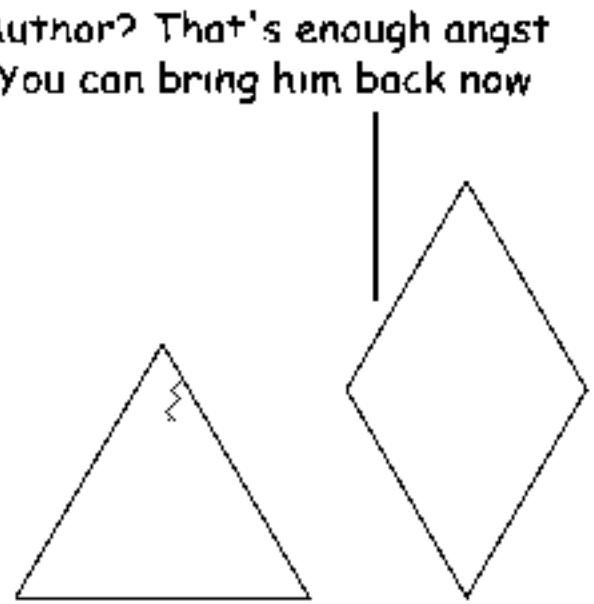

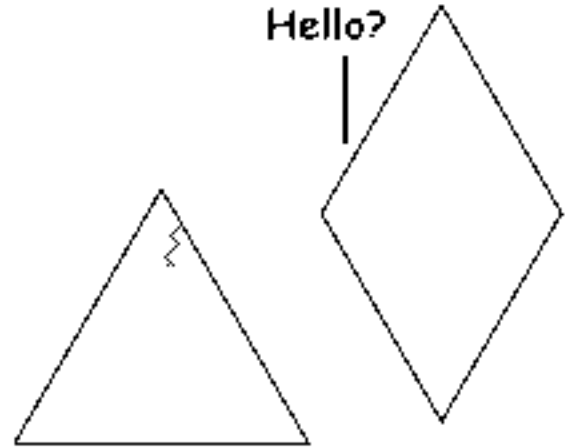

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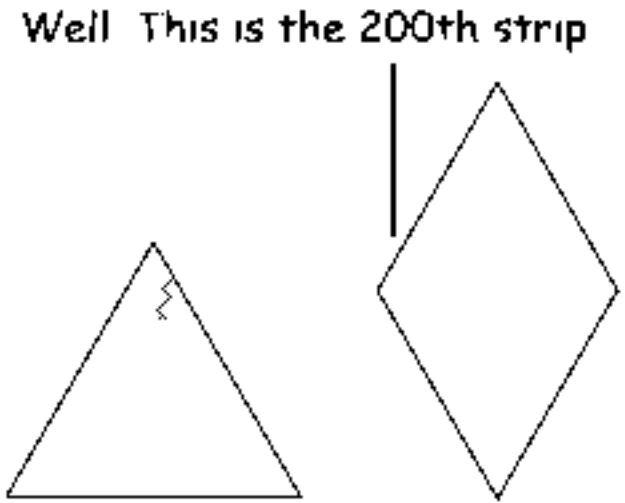
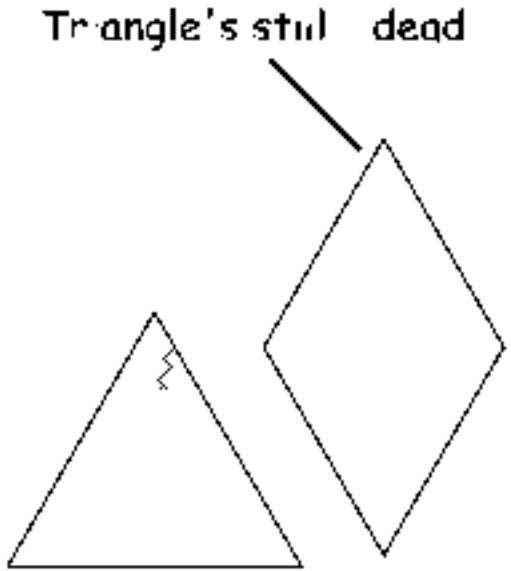
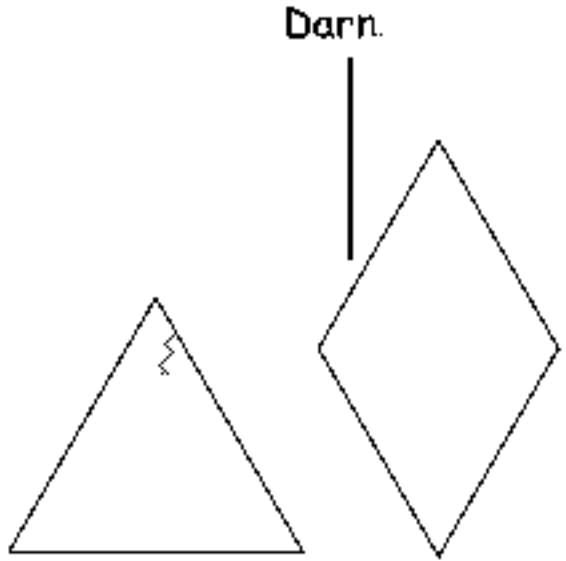






Triangle and Robert

What are you?

A MESSENGER.

Oh great More plot stuff

YES. MORE "PLOT STUFF", AS YOU CHOOSE TO PUT IT.

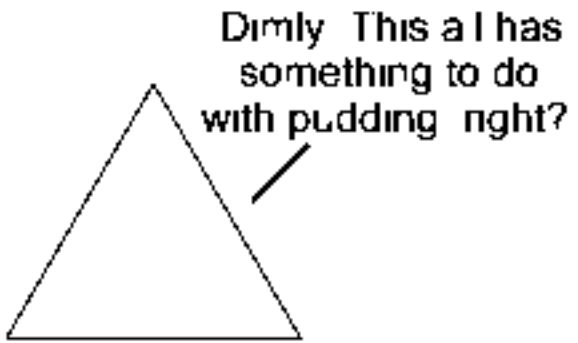
And then I stop be ng dead?

PROBABLY. WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT IT ALL THROUGH.

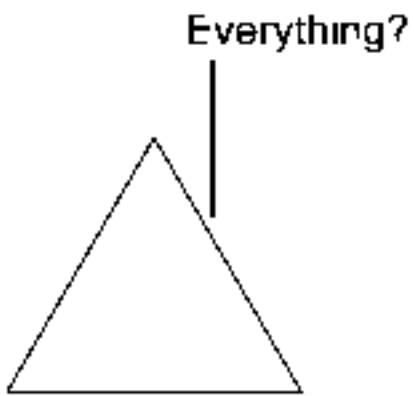
We l Gee No rush

Triangle and Robert

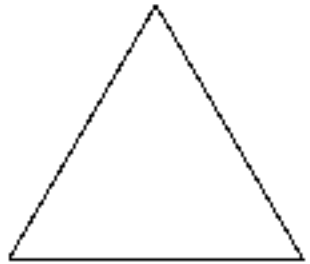
THIS IS NOT YOUR FIRST TIME BETWEEN WORLDS. DO YOU REMEMBER?



EVERYTHING HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PUDDING.



WELL, NOT REALLY. BUT THIS DOES.



Triangle and Robert

WHEN LAST YOU CAME HERE, YOU WERE LED BY A DIFFERENT MESSENGER.

Right Her

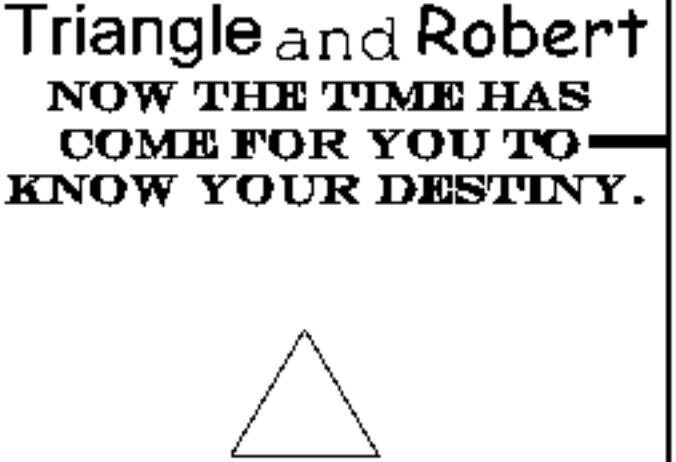
RIGHT, WELL... THAT SORT OF THING HAPPENS. SHE WAS A TEMP.

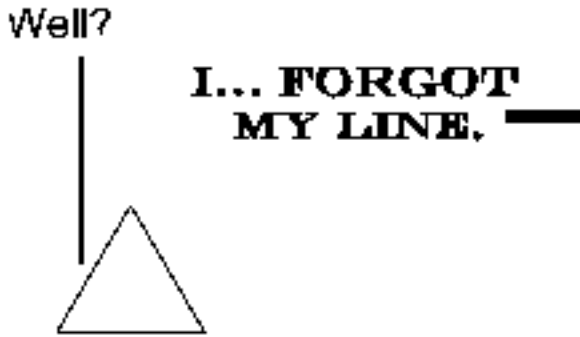
She explained absolute y nothing and then ran off for no apparent reason and stranded me!

SHE DOESN'T WORK HERE ANYMORE.

I'd hope not

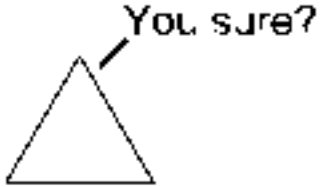
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

OKAY, NOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO KNOW YOUR DESTINY.

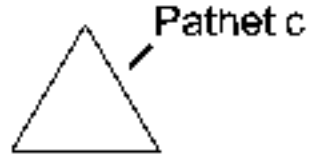


I THINK SO, UM...

YES!

NOW YOUR PURPOSE SHALL BE REVEALED!

BUT FIRST, LET'S ALL GIVE A BIG HAND TO OUR SPECIAL GUEST, ED... HUH? THIS ISN'T MY SCRIPT. WHAT IS THIS?



Triangle and Robert

NOW THE TIME HAS REALLY COME FOR YOUR DESTINY TO BE REVEALED.

Sure it has

YES. IT HAS. SO COME ON OVER TO CRAZY SAL'S NEW AND USED... THIS CAN'T BE IT. WHAT PAGE ARE WE ON?

Don t ask me You're the one with the book of eternity

UM... HAVE YOU GOTTEN TO THE BIT WITH THE VOLCANO YET?

You re worse than the temp

Triangle and Robert

I'm sorry. This
ast isn't working

You're telling me

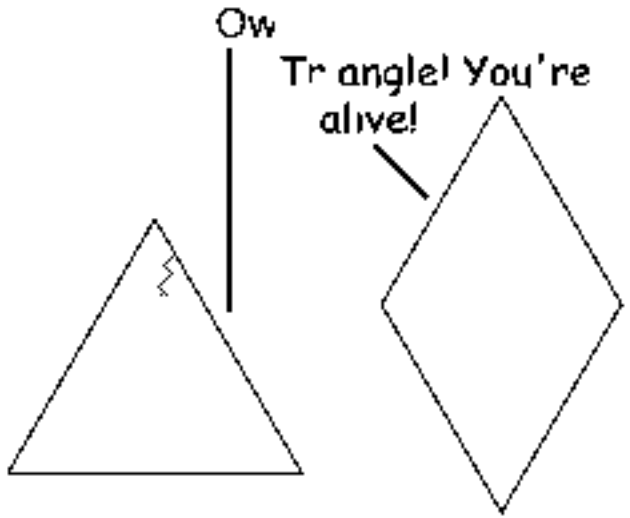
I actually did intend
your destiny to be
revealed this time

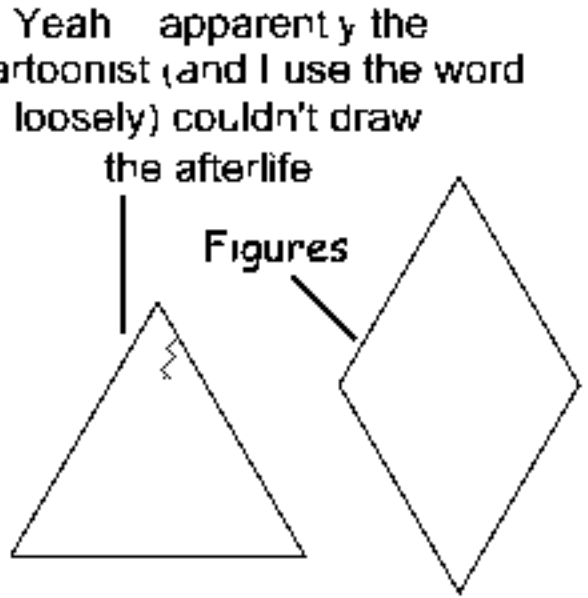
We'll can wait. You got a couple
decent jokes out of it anyway

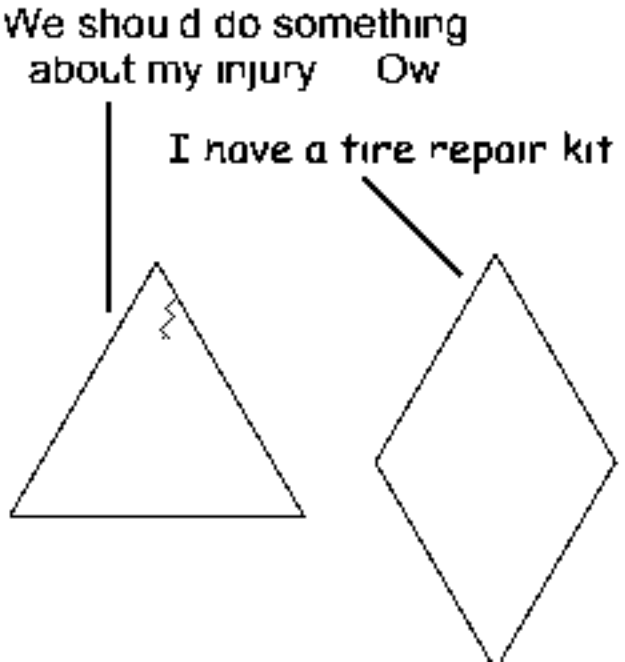
Why is it I can never
introduce a majestic
godlike figure without
him or her immediately
turning into a bumbling
moron

You don't want me
to answer that

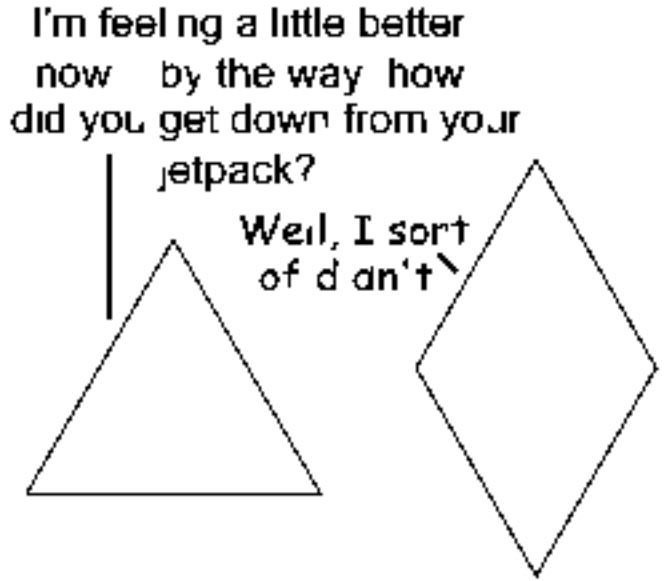
Triangle and Robert

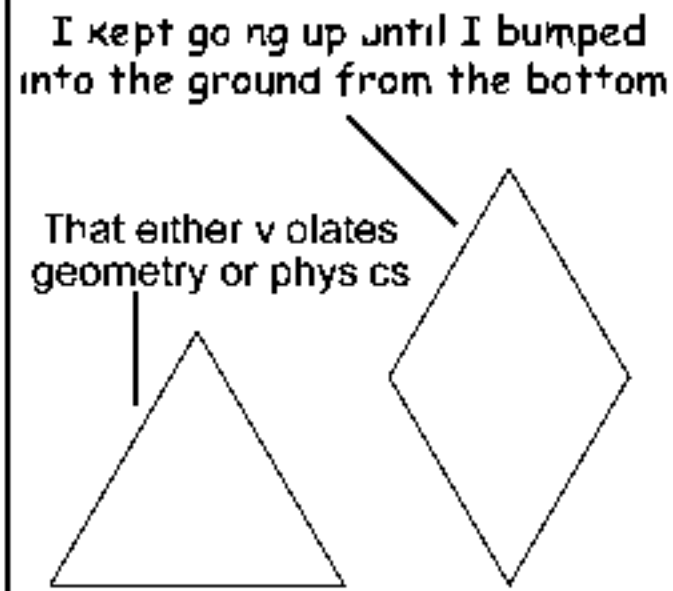


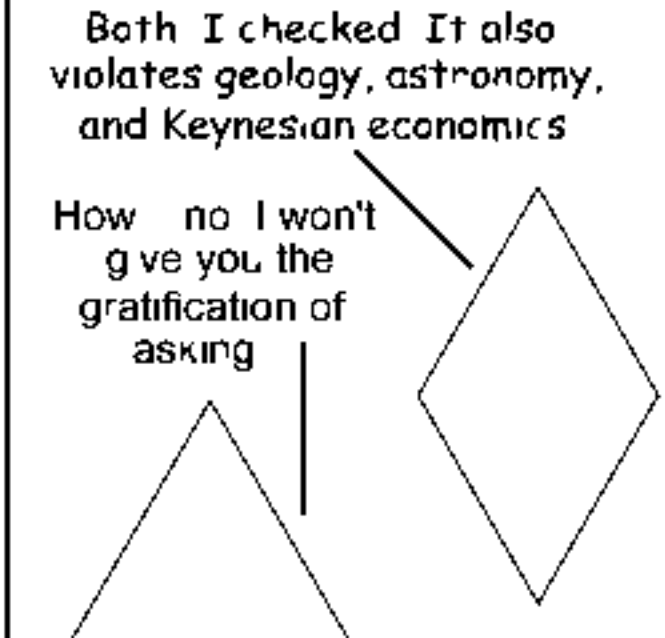




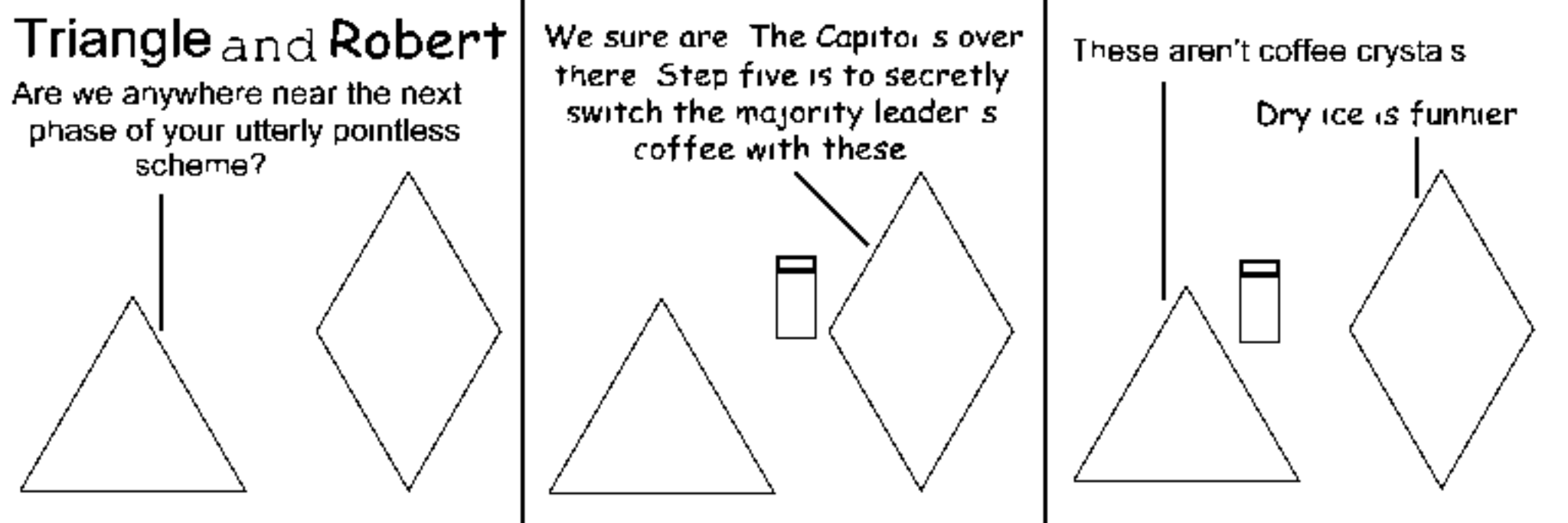
Triangle and Robert



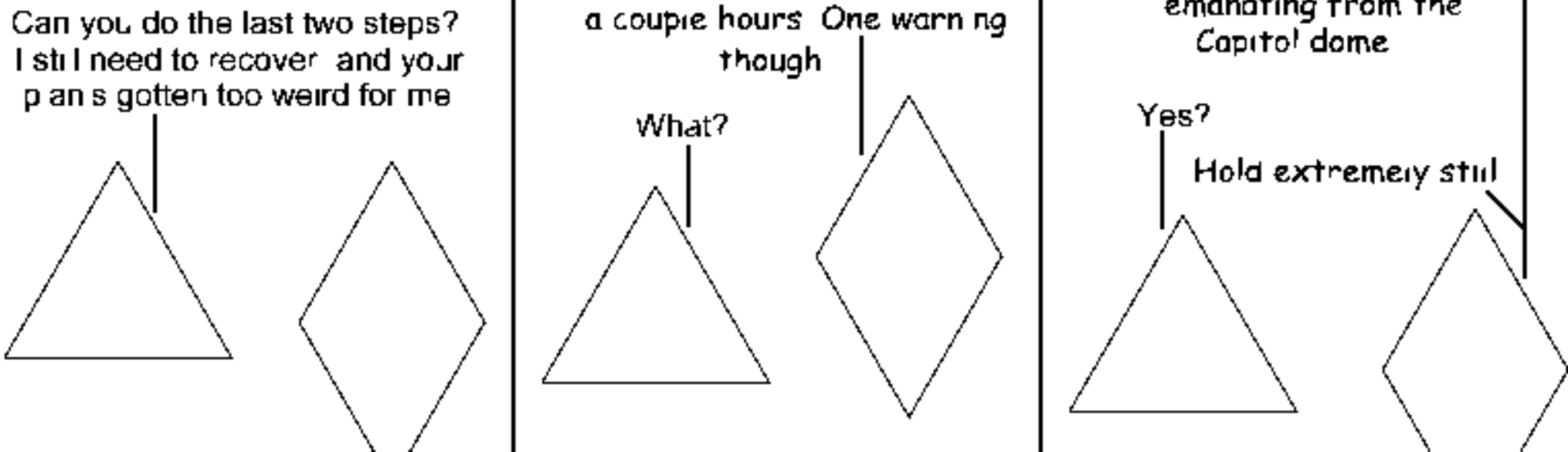




Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Get away from me with that melon!

Huh? That's no buffalo!

The bagels! Save the bagels!

Judging by the sounds of arbitrary mayhem step six must be com ng along

That's. my. face!

Skunk! Skunk!

Who invited the yodeler?

We're out of fabric softener!

I am ***SO*** g ad don't know what step s x actual y s

Finished

A ballet instructor! We're saved!

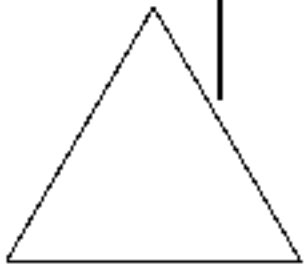
No, it's a fish!

Sign it anyway!

I hope no one tries to explain t to me

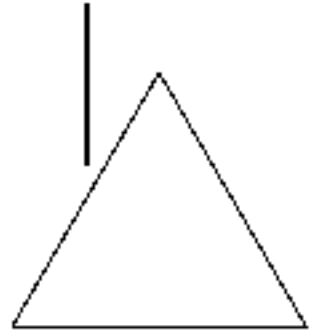
Triangle and Robert

And so the fish-sign ng plotline ends not with a bang but with a sort of "thwarplookity-boing" sound



THWARPLOOKITY-BOING!

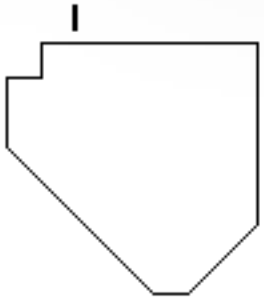
There it is again What keeps making that no se?



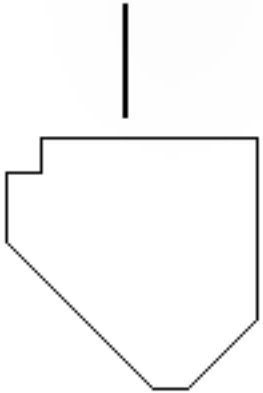
Oh my what IS that?

Triangle and Robert

Thanks to Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants, my fish is now part of the body of law of this great nation



Let Triangle and Robert work for YOU

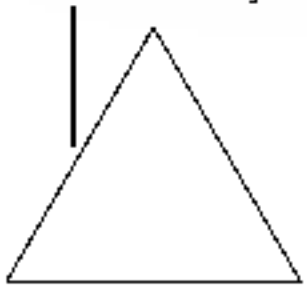


Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants is an unlicensed partnership Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants does not offer legal advice If suffering from epilepsy or lack of rhythm, ask your doctor before consulting Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants

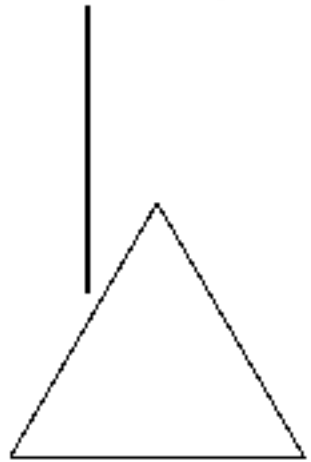
CALL NOW AND GET A FREE MONKEY!

Triangle and Robert

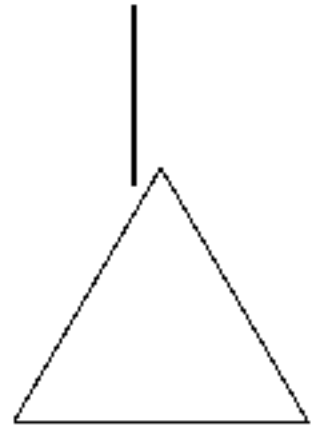
Oh in case you're wondering the th ng making the "thwarplookity-boing" sound two strips ago was ,ust some guy say ng "thwarplookity-boing" I d dn't ask why



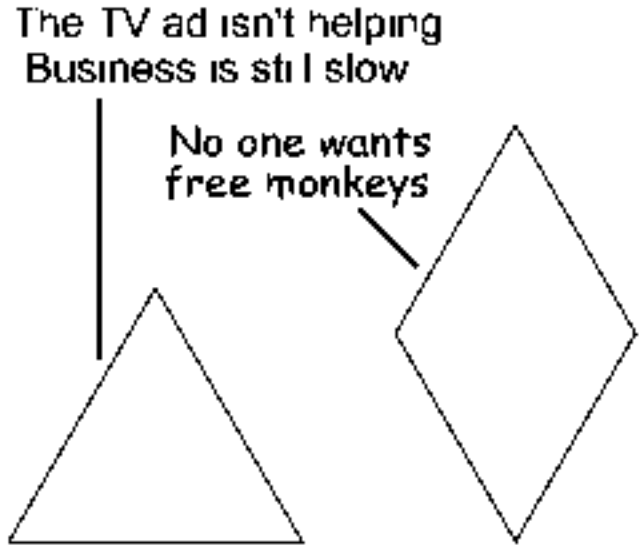
Yes I know it doesn't make any sense Live with it

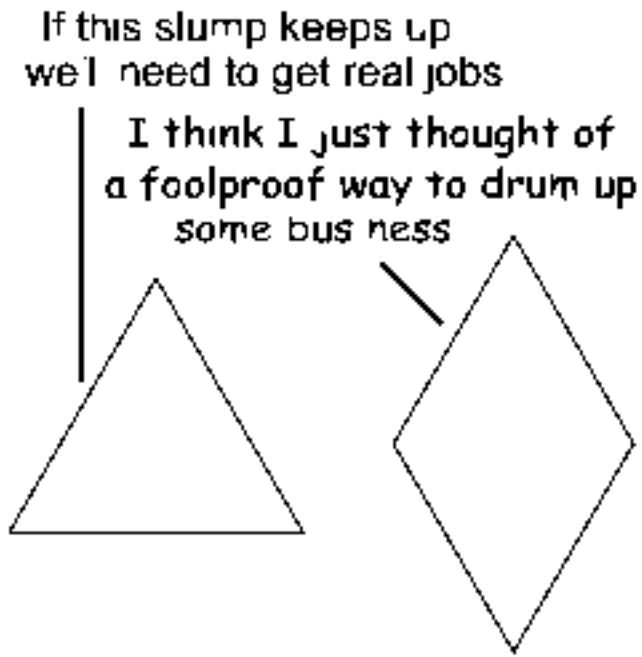


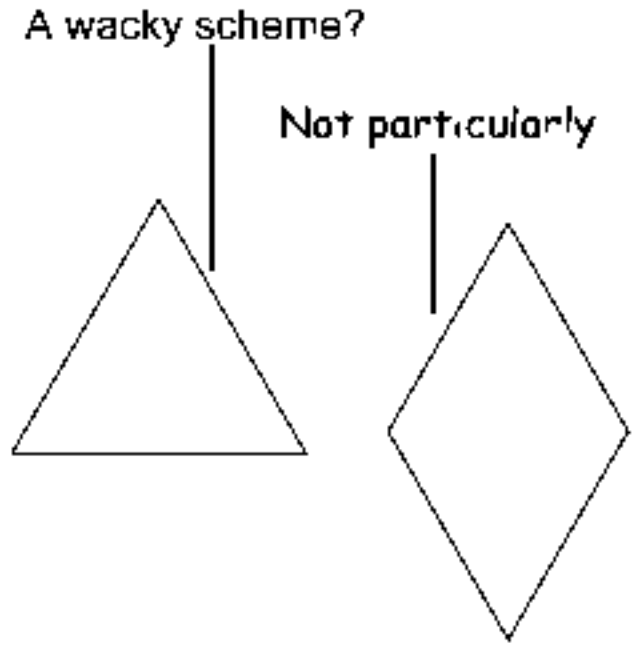
I have to



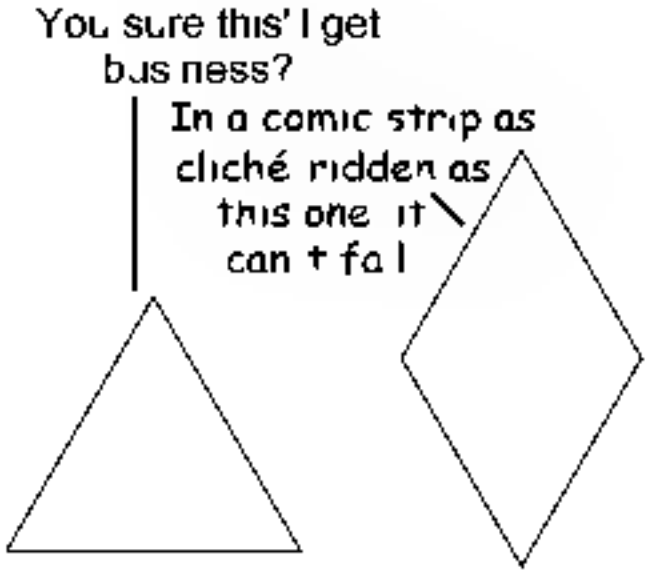
Triangle and Robert

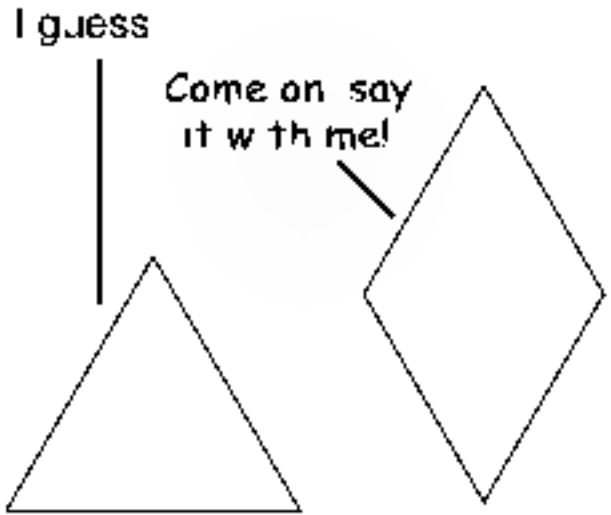




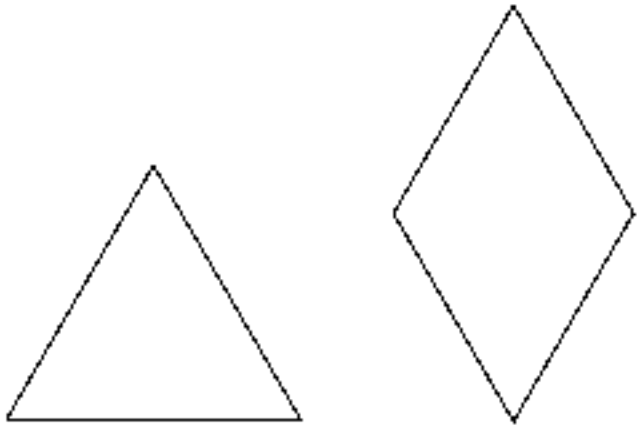


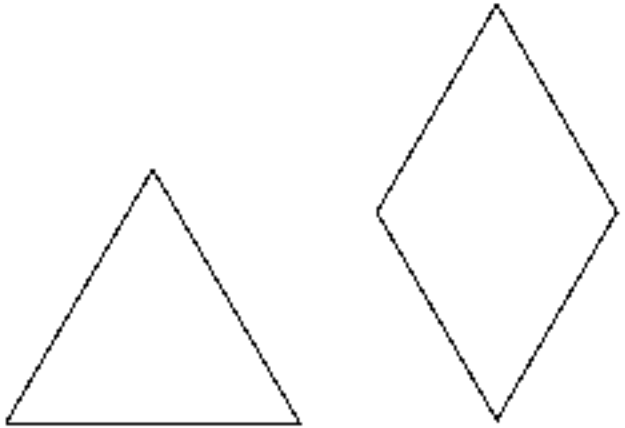
Triangle and Robert

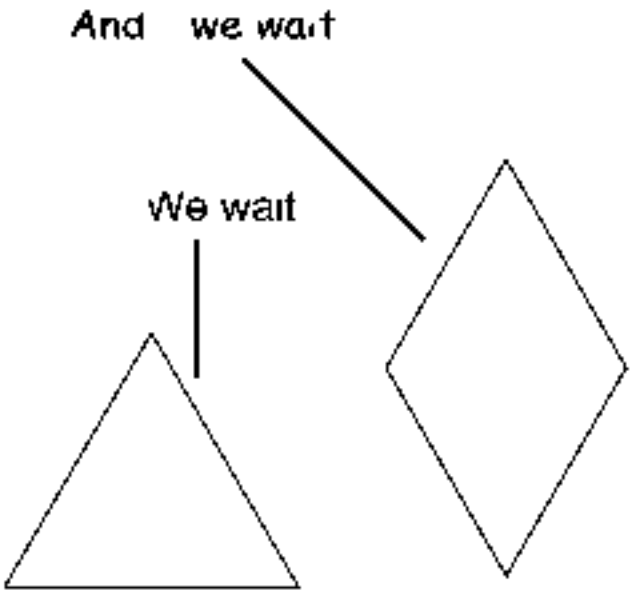




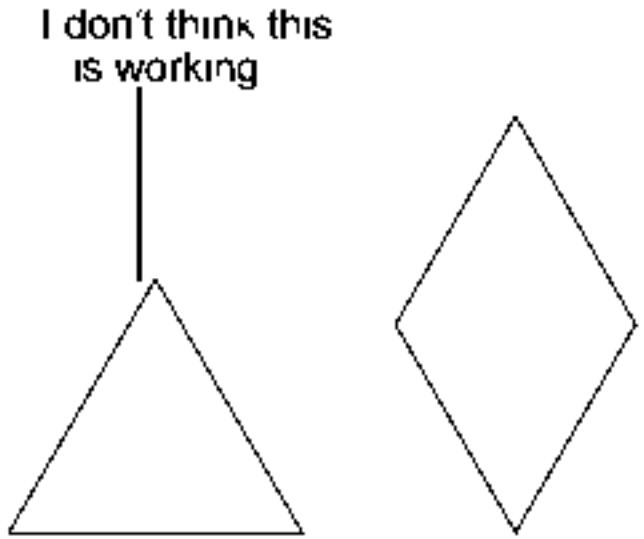
Triangle and Robert

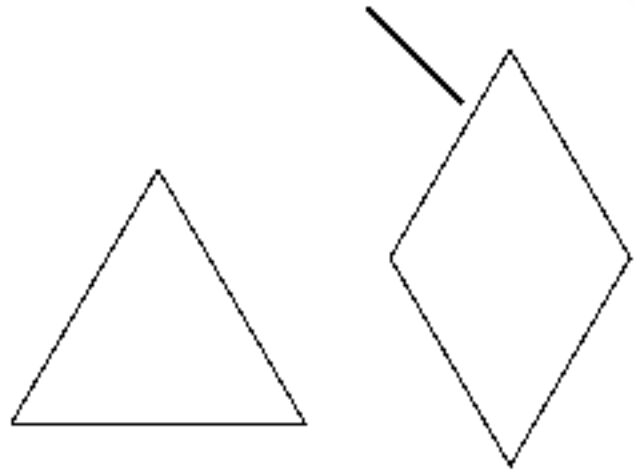


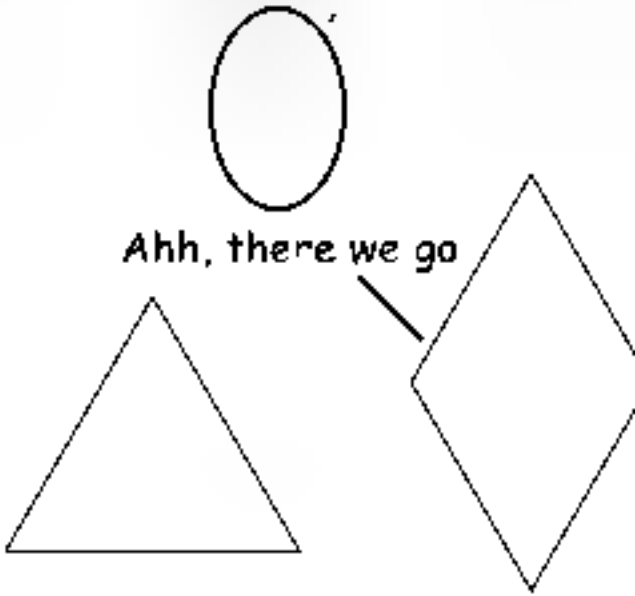




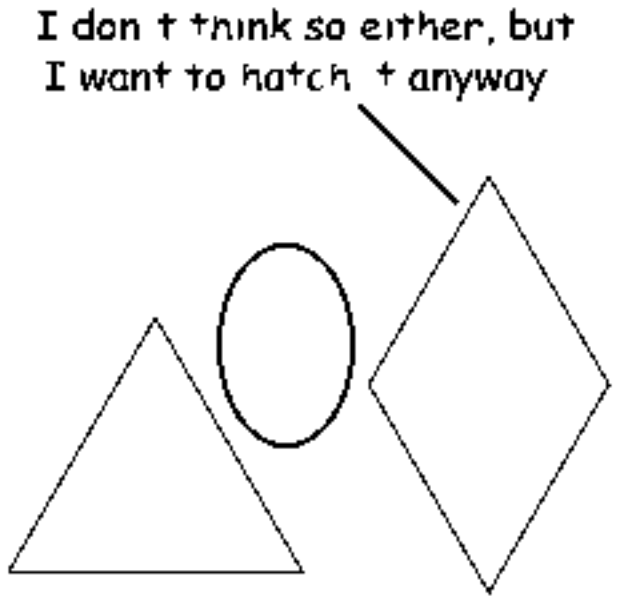
Triangle and Robert

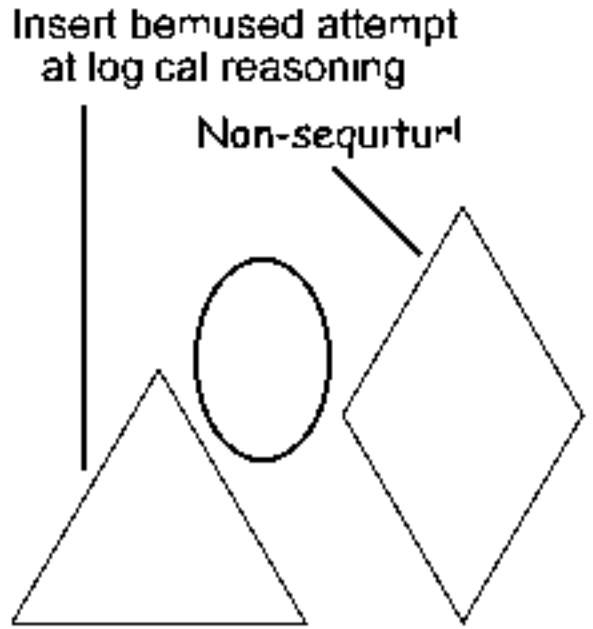




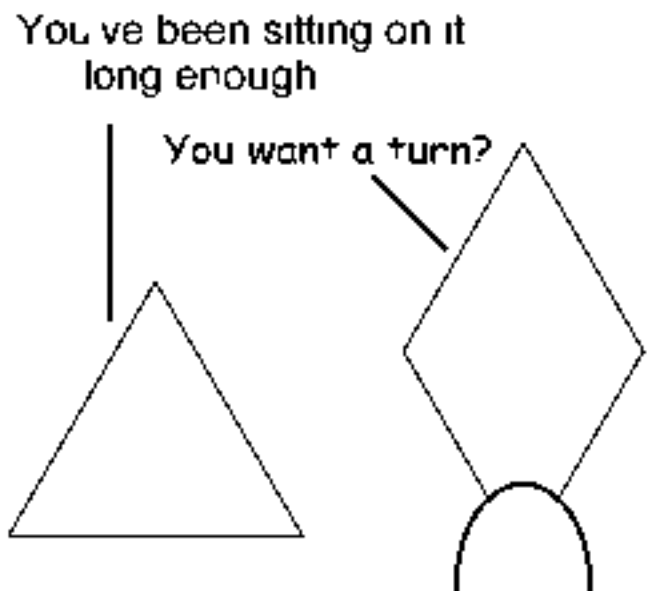


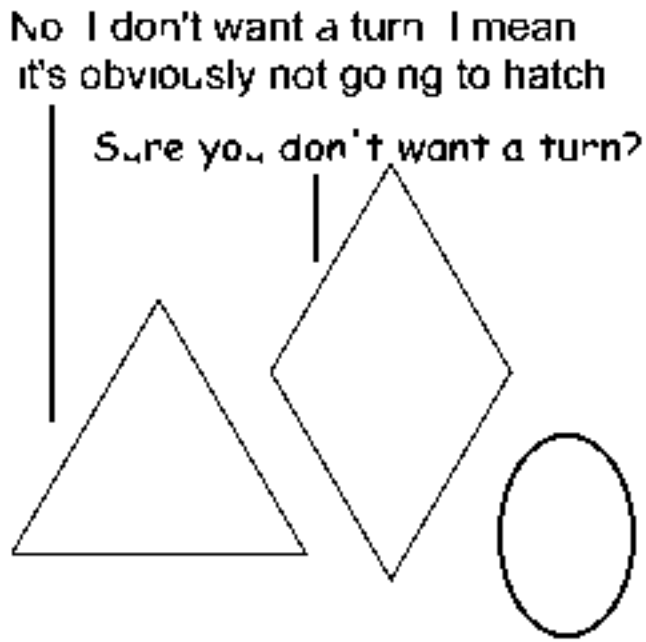
Triangle and Robert

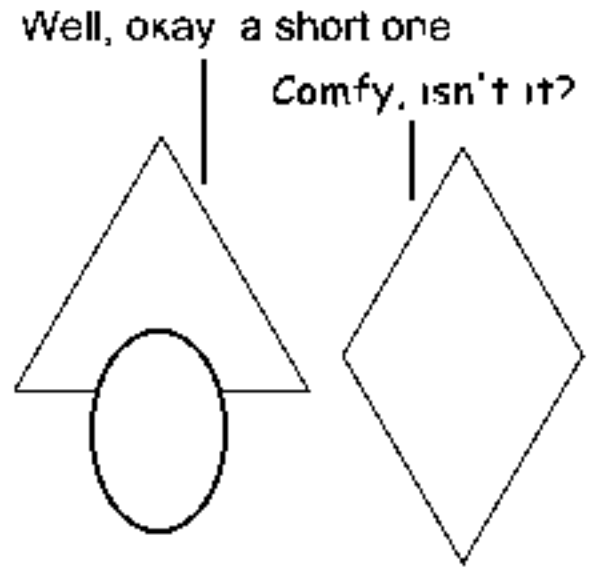




Triangle and Robert



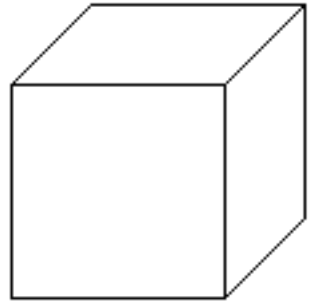




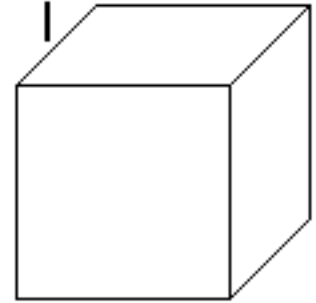
Triangle and Robert

In a forgotten temple high above the. no, it's far below the . or maybe . um ...

In a forgotten temple somewhere forgotten .



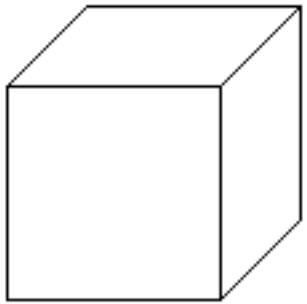
Huh? No, this isn't a temple, it's um... a large temple-shaped frozen-foods warehouse. Yup, this is in no way a forgotten temple or in any way connected to the mystery of the Fourth Race. Not at all.



Triangle and Robert

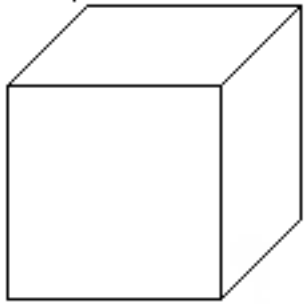
In a forgotten temple.

Temple? Where? I'm picking up ice cream.



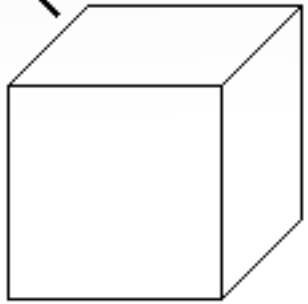
Your cover's blown and you know it

Cover? What cover?

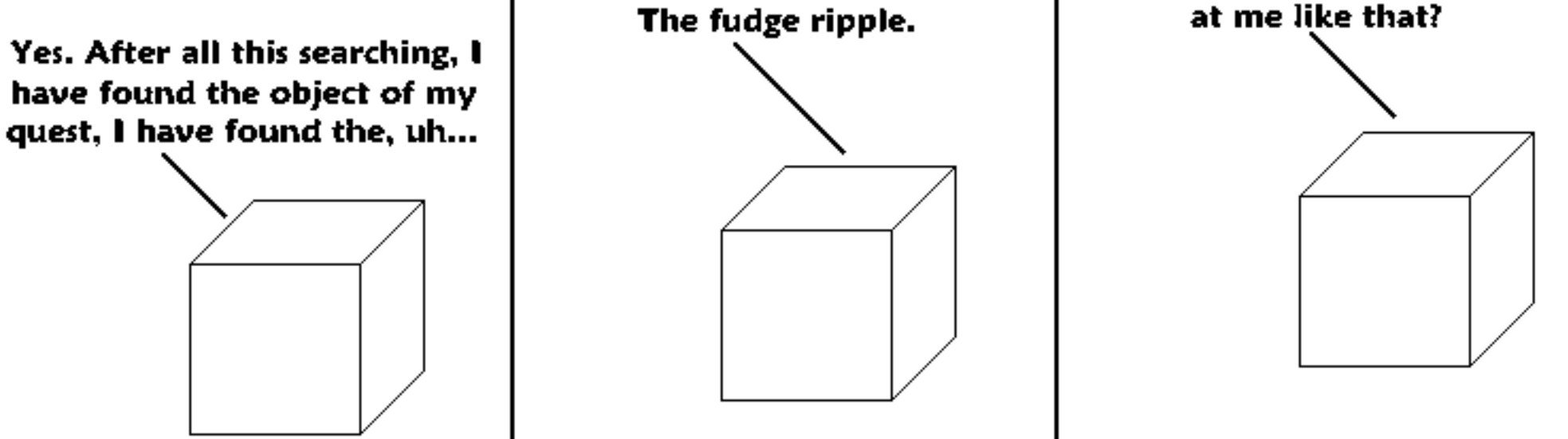


Fine. I'm a forgotten frozen-foods warehouse which resembles an ancient temple only by sheer coincidence.

That's better.



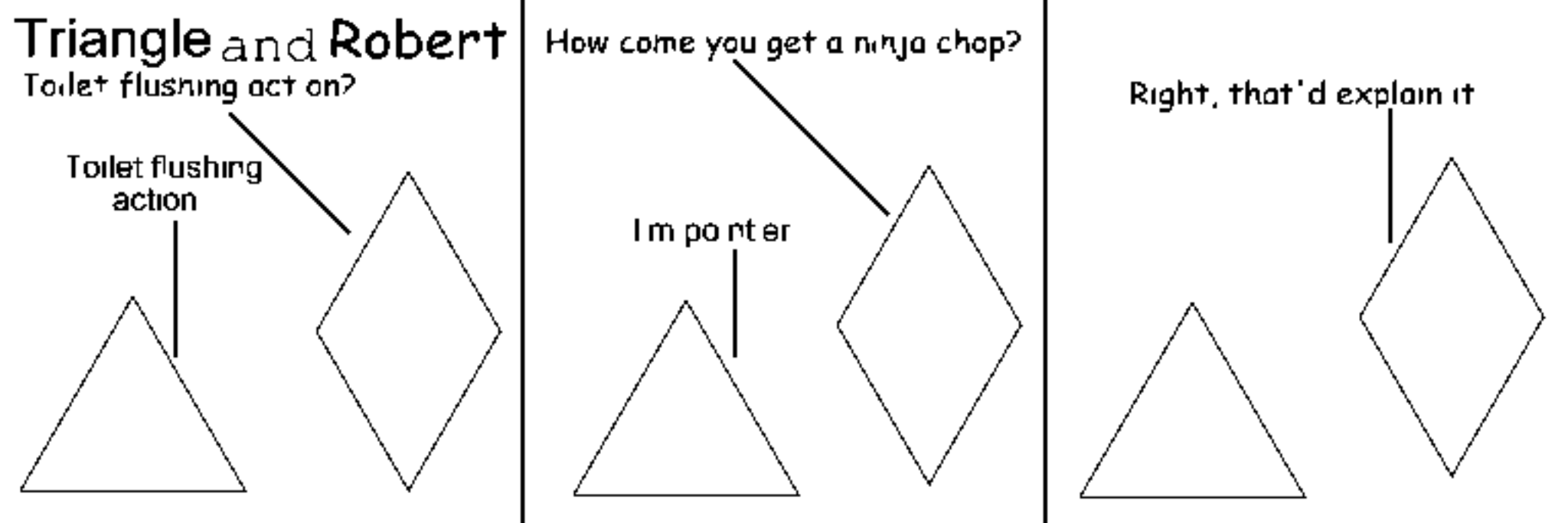
Triangle and Robert



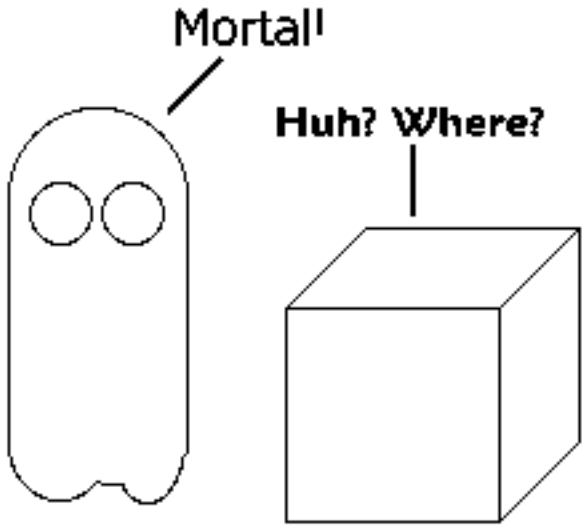
NEW

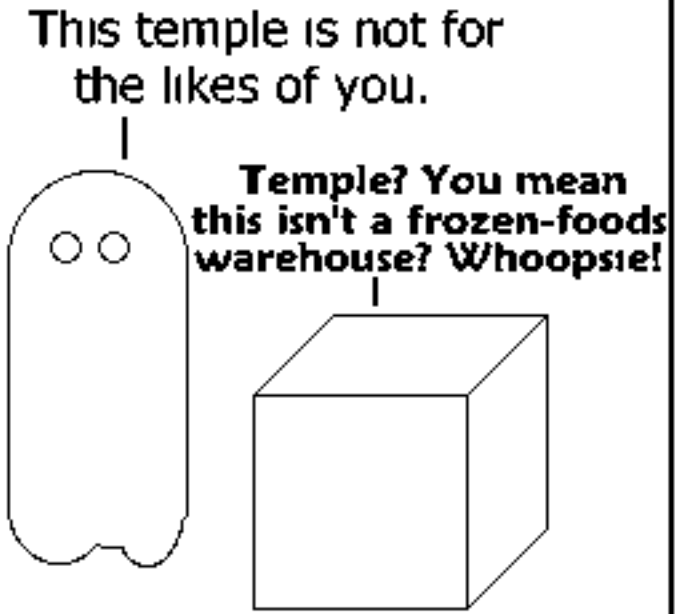
Triangle And Robert

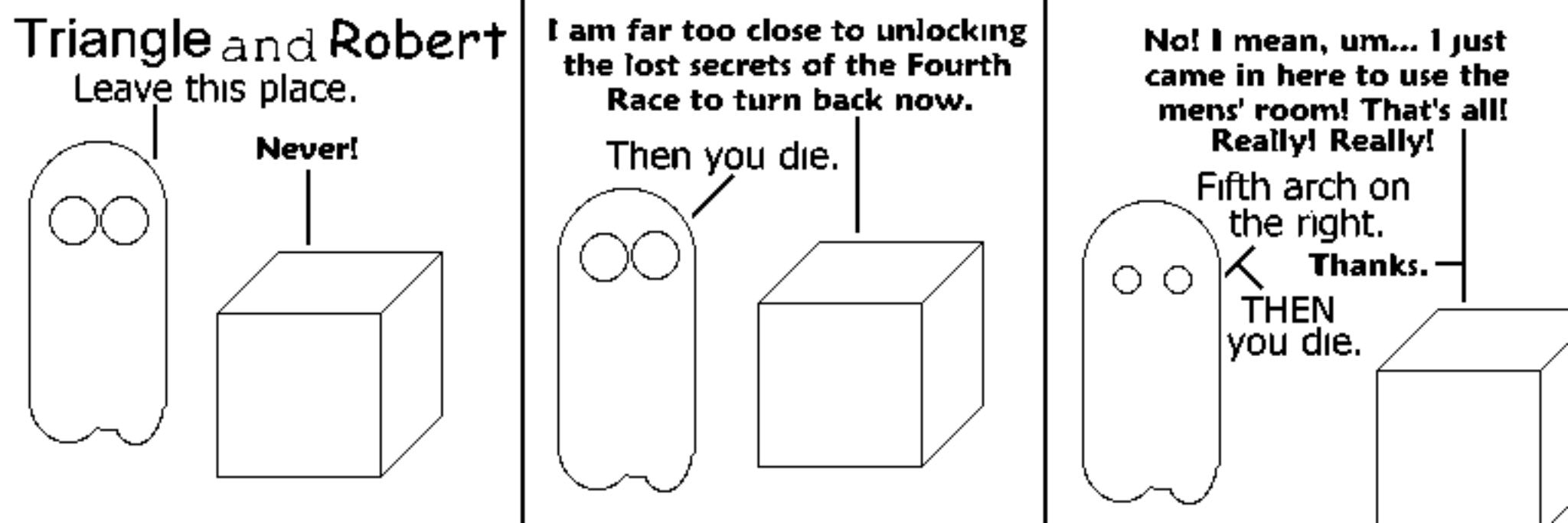
ACTION FIGURES


Triangle and Robert
Toilet flushing act on?
Toilet flushing action
How come you get a ninja chop?
Im po nt er
Right, that'd explain it

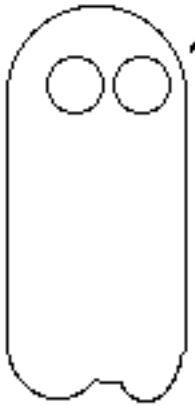
Triangle and Robert

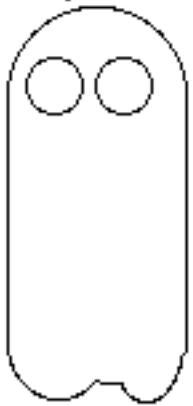




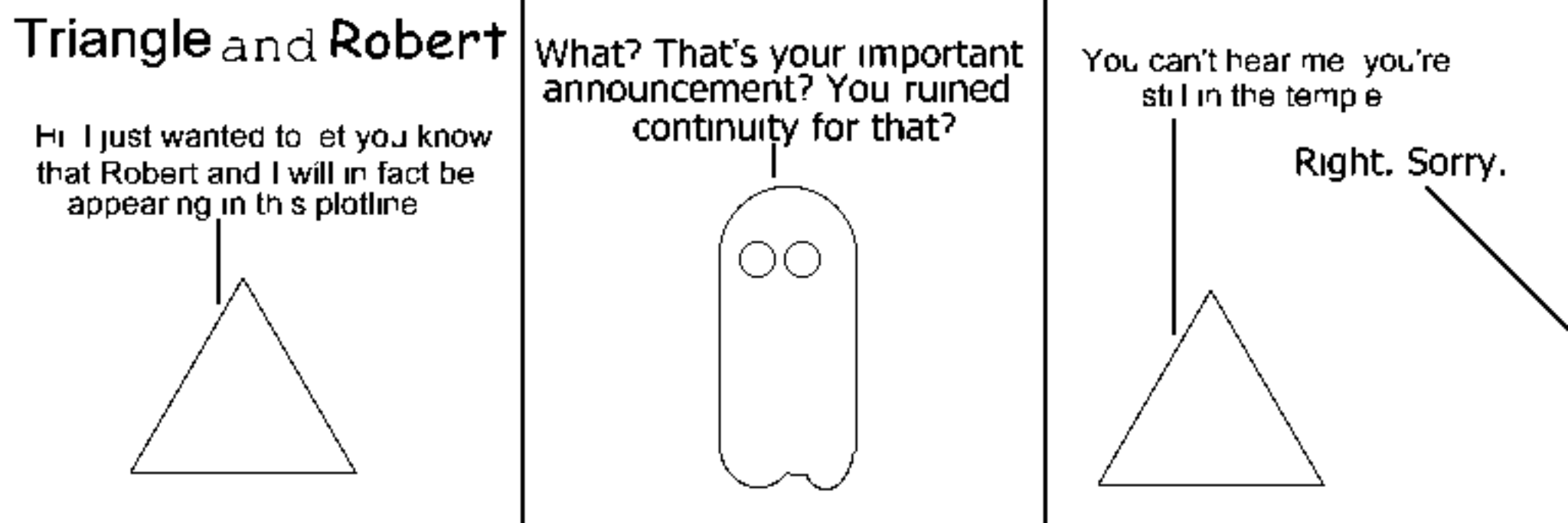

Triangle and Robert
Leave this place.
Never!
I am far too close to unlocking the lost secrets of the Fourth Race to turn back now.
Then you die.
No! I mean, um... I just came in here to use the mens' room! That's all! Really! Really!
Fifth arch on the right.
Thanks.
THEN you die.

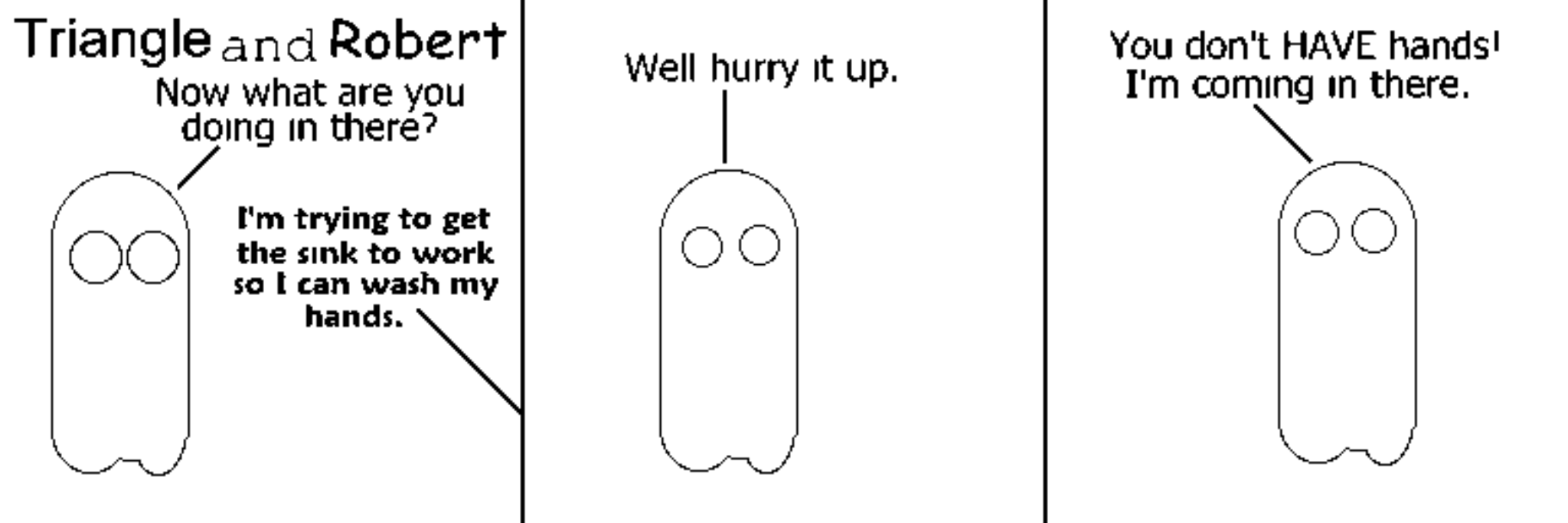
Triangle and Robert





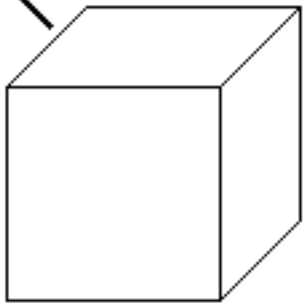
Triangle and Robert



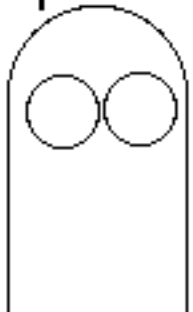

Triangle and Robert
Now what are you doing in there?
I'm trying to get the sink to work so I can wash my hands.
Well hurry it up.
You don't HAVE hands! I'm coming in there.

Triangle and Robert

Cornered in a lavatory in the largest surviving temple of the Fourth Race, I must escape the Pudding-Watcher.



Guarding the powerful secrets of this temple, I must stop the cube, for he knows not what he meddles with.

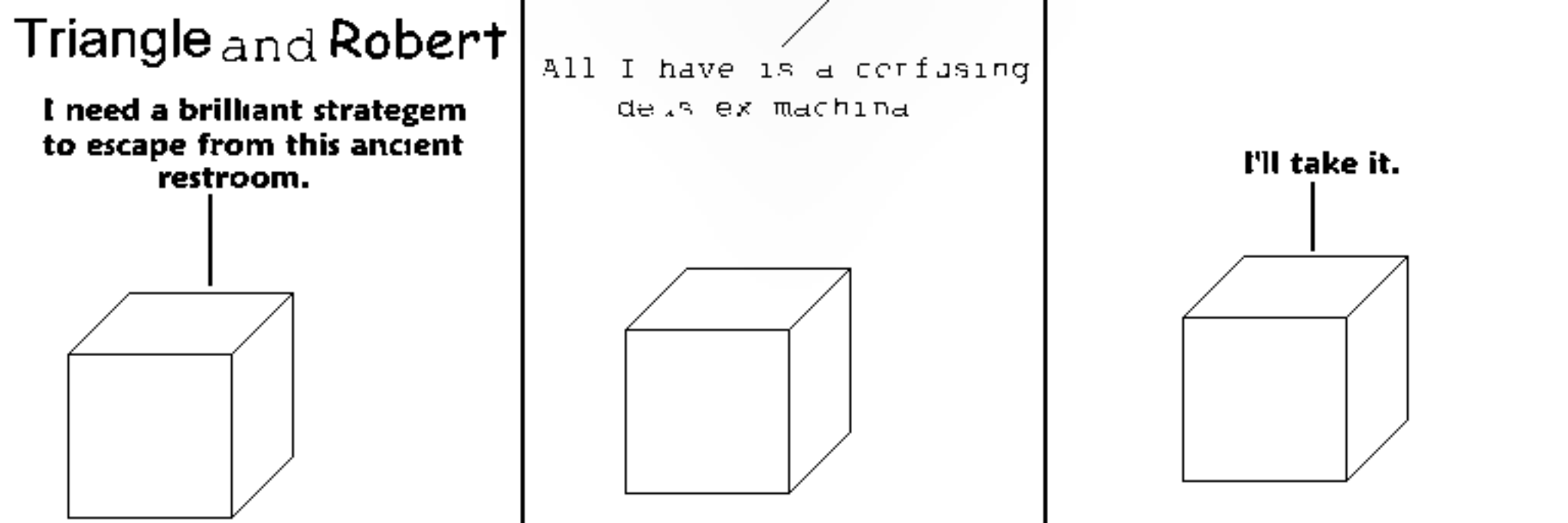


Drawing a very bad comic strip, I must find a better way to lose age.

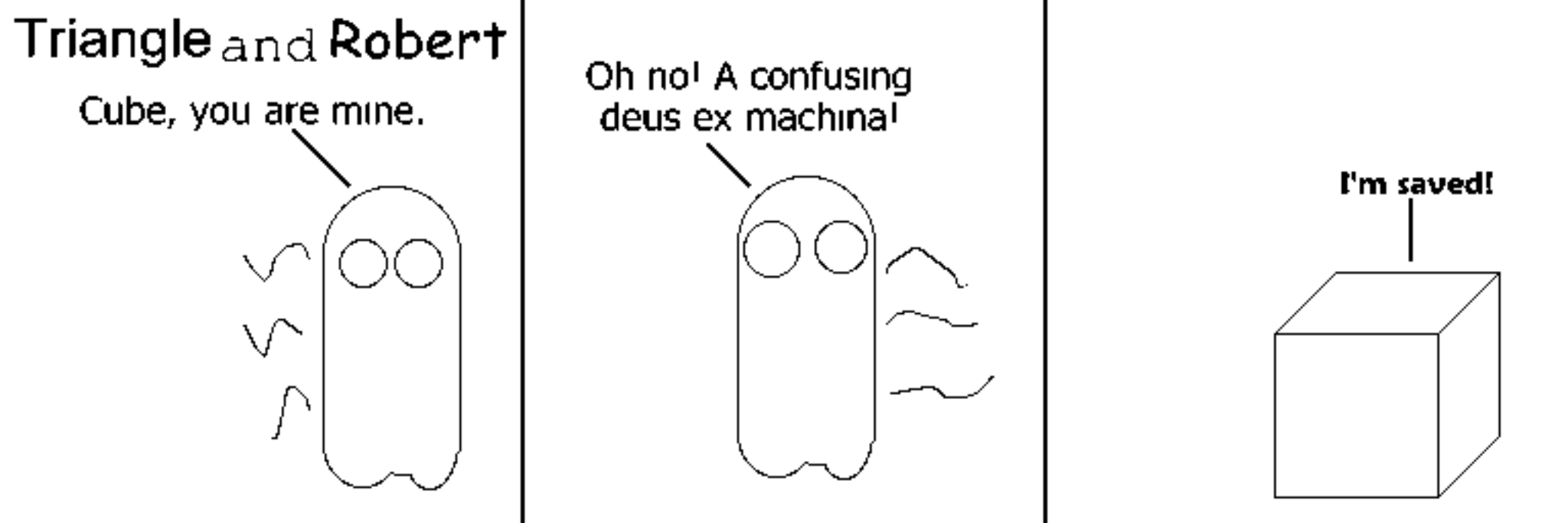
Yes.

Can't argue with that.

Triangle and Robert

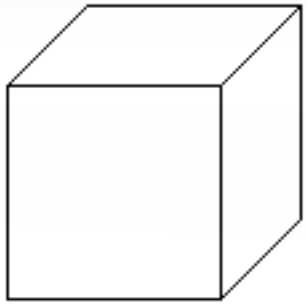


Triangle and Robert

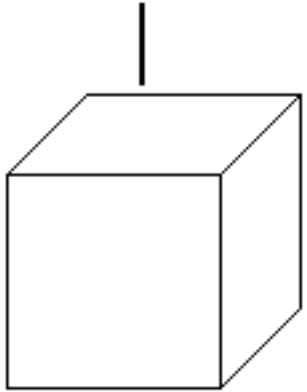


Triangle and Robert

Okay, now that I've bailed you out of that, it's time to level with me. What's going on?

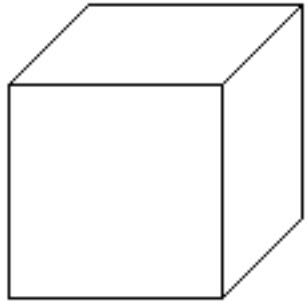


Um... you're the author. You don't already know?



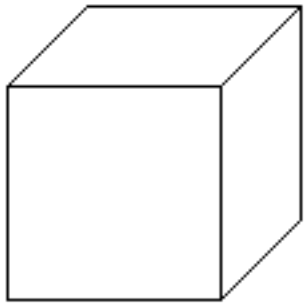
I did, then you confused me with that ice cream thing.

Sorry. It was a necessary precaution.



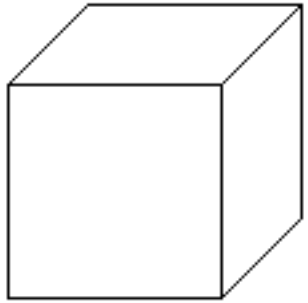
Triangle and Robert

Okay, just a quick recap, then you draw some ancient-templey stuff and I get on with the expedition.



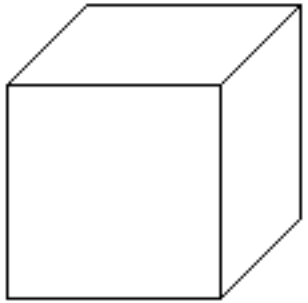
Cue

This may come as a shock to you, but I'm not really an ice-cream man.

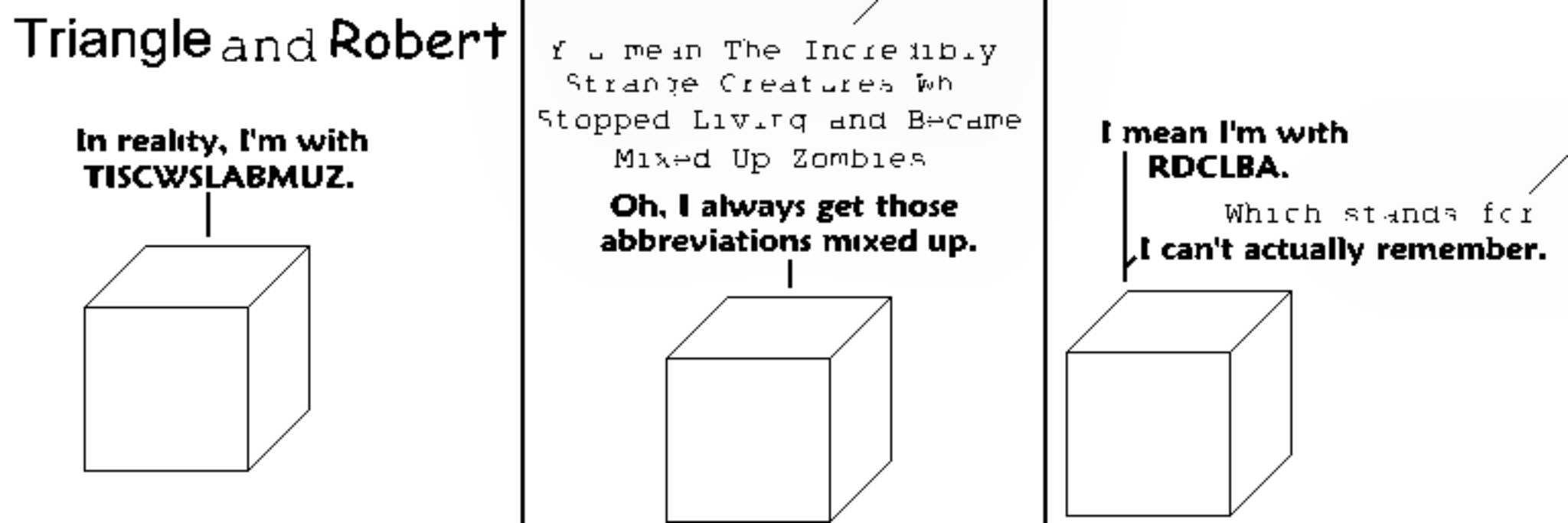


I am entirely non shocked

I said "may".

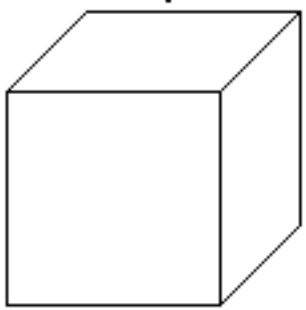


Triangle and Robert

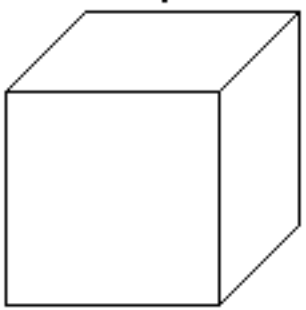


Triangle and Robert

RCDLBA is the government responsible for locating ancient civilizations and artifacts of immense power and covering them up.

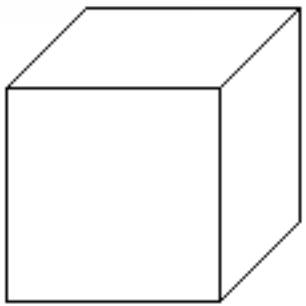


Recently it has been discovered that the Fourth Race, once thought a primitive civilization of fractal-worshippers, were in fact as technologically advanced as our society today, possibly more so.



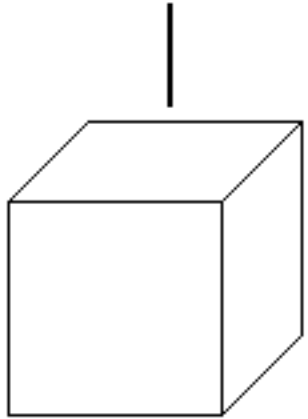
That seems awfully implausible

You're the one who wrote it.

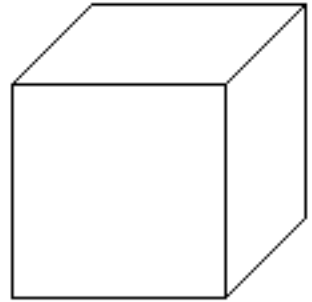


Triangle and Robert

This temple is the largest surviving structure from the Fourth Race.

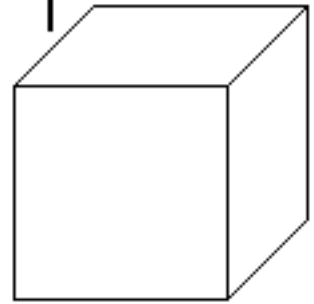


In it, it is theorized, are scientific achievements which could rock the foundations of modern thought.



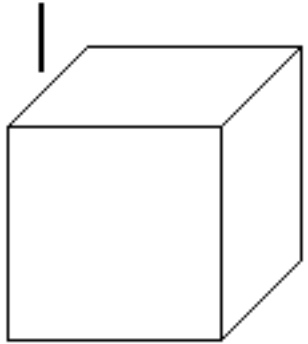
My job is to make sure none of these achievements are intact when the archaeologists get here.

At least, that was my job.

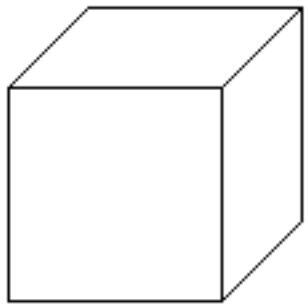


Triangle and Robert

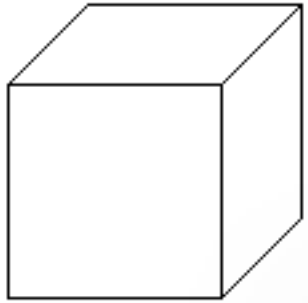
During the course of my covering-up duties, I gradually realized that there was more going on than RDCLBA thought.



I could no longer in good conscience destroy polygonhood's link to the ancient past.



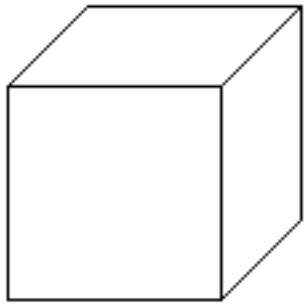
I began collecting the artifacts I was sent to destroy, and I studied them.



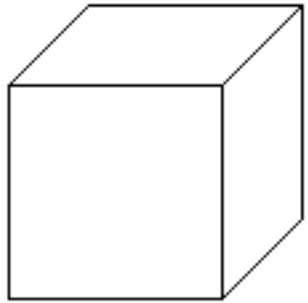
Shouldn't this strip have a link in it

Triangle and Robert

The most startling of my discoveries is that the Fourth Race were not polygons.

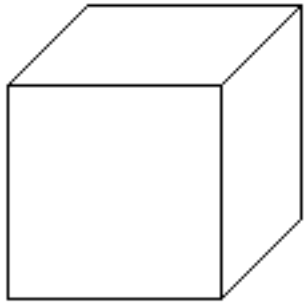


Polygons are not the first civilized species on this world, and from the name the Fourth Race gave themselves we can surmise that they were not the first either.



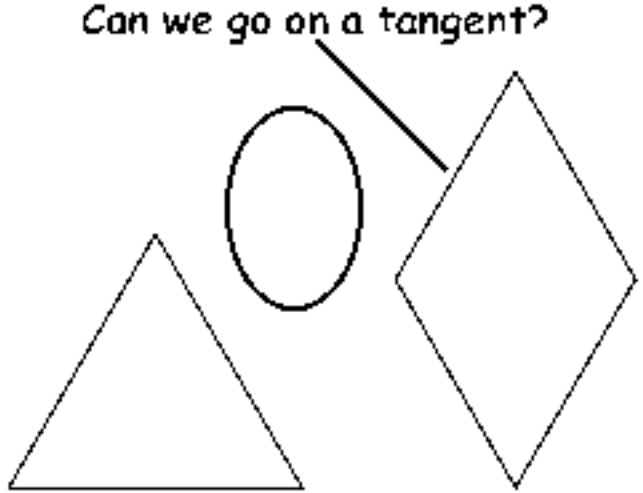
What name was that

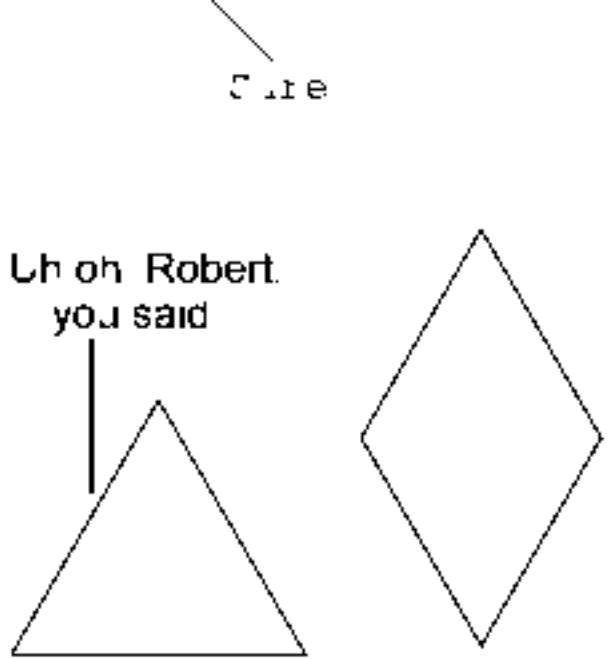
The Fourth Race. What, you think archaeologists would come up with a cool-sounding name like that themselves?

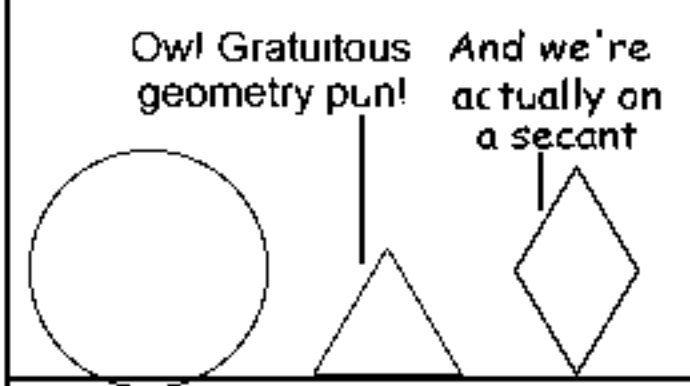


Cool, a joke, of sorts

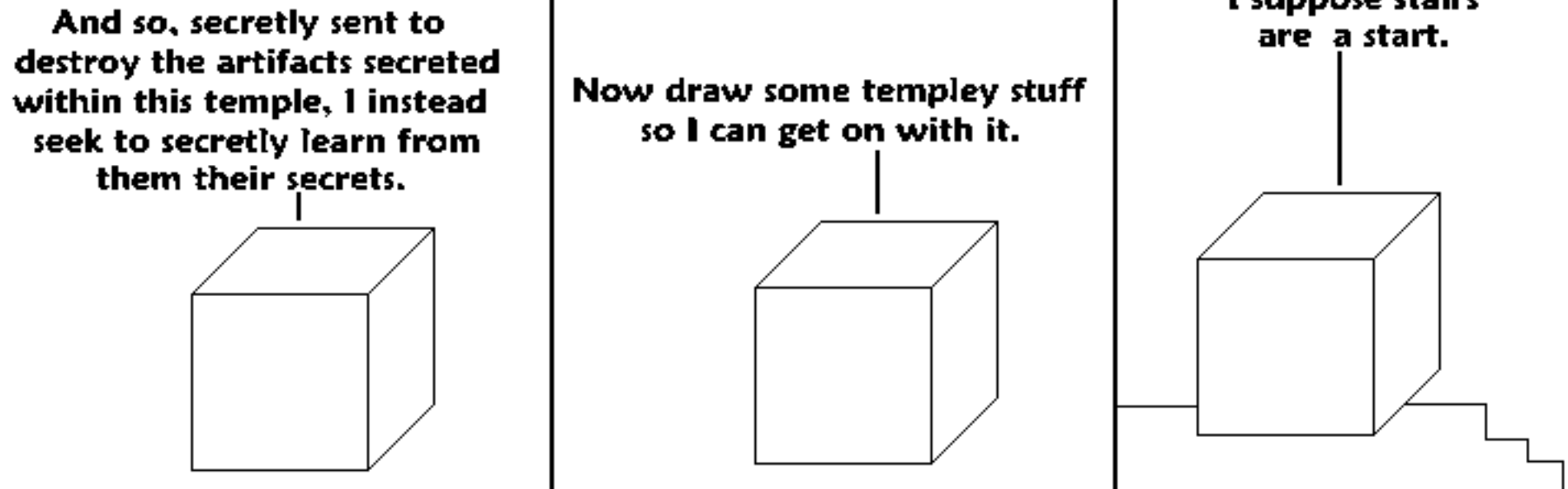
Triangle and Robert



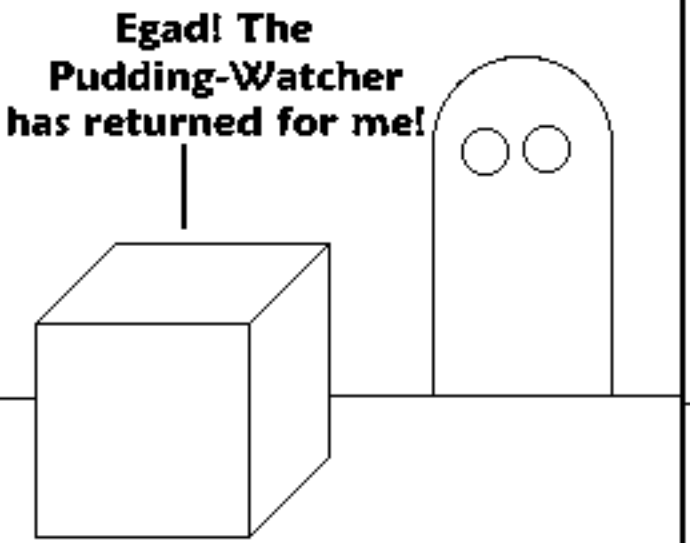


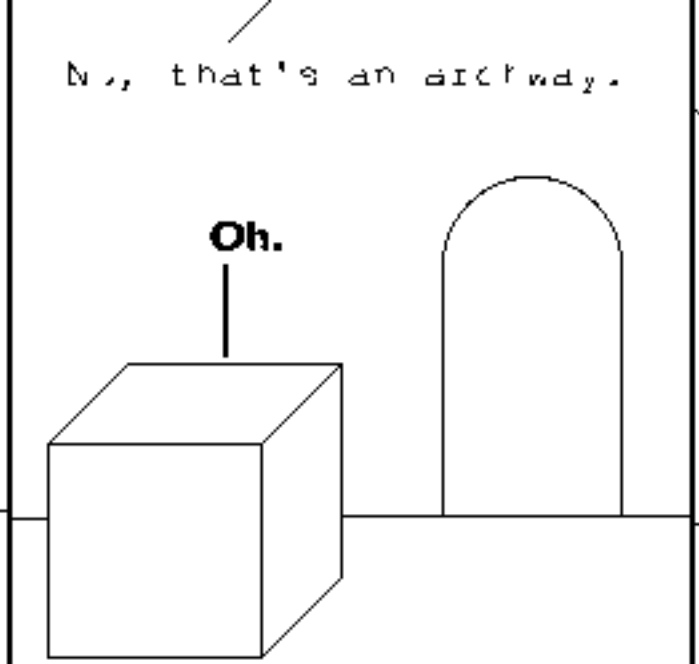


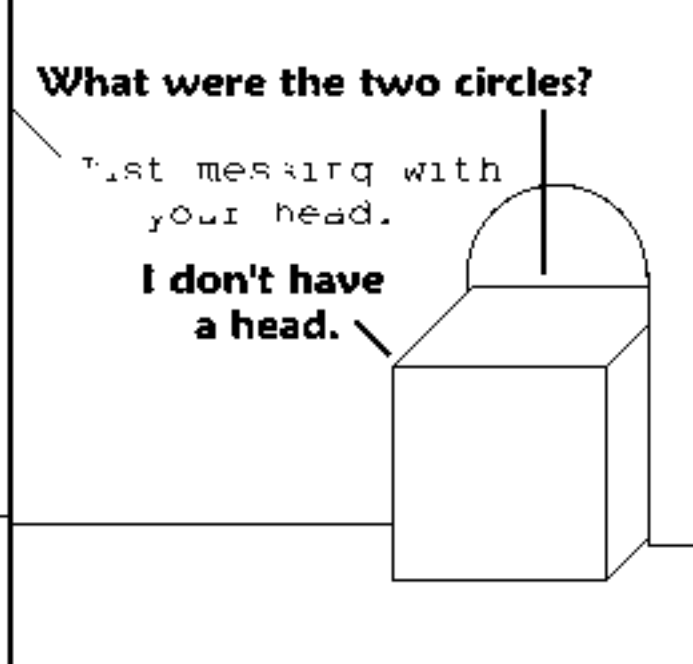
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

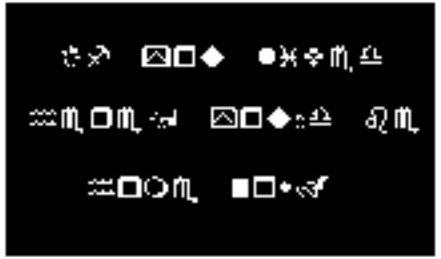


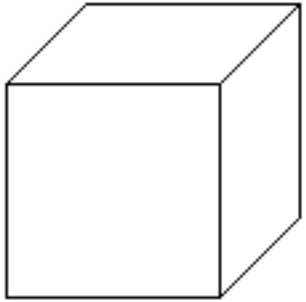


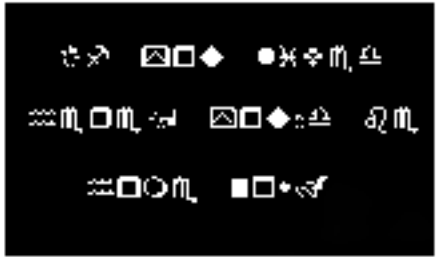


Triangle and Robert

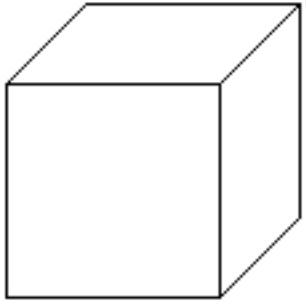
Peculiar.







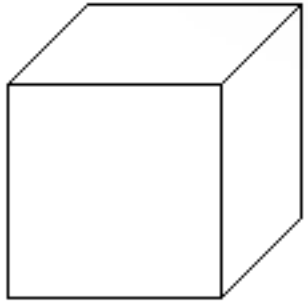
The writing on this tapestry is not in the [redacted] customarily used by the Fourth Race.



It's Wingdings

Wingdings?

I didn't have any ancient script fonts, so I used Wingdings



Triangle and Robert

You don't actually know anything about archaeology, do you?

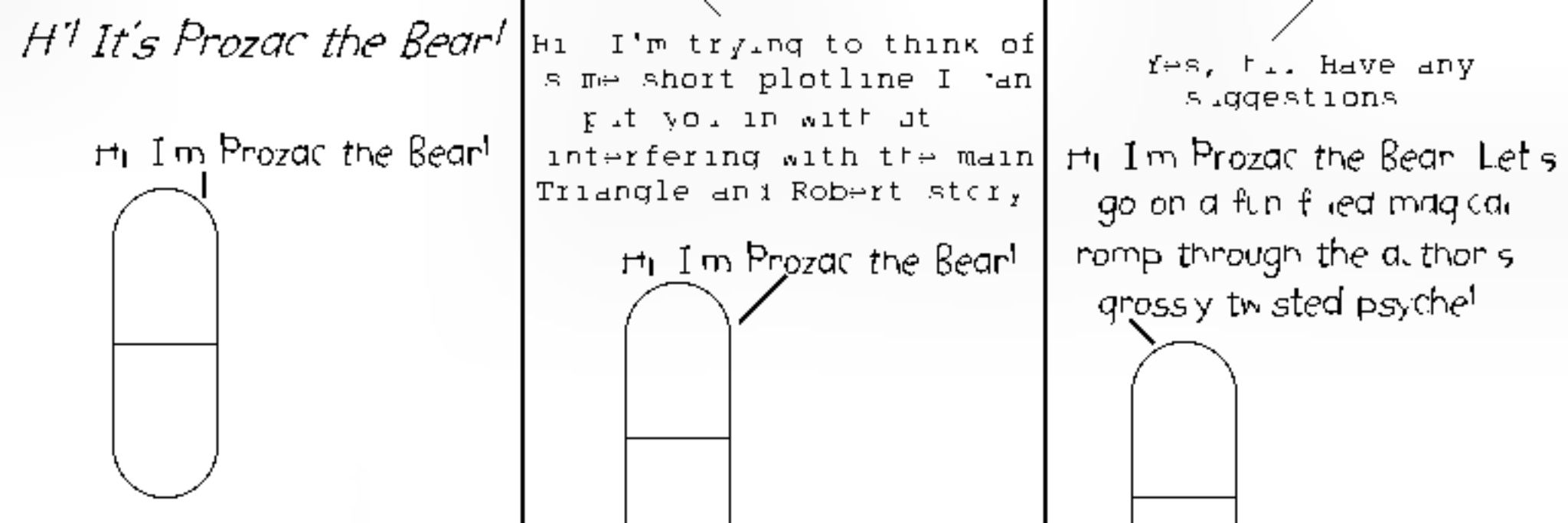
N

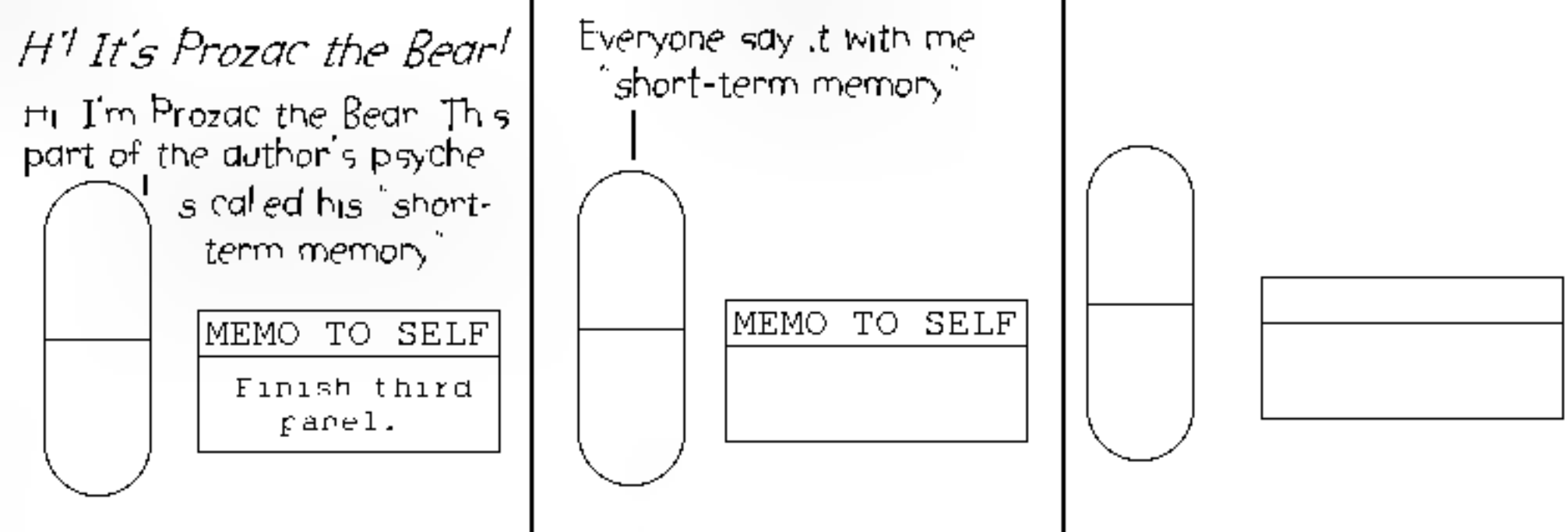
So as long as you're drawing the expedition I'm not going to be able to make any important discoveries.

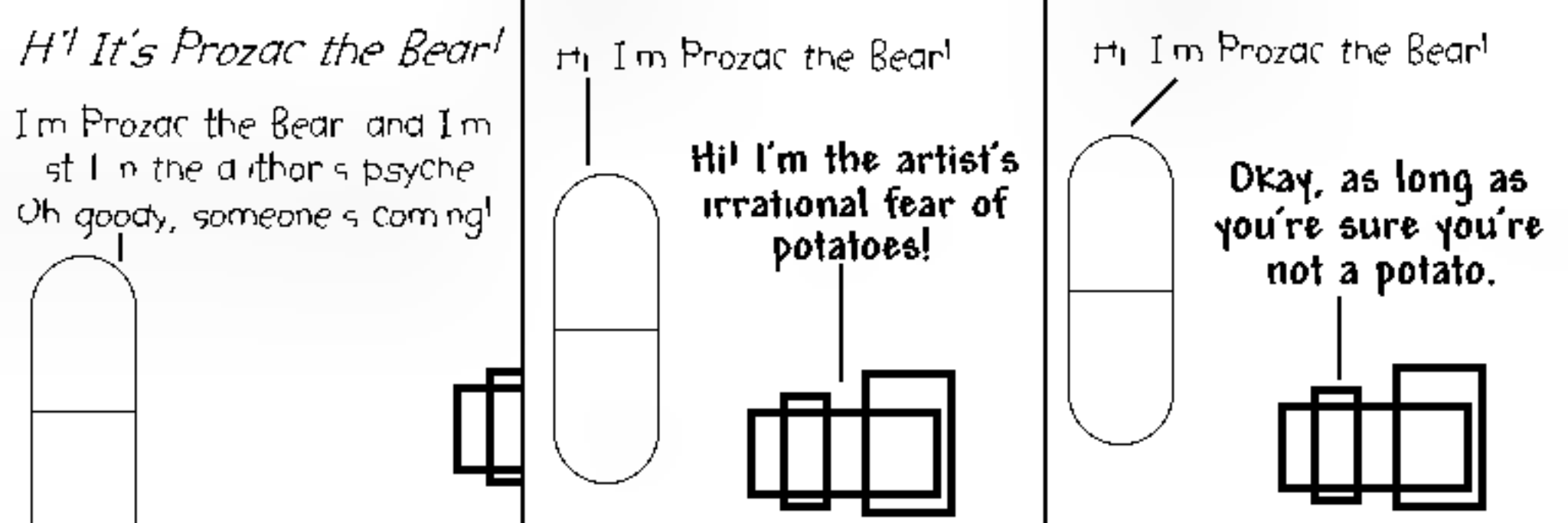
No, only plot advancing ones

So why don't you do some other plotline for a bit and let me do the archaeology.

Sounds good to me.


H! It's Prozac the Bear!
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!
Hi I'm trying to think of some short plotline I can put you in with out interfering with the main Triangle and Robert story
Yes, I'll have any suggestions
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear Let's go on a fun filled magical romp through the author's grossly twisted psyche!


H'l It's Prozac the Bear!
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear Th s part of the author's psyche s cal ed his "short-term memory"
MEMO TO SELF
Finish third panel.
Everyone say .t with me "short-term memory"
MEMO TO SELF


H! It's Prozac the Bear!
I m Prozac the Bear and I m st l n the a thor s psyche
Oh goody, someone s com ng!
H! I m Prozac the Bear!
Hi! I'm the artist's irrational fear of potatoes!
H! I m Prozac the Bear!
Okay, as long as you're sure you're not a potato.

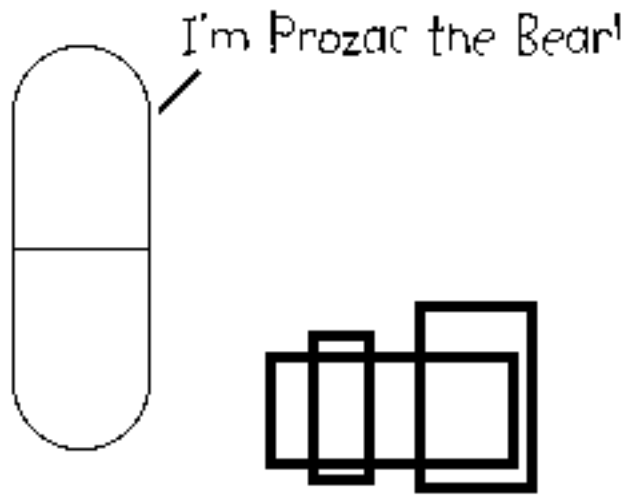
Prozac the Bear

and

the artist's irrational fear of potatoes

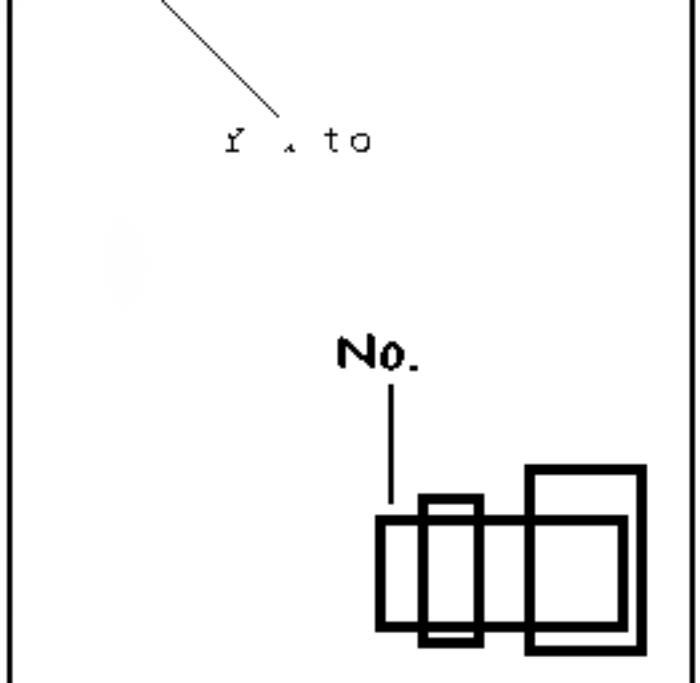
in

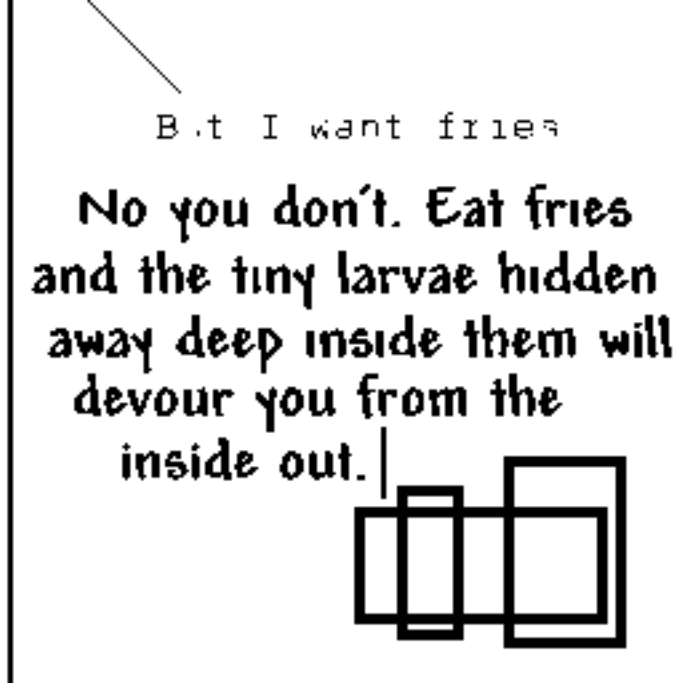
STRIP #250



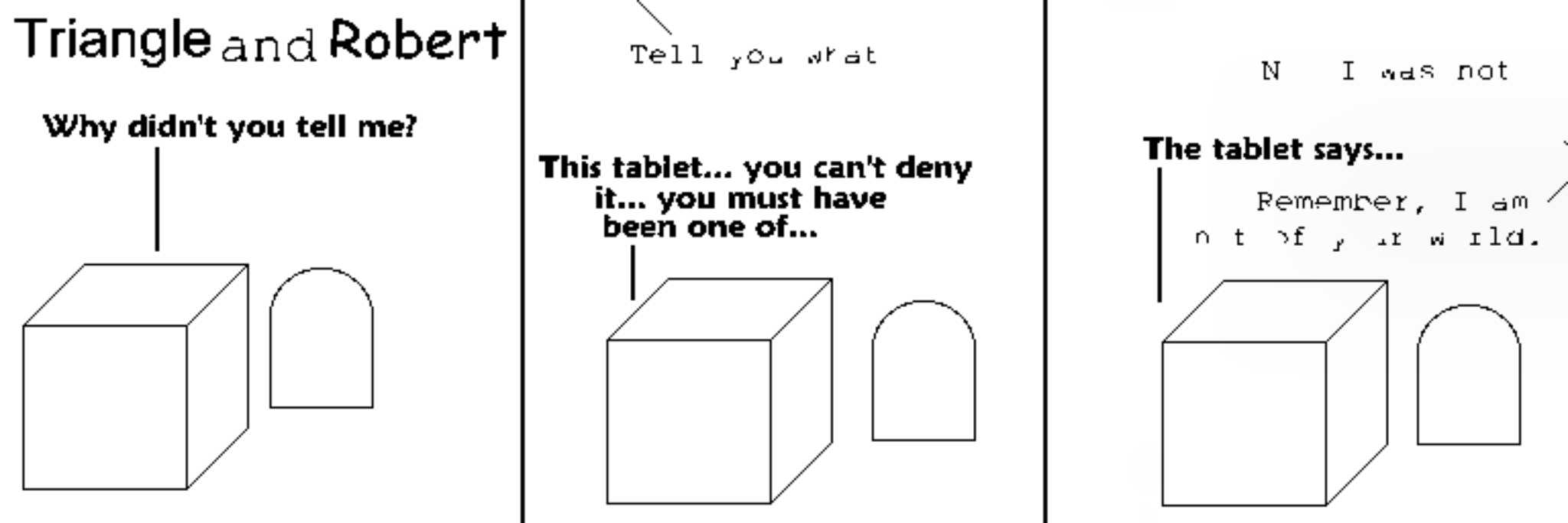
Fin

H'! It's Prozac the Bear!
Kay, this is just embarassing and not at all funny. Get out of my psy he.

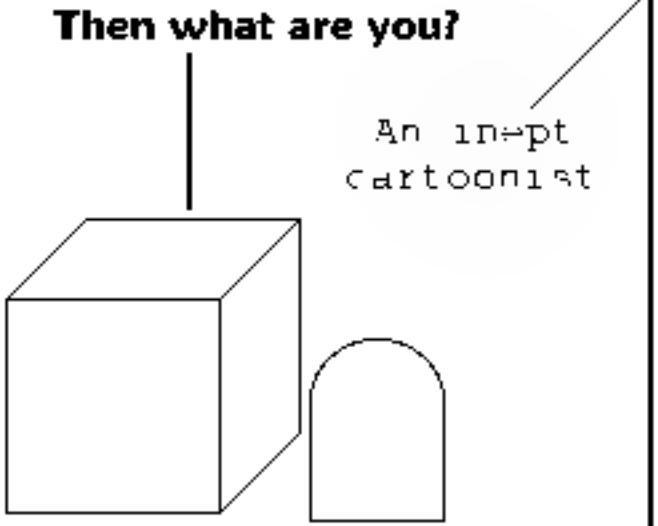

Y to
No.

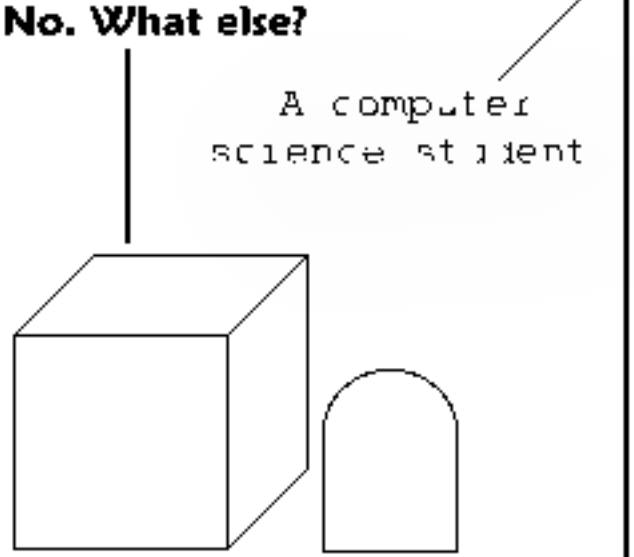

But I want fries
No you don't. Eat fries and the tiny larvae hidden away deep inside them will devour you from the inside out.

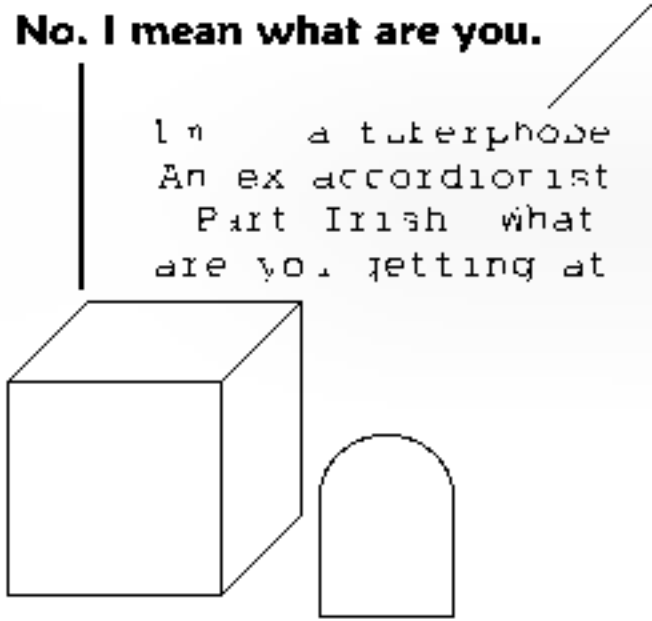
Triangle and Robert



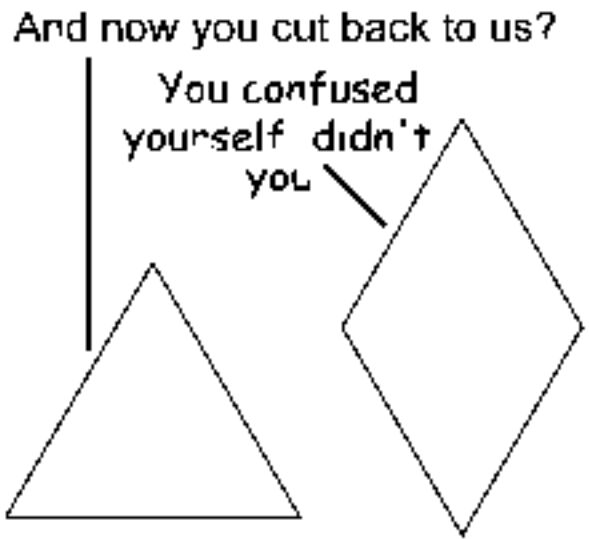
Triangle and Robert

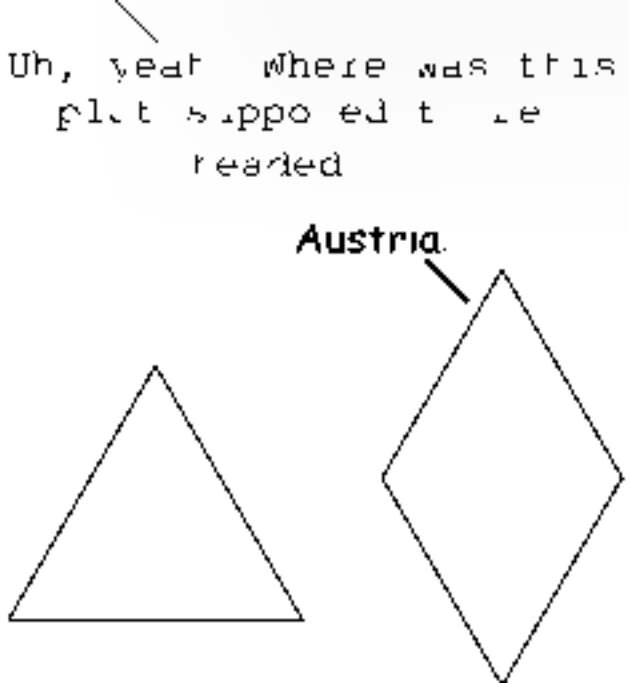


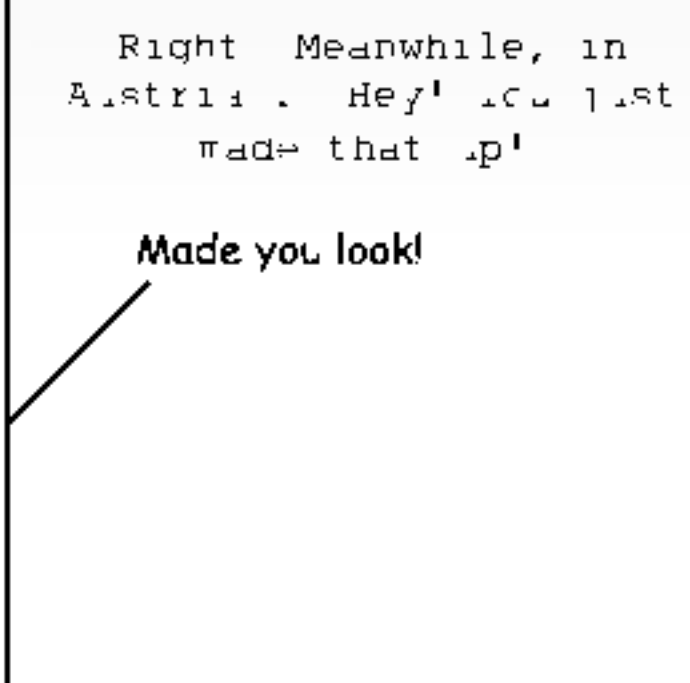




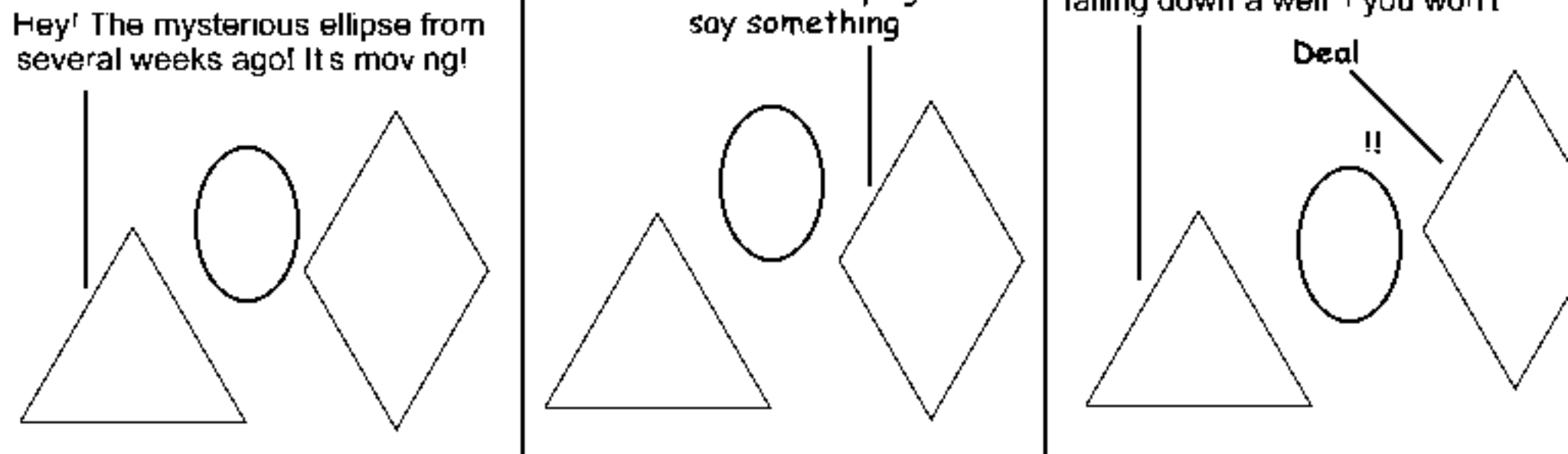
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Meanwhile, in darkest Scotland

Not a chance.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

You have Cube and Orpuddex and the oval and the temple and whatever that tablet says and Prozac and potatoes.... Call me when the plot thins a little.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

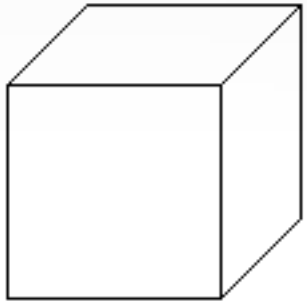
But that could take months

Find a way to hurry it up then.

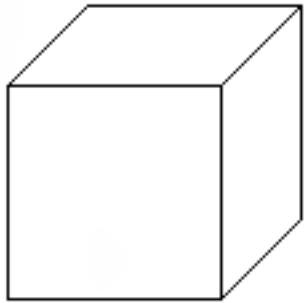
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

I am no more fey or wild than Cryddex is. I am a human as the Fourth Race were, yes, but I am not one of them

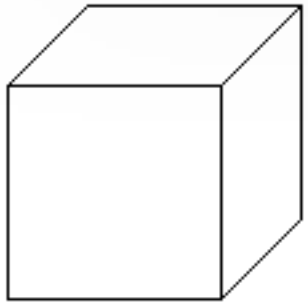


I thought you were saving the "Fourth Race was Man" revelation for after the Oval opened.



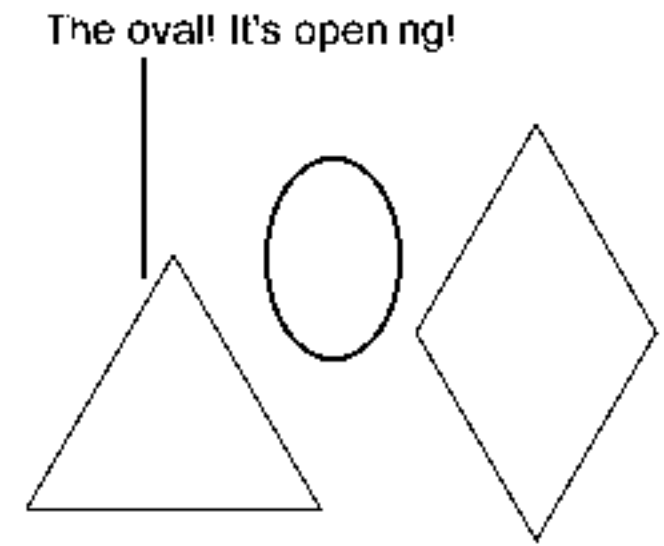
I thought I was too, but I couldn't keep track of the whole plot so I'm playing some of my cards early.

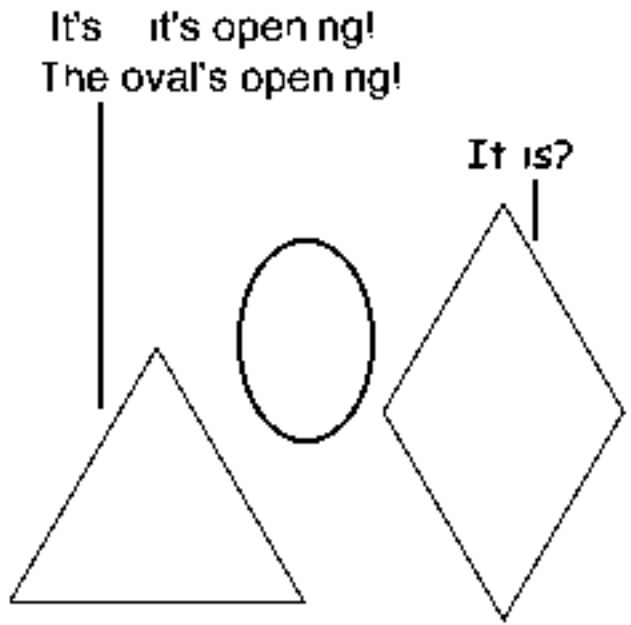
Frank Herbert you're not.

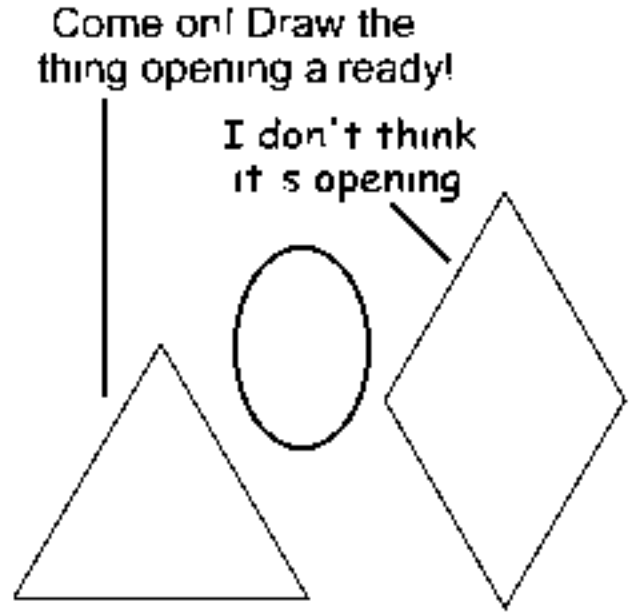


I'll take that as a compliment

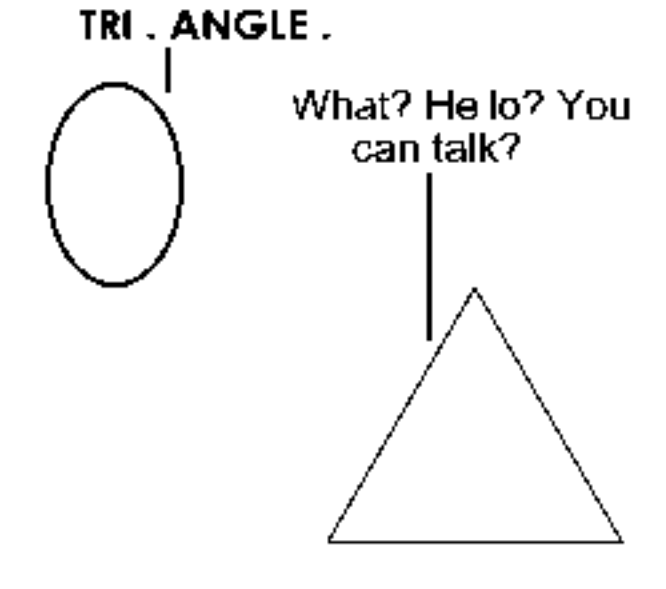
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

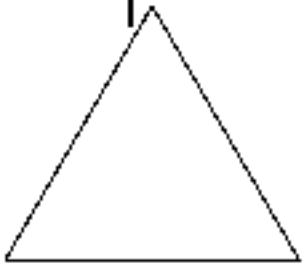


Triangle and Robert

I don't think I can pull this off

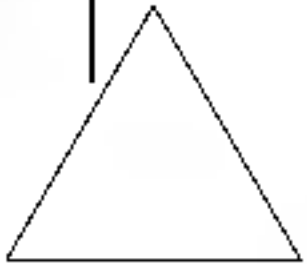
WHO SPEAKS OF WHAT?

Huh?



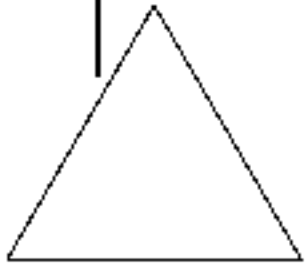
I had this whole story arc thing planned out, but I don't think I can do it and still be funny

So we're going to abandon another potentially-grossing plotline to its fate?

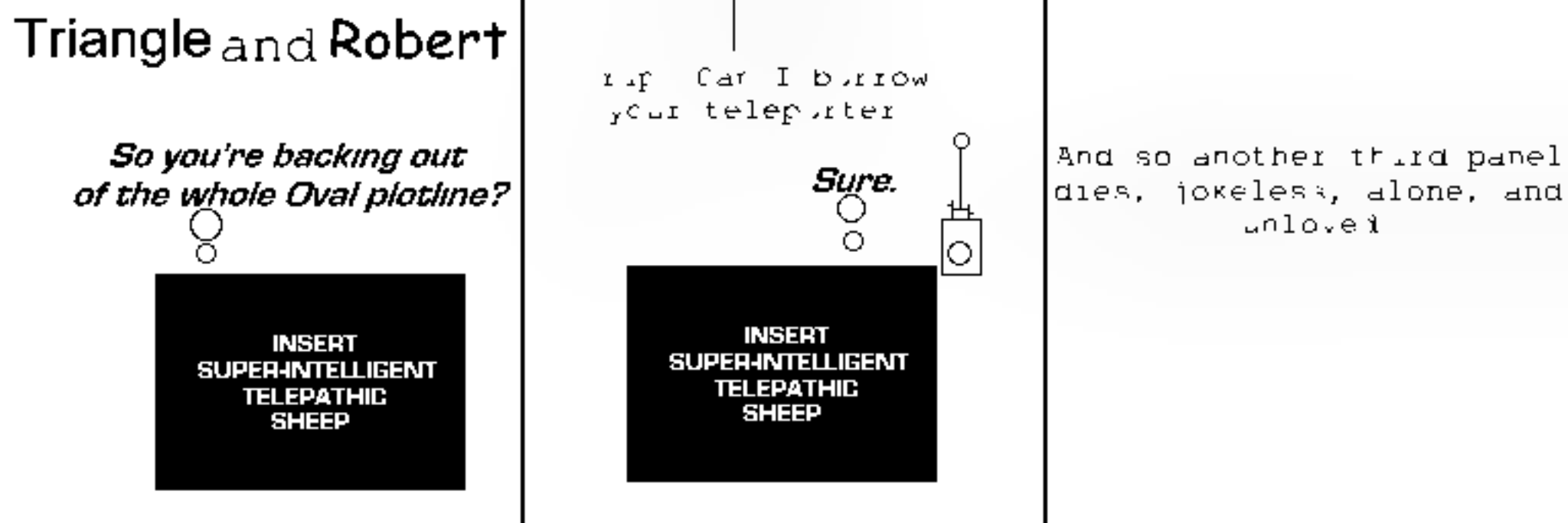


Yeah. Business as usual

How do you live with yourself?



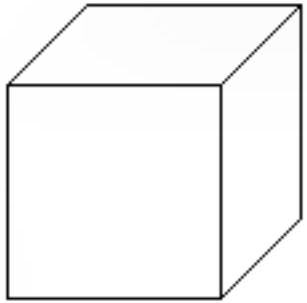
Triangle and Robert



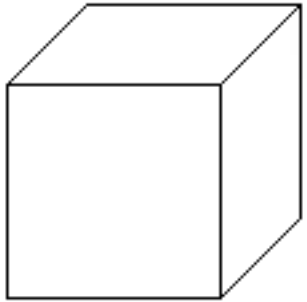
Triangle and Robert

By the way, did you know that cursed relic thing was never destroyed

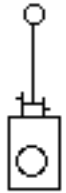
What? Then that means...

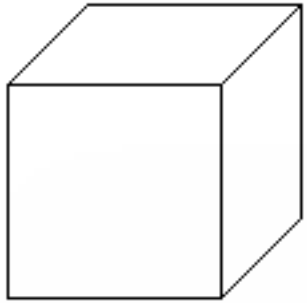


that means Triangle and Robert are a pair of incompetent nincompoops who can't possibly be trusted with the Oval!



[illegible] you'll have to take it from them. Use this teleporter

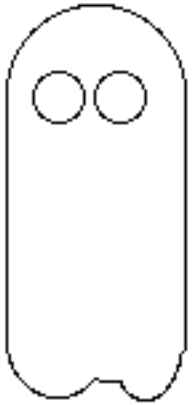




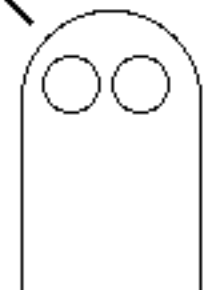
Triangle and Robert

Hey Orpudlex, Cule' headed towards the Oval

WHAT?

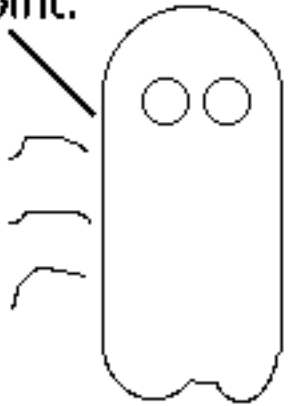


I must stop him! For the sake of the universe, which I sort of want destroyed anyway but would much rather destroy for myself, he must be stopped!



Then you should stop soliloquizing and start chasing him

Good point.

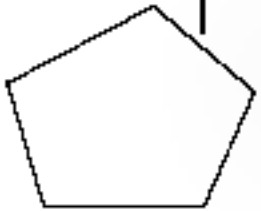


Triangle and Robert

RDCLBA Industries, how may I direct your call?

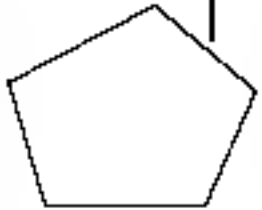
I know what this place really is and I need to talk to the Pentagon

Yes, this is the Pentagon. What is it?



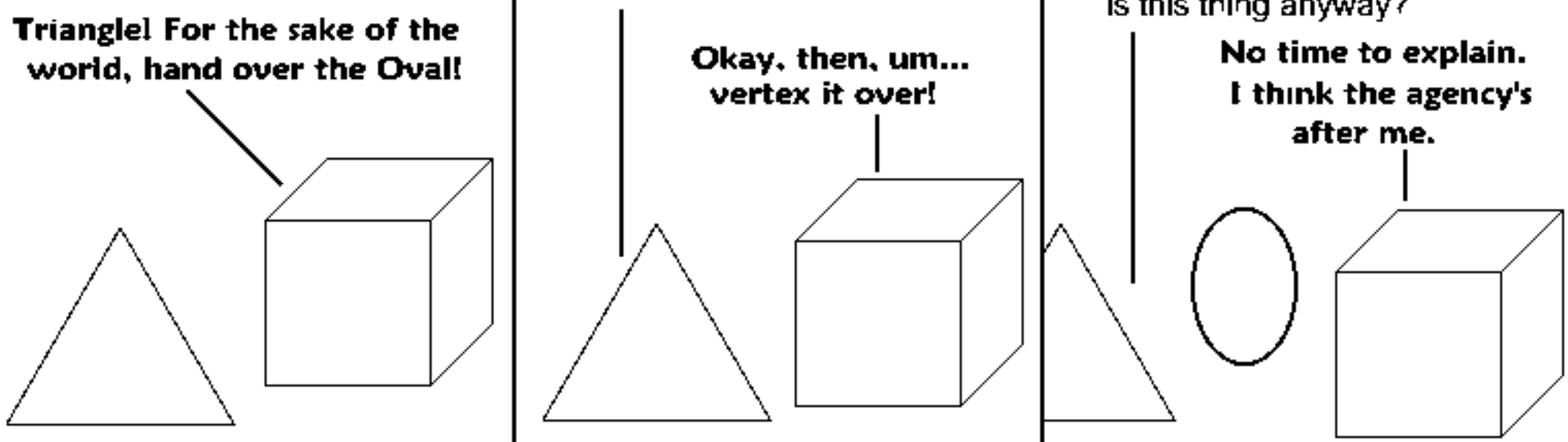
It's about one of your agents. Cube

That backstabber! Tell me where he is! Now!

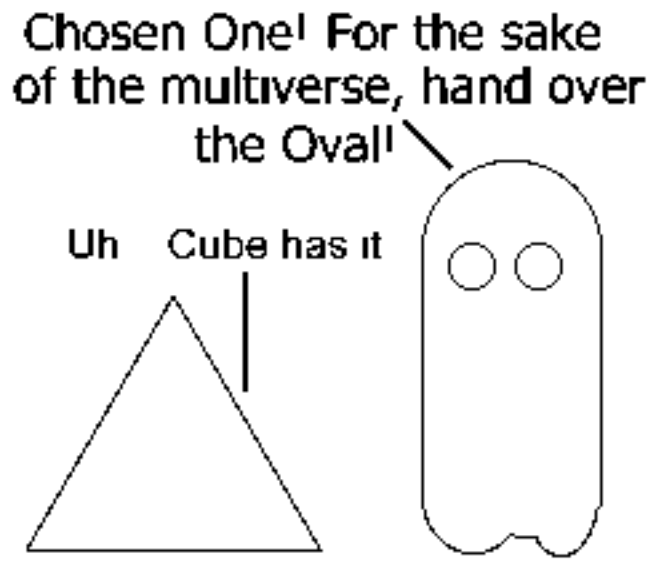


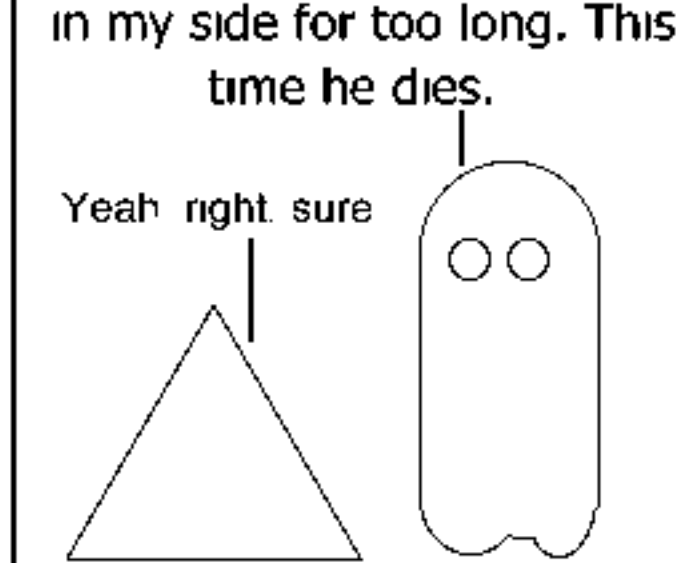
That's exactly the reason I called

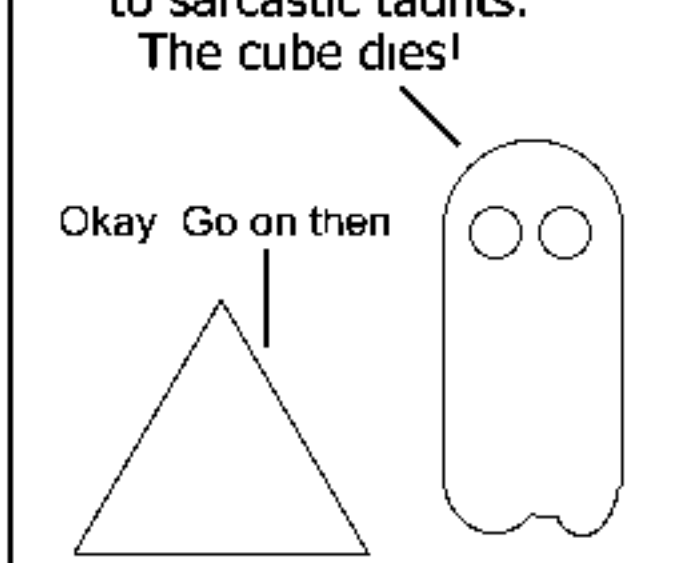
Triangle and Robert



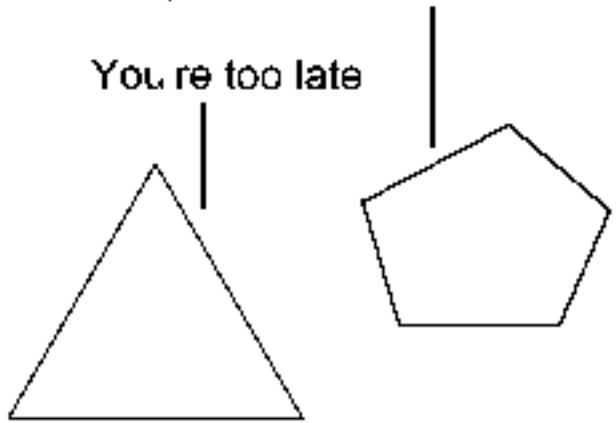
Triangle and Robert

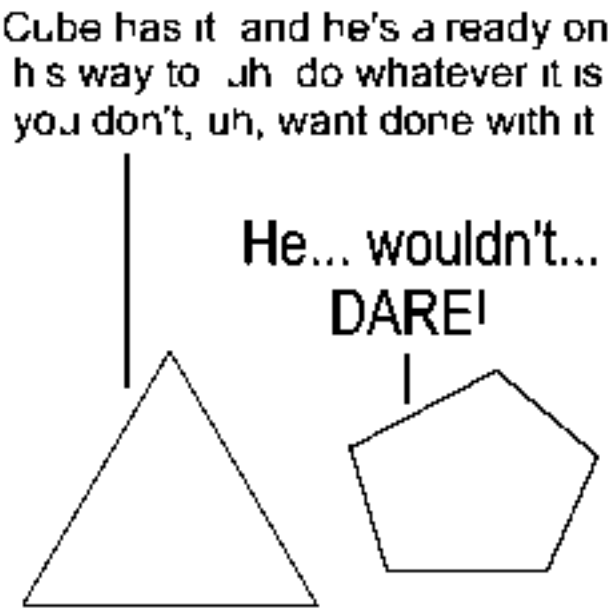


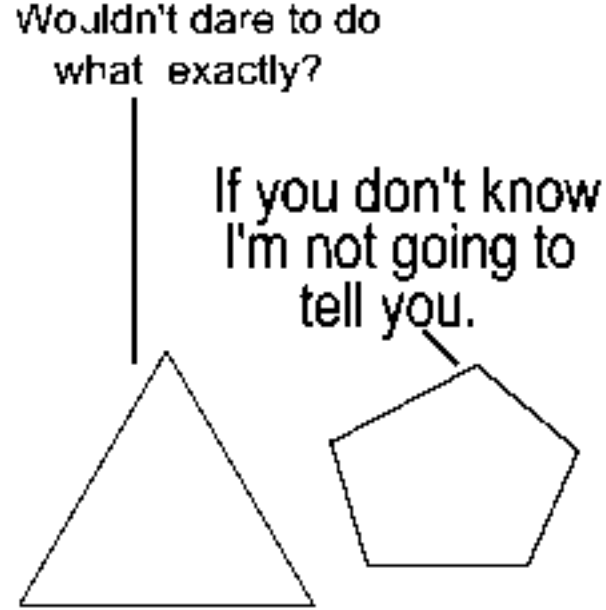




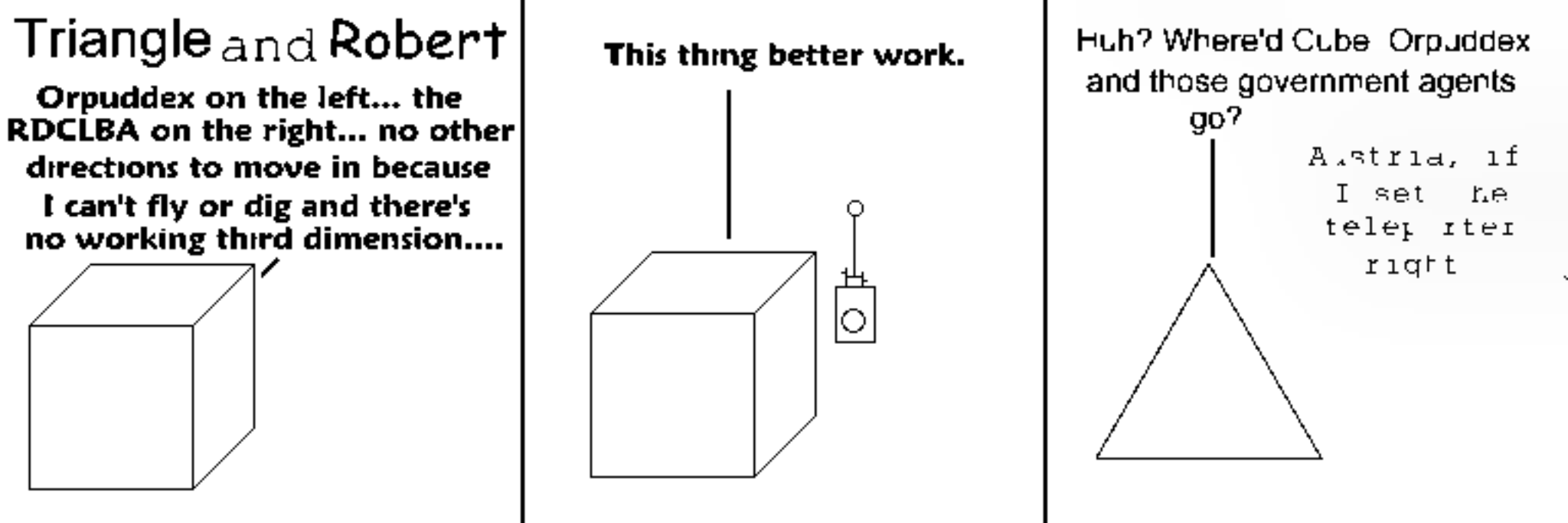
Triangle and Robert





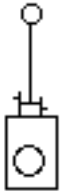


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Here's your teleporter back.



Thanks. What did you need it for anyway?

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Well as I said, I needed to back out of the real plotline because I had an elaborate story arc planned and forgot to put any jokes in it

And the teleporter?

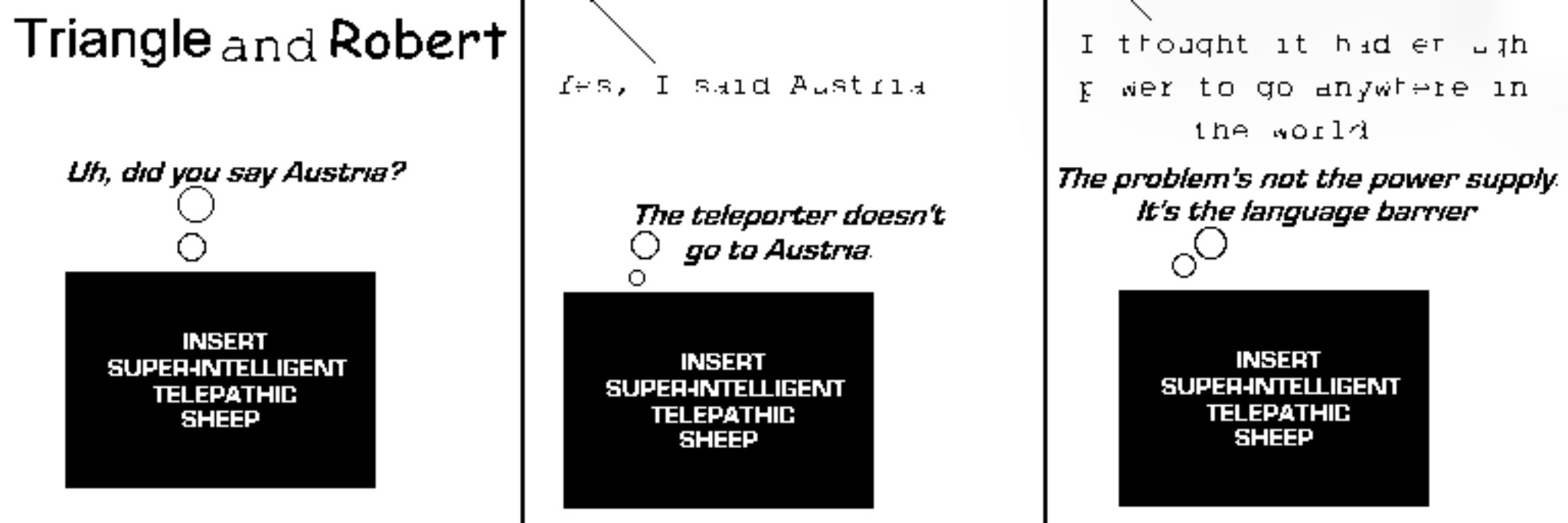
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I got all the problematic plot elements in one place and put Cube to use the teleporter. The whole story arc's cooling its heels in Austria now

Subtle.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

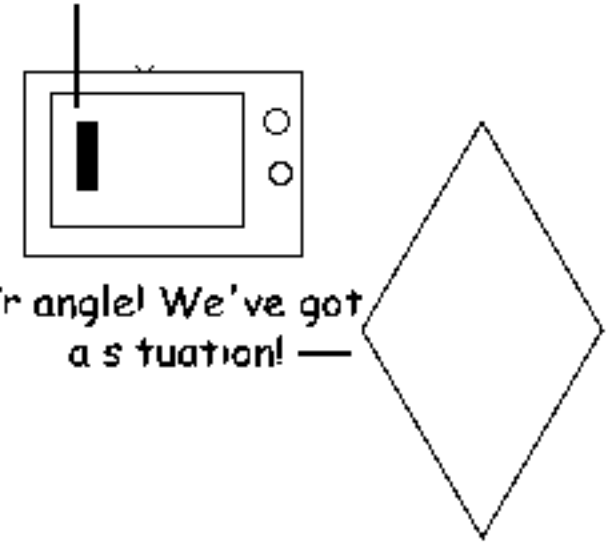


Triangle and Robert

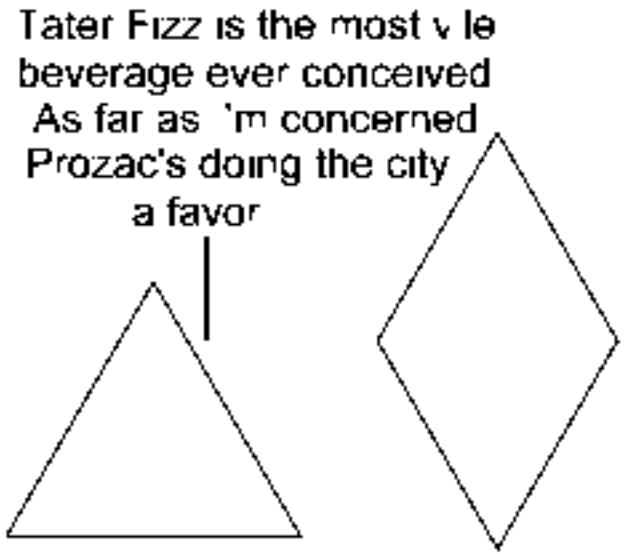
I'm reporting live from outside the Tater Fizz bottling plant. Witnesses claim to have seen a

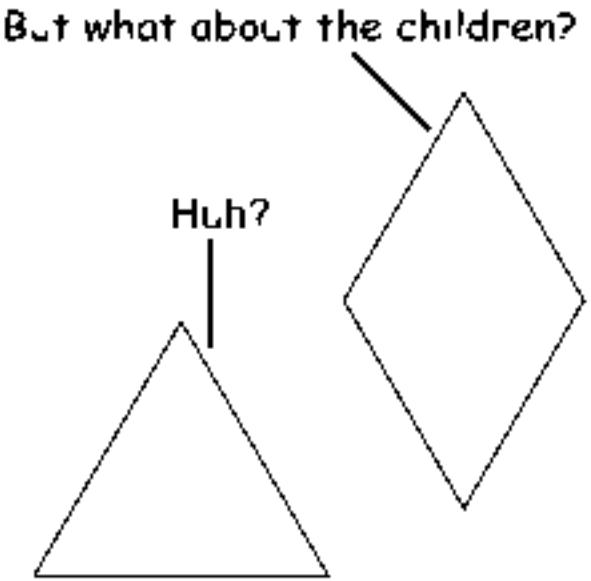
giant screaming pill entering the plant two days ago. Since then, no one has entered or left the bottling plant. It appears that the local supply of

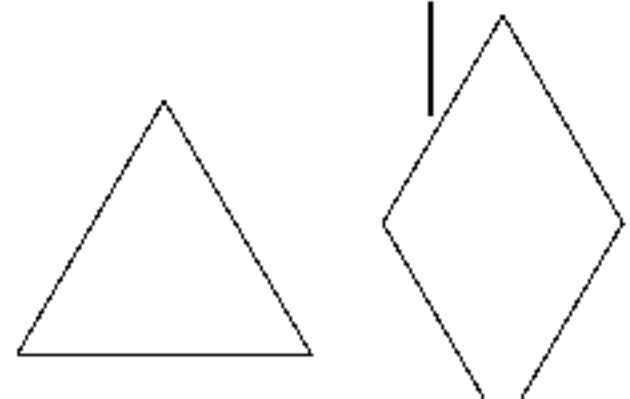
the popular potato flavored soft drink has been cut off.



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

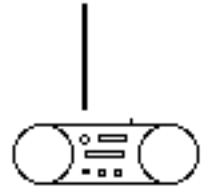
If they're not in Austria then where are they

Shh. I'm listening to this.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

It's day four of the Tater Fizz crisis and there has as yet been no communication of any kind from inside the plant. Police believe there may be a hostage situation in progress but don't feel like doing anything about it

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

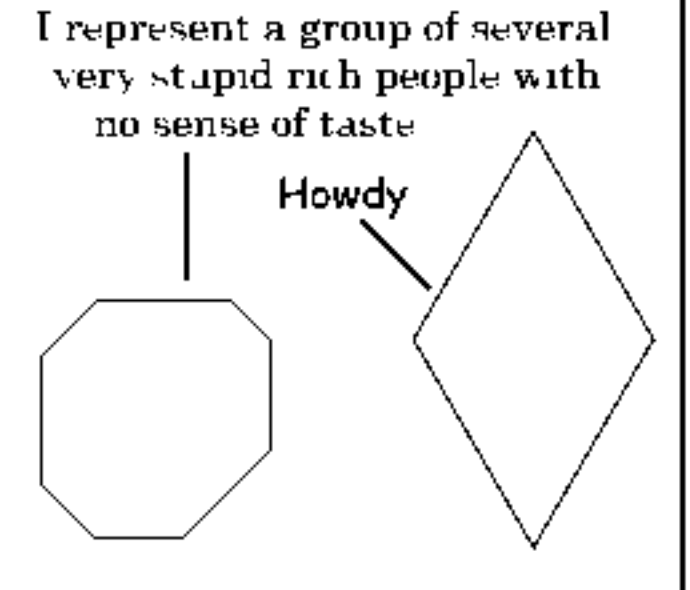


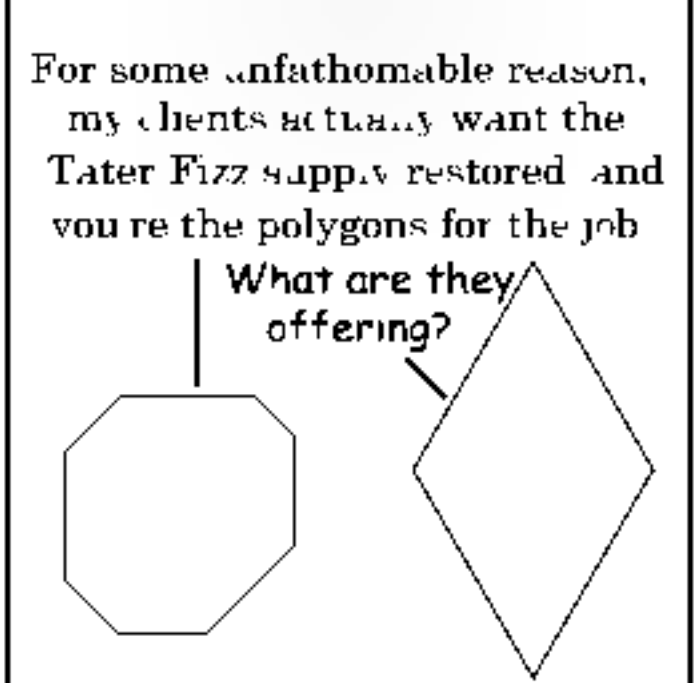
In other news, the government is denying both the disappearance of the RDCLBA and the fact that said agency ever existed to begin with. And now, weather

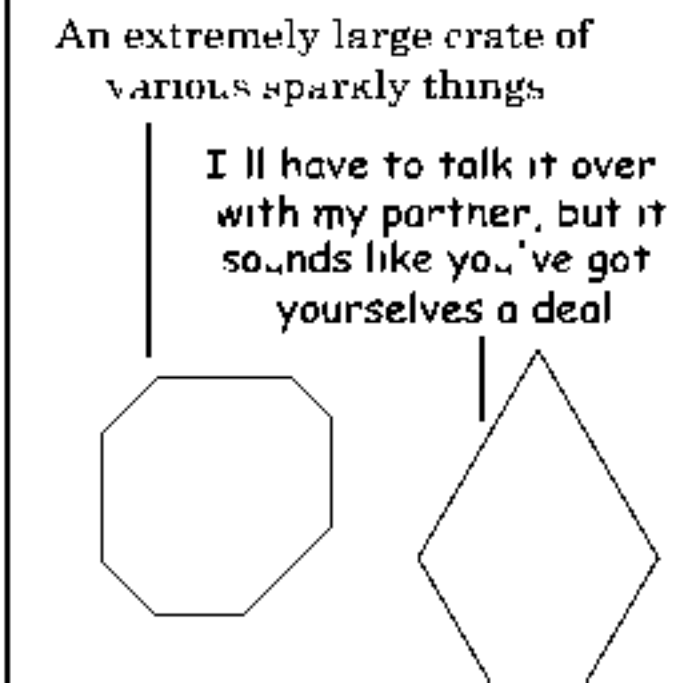
What was your question again?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

A new development in the Tater Fizz situation: local wacky scheme consultants Triangle and Robert have just been seen entering the bottling plant carrying an oversized copy of the Emancipation Proclamation.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Hey Turn off the radio for a second I need to know where the teleporter sent everyone!

Shh! Listening! News!

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Huh? Did my radio just turn into some kind of spider?

That's an explosion Now talk

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Having been repulsed by the language barrier, they would naturally emerge from teleportation at the least Austrian point on the planet.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

fo. mean.

No. I don't.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

r u sure? I really want to go to

Well, that's not where they are.

Paty

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Okay, then where is the least Austrian point on the planet

Will you replace my radio if I tell you?

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Of course

Okay. You'll find them at the core of the planet.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Which core? Your planet is shaped funny, you know

The 4D hypertaco was your idea, not ours. Anyway, they're in the molten pudding core.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Do y[illegible] mean to tell me half m[illegible] d[illegible]t ha[illegible] been immersed in molter p[illegible]dling f[illegible] a week

At this point, "dissolved" would be more accurate.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

S[illegible] they're dead

Except for Orpuddex, yes.

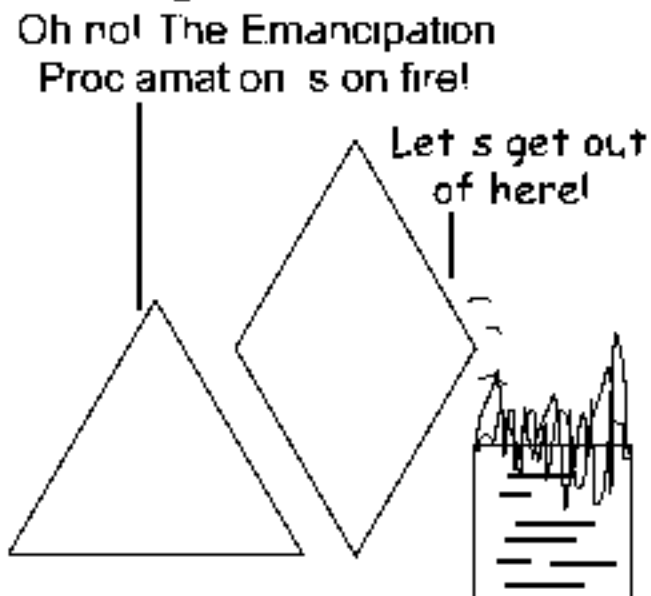
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

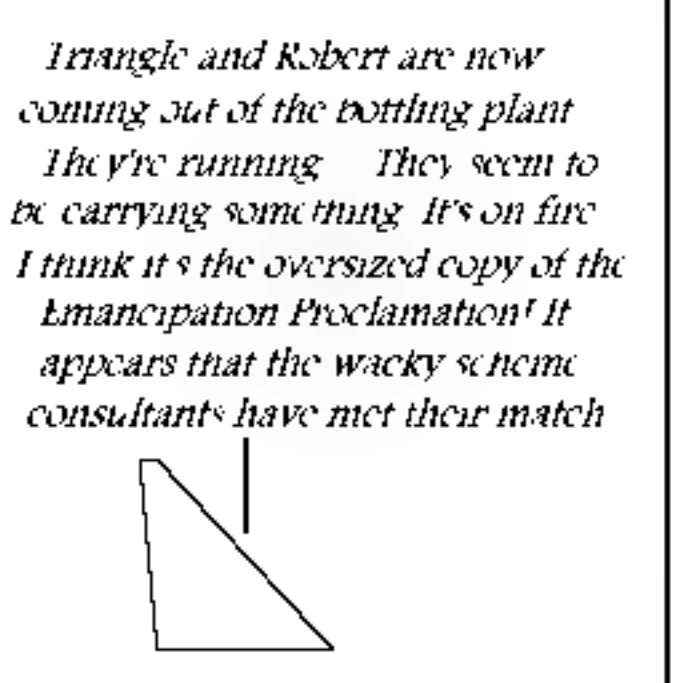
Well That makes things easier It's a l[illegible]t less w[illegible]rk to bring characters b[illegible]k from the dead than t[illegible] find them when they're lost.

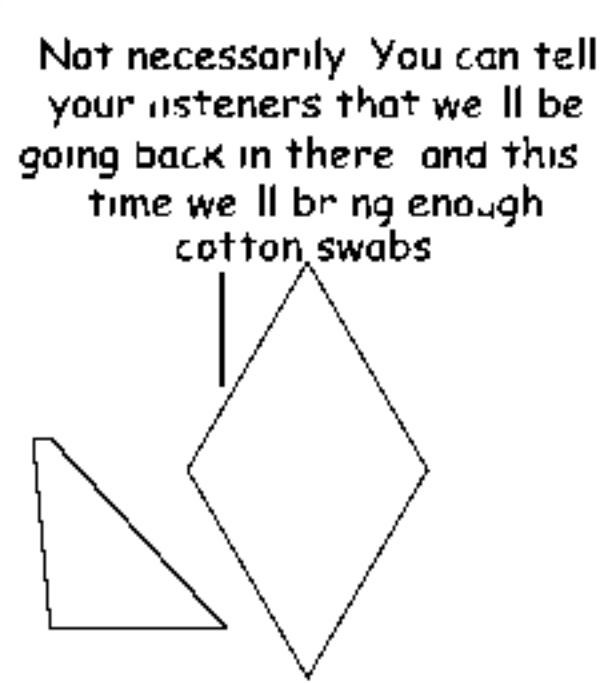
Now give me my radio back.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

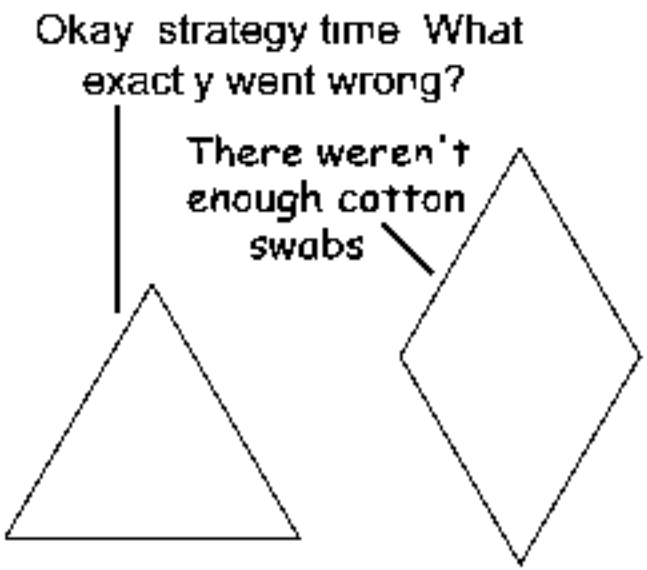
Triangle and Robert

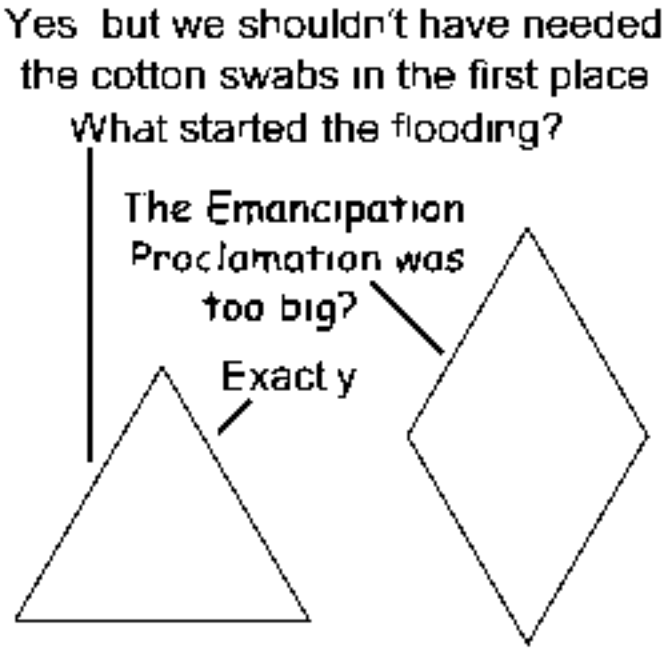


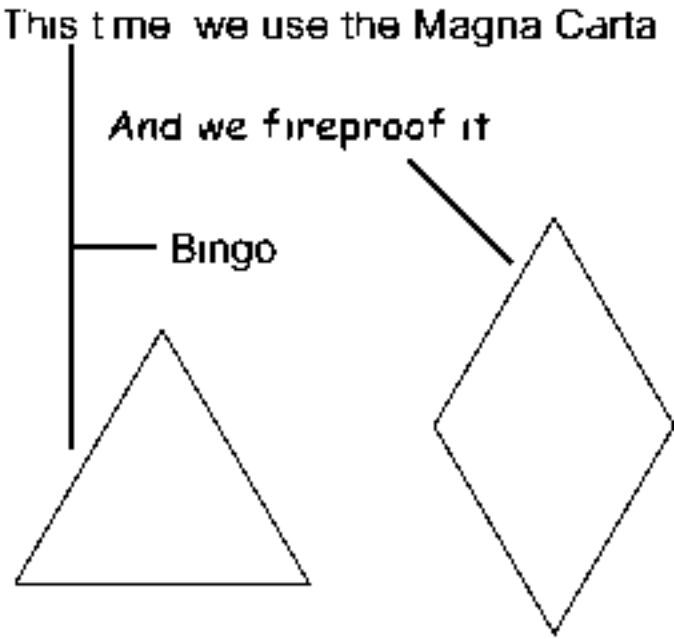




Triangle and Robert

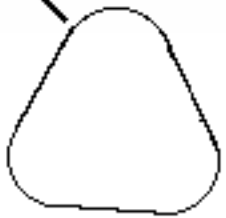






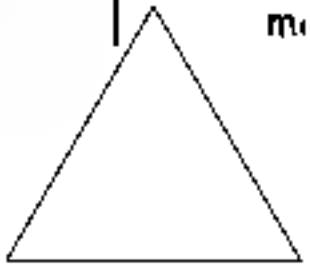
Triangle and Robert

It's the eight of the Tater Fizz raids. So far Triangle and Robert have made six attempts to penetrate the bottling plant's fortress-like defenses. Each attempt has ended with a lot of screaming and something being set on fire.



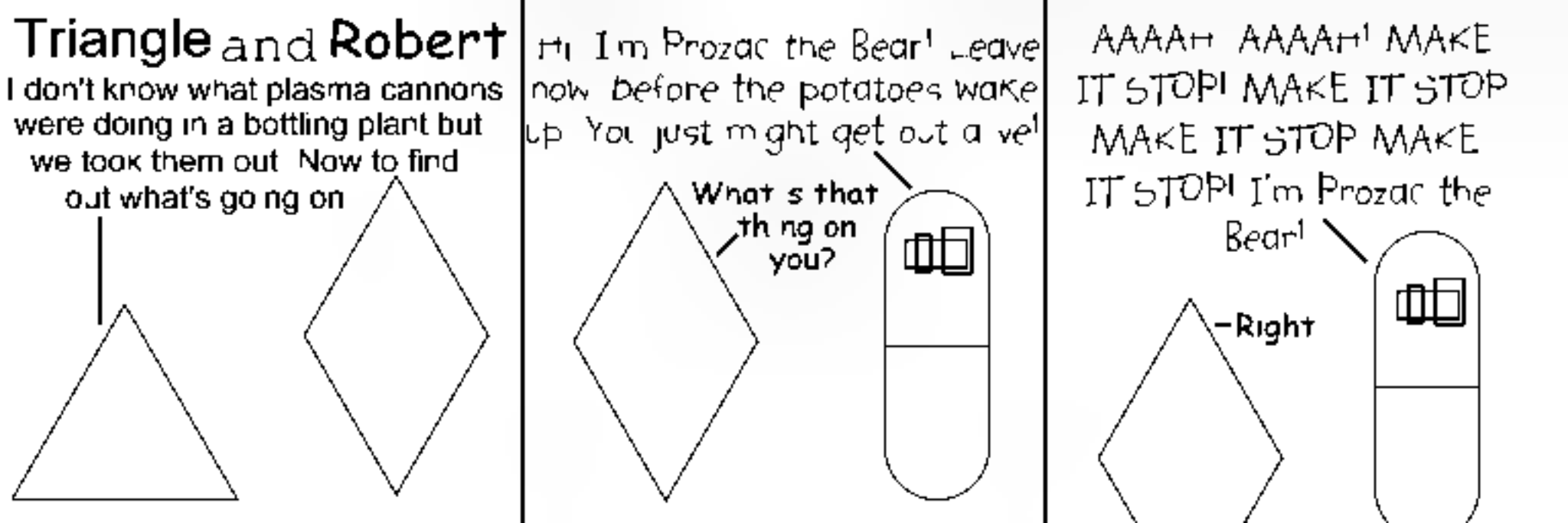
It appears that they are preparing for a seventh attempt. This time, rather than carrying an oversized copy of a historical document, they'll be using the squad. Hopefully this change of plan will lead to success.

WHY? WHY does a bottling plant for a soda no one sane drinks have automated defenses that make Area 51 look like a miniature golf course?



Maybe they like miniature golf

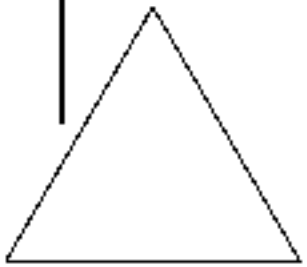
Triangle and Robert

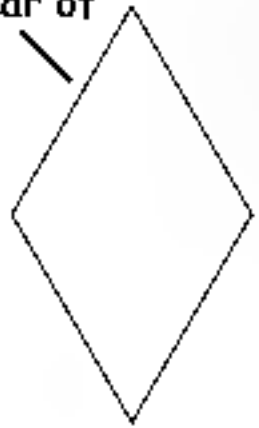


Triangle and Robert

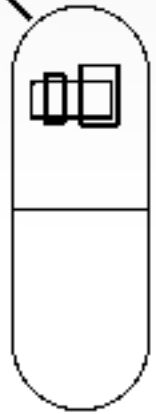
What s gotten into that pill?

I I th nk it s the author s irrat onal fear of potatoes

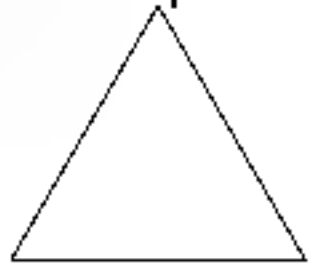




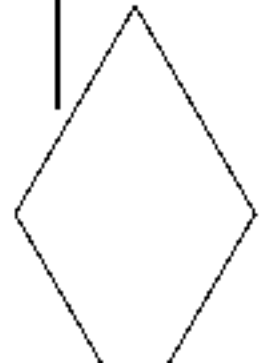
The yams are n it too you hear me? Yes! I said the yams! It s a consp racy reach ng up to the highest levels of th ngy I m Prozac the Bear!



Fetch me a packet of cr sps I'm gonna try an exorcism



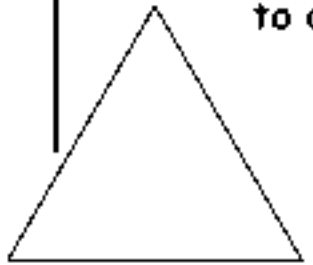
No! The shock would kill him!

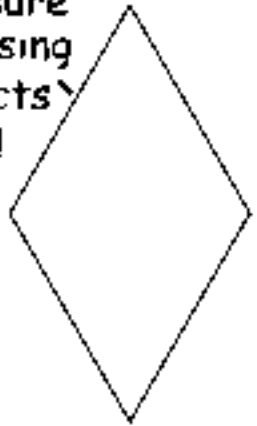


Triangle and Robert

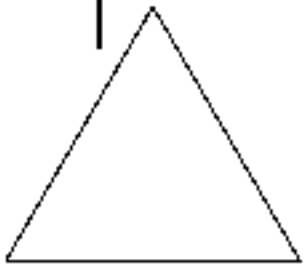
It's our only chance! The lasers will be back online any minute now!

Exorcise him sure but we're not using potato products to do it!

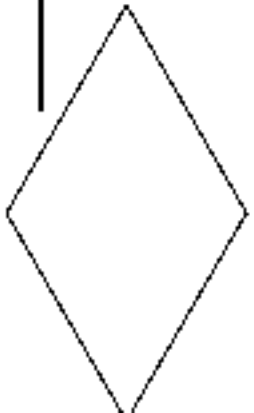




Then what?



You still have a couple squid left?



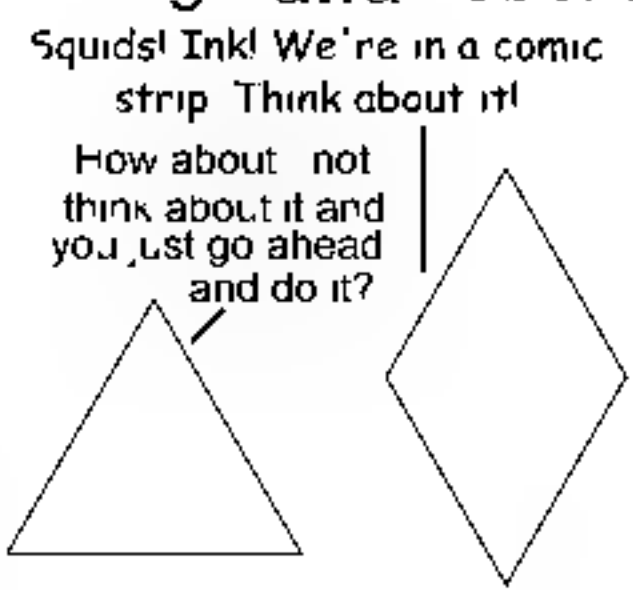
Oh! Of course! Exorcise irrational fear of potatoes with a pair of squid!

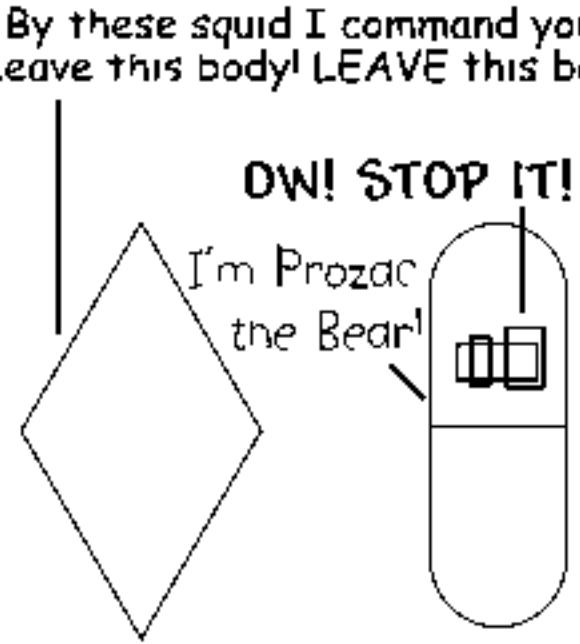
See what I'm getting at?

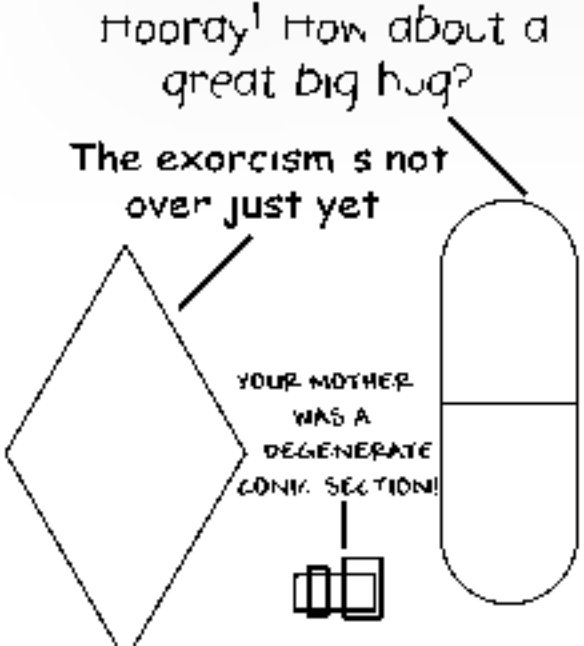
No! Not in the slightest!

Just hand me the cephalopods and hide behind something

Triangle and Robert







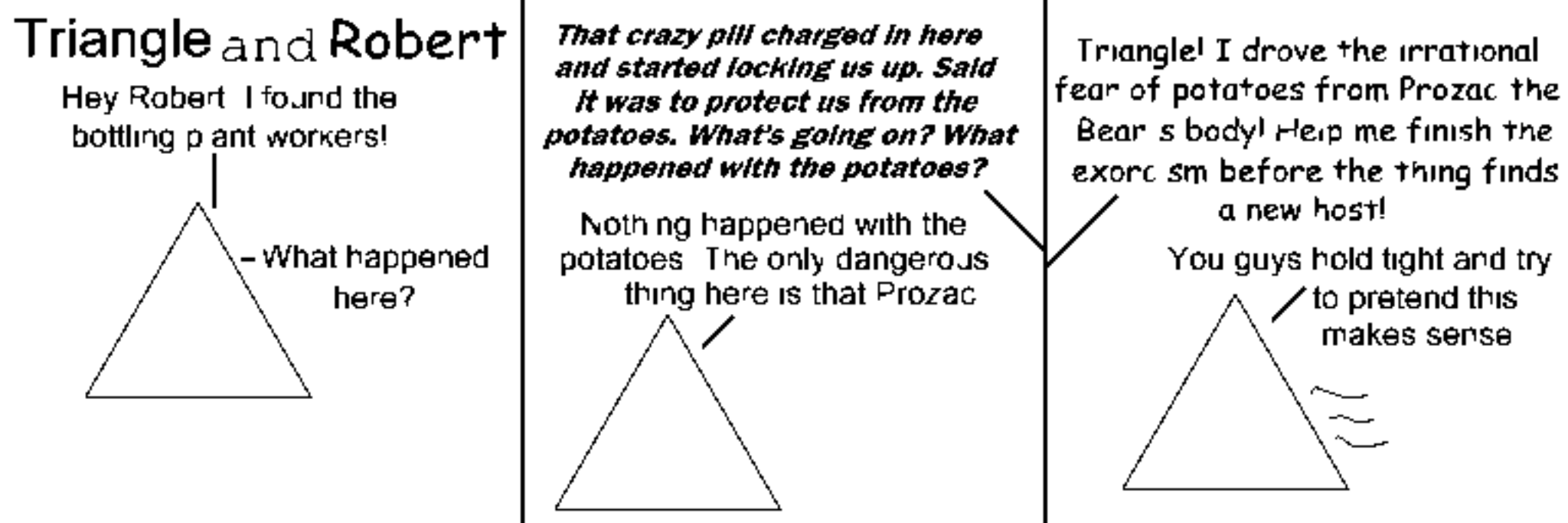
Triangle and Robert

You don't get it! I'm not the bad guy! It's the potatoes! I'm the only one who knows! I'm trying to stop them!

You're BLIND! You don't SEE what I can see! The potatoes! They're. . they're what you should be after, not me!

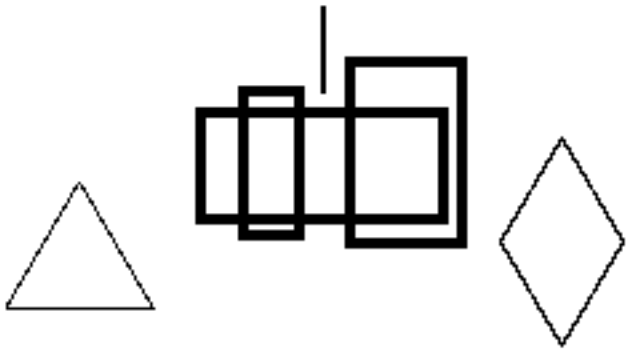
They won't spare you if you stop me! Don't expect potatoes to be merciful! They're not LIKE the carrots! They'll get you!

Triangle and Robert

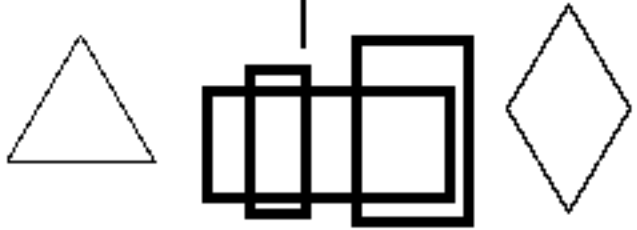


Triangle and Robert

LISTEN! I'm not the villain here! Potatoes infect your mind with their radiation!

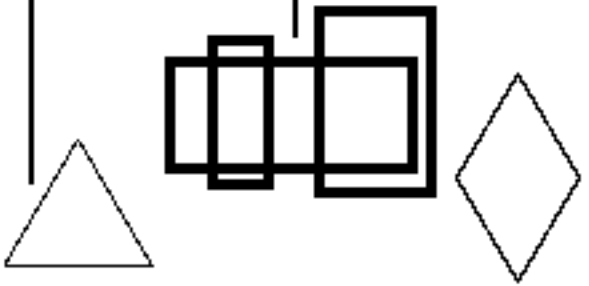


They're not even really vegetables! They're biological incubators for a hostile alien race! It's all in the thesaurus, I'm not making it up!



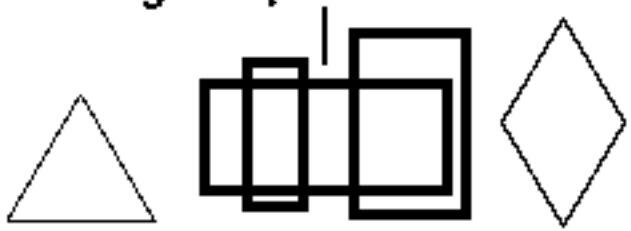
The thesaurus?

Don't look at me like that! I didn't put it there!



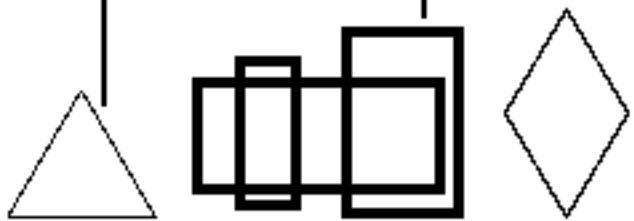
Triangle and Robert

I sense the fear in you, equilateral one. It is strong. Together we can crush the potatoes and rule the galaxy as, uh...



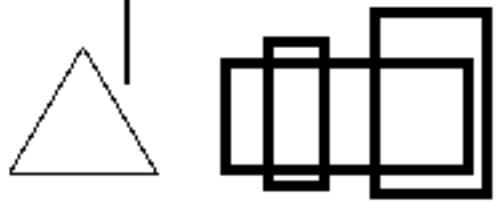
and rule the galaxy as psychological phenomenon and polygon! Join me!

No

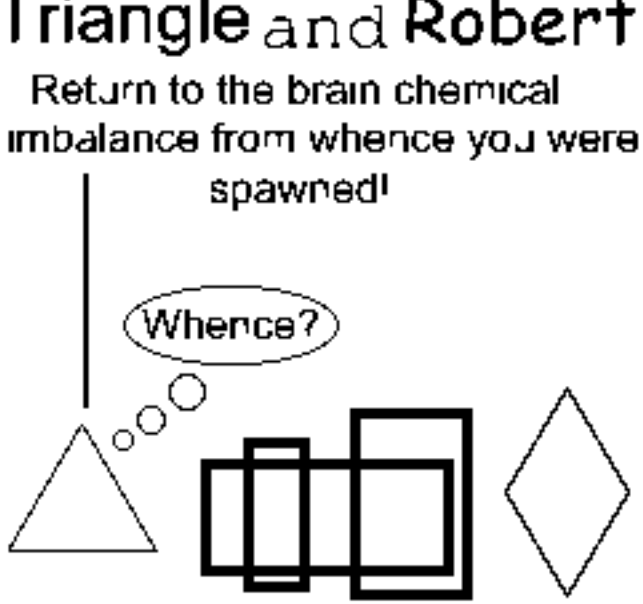


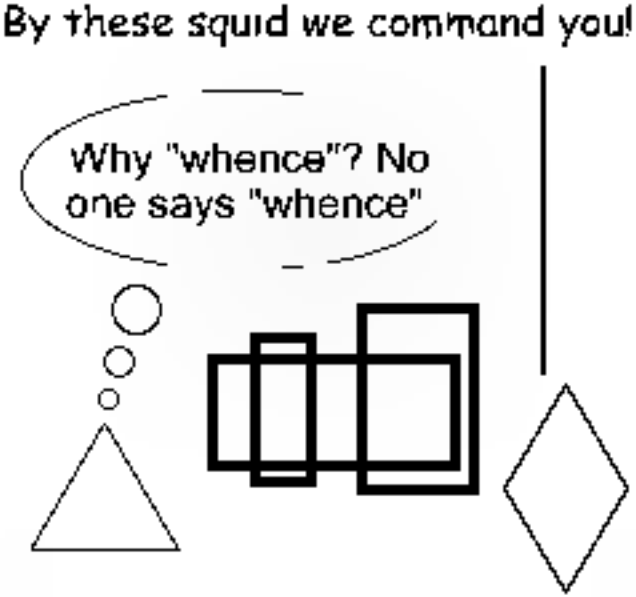
"No"? Not "I'll never join you"? Just "no"?

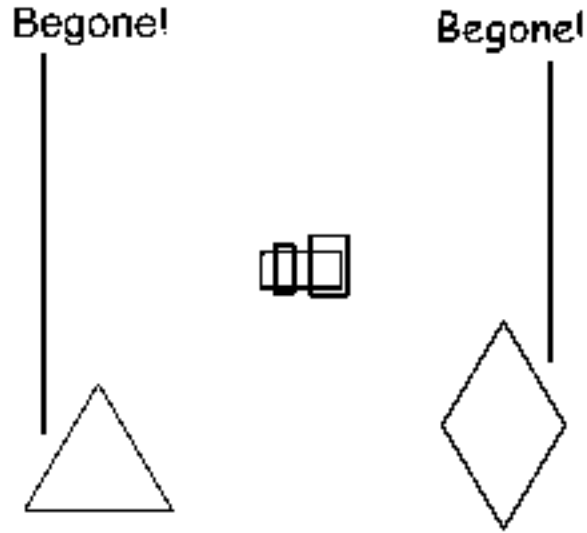
As great a threat as you are, unnecessary pop-cultural references are a greater one still

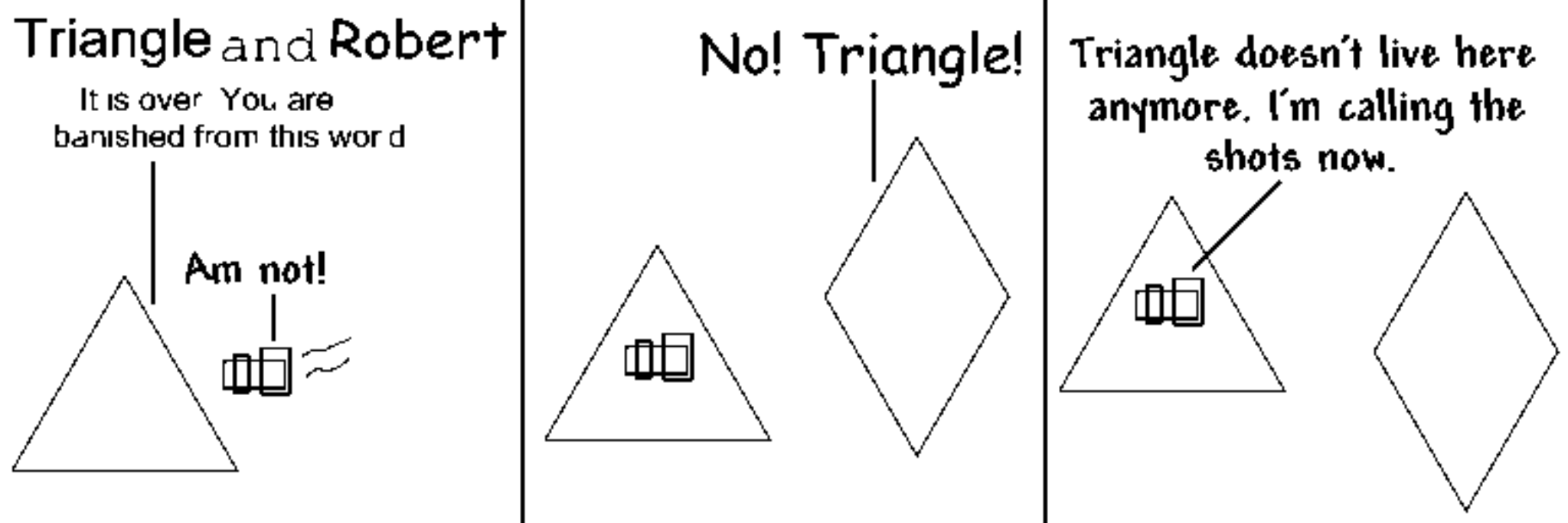


Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
It is over. You are banished from this world
Am not!
No! Triangle!
Triangle doesn't live here anymore. I'm calling the shots now.

Triangle and Robert

I'm here again? I d ed?

NO. YOU WERE DRIVEN FROM YOUR MORTAL BODY BY THE FEAR-DEMON. WHEN IT IS DEFEATED YOU WILL RETURN.

IN THE MEANTIME I WILL TELL YOU SOMETHING OF YOUR DESTINY.

Oh great, this aga n

Triangle and Robert

DO NOT WORRY. THE RHOMBUS WILL SUCCEED IN HIS TASK.

EVEN NOW, HE PURSUES YOUR POSSESSED BODY ACROSS THE WORLD.

And I'm guessing the reason you're narrating this to me is that the cartoonist can't draw it?

YOU ARE WISE IN THE WAYS OF THIS UNIVERSE.

Triangle and Robert

AND NOW FOR THE MATTER OF YOUR DESTINY.

Ah yes What sort of zany ce estial incompetence will keep me from finding out this time?

IN THE REALMS ABOVE, THE SAME MISTAKE IS NOT MADE THRICE.

I'll be ieve that when I hear my destiny

LOOK, IF YOU KEEP INSULTING ME I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET AROUND TO TELLING YOU.

Triangle and Robert

THIS UNIVERSE DID INDEED BEGIN AS PUDDING, AND THE PUDDING-WATCHER WAS INDEED CREATED TO SHEPHERD IT.

THEN THINGS VARY A BIT DEPENDING UPON WHOM YOU ASK. THE TRUE STORY LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN.

ORPUDDEX IS OLD, VERY OLD. HE REMEMBERS NOT ONLY WHAT WAS, BUT ALSO WHAT HE WISHED BUT WAS NOT. THOUGH HE IS TO BE FEARED, HE IS ALSO DESERVING OF YOUR PITY.

Triangle and Robert

DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN CREATION?

Uh I don't know
Assume I don't

BY ONE WAY OF VIEWING TIME, YOU WERE CREATED AT THE SAME TIME AS THIS UNIVERSE. BY ANOTHER, YOU PREDATE IT.

Huh?

TIME CAN BE VIEWED SUCH THAT YOU ARE ETERNAL, NEVER IN NEED OF HAVING BEEN CREATED. AND IN YET ANOTHER VIEW YOU HAVE YET TO BE BORN.

You re just try ng to confuse me now

Triangle and Robert

Look enough of the meaningless quasi-philosophical babble Tell me my destiny already before Robert catches up with my body

YOU THINK IT MEANINGLESS? THEN YOU ARE NOT YET READY.

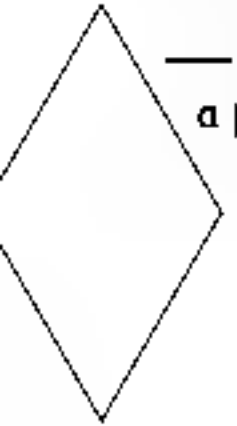
So that's your excuse this time?

UNLESS I CAN COME UP WITH A BETTER ONE, YES.

I knew it! You're not even trying!

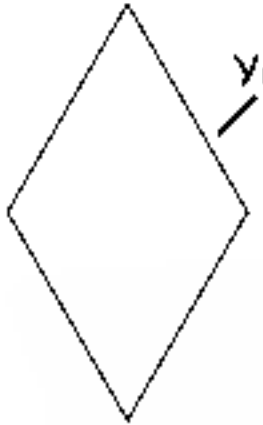
Triangle and Robert

On the slopes of Mount Scary, Robert catches up with his quarry



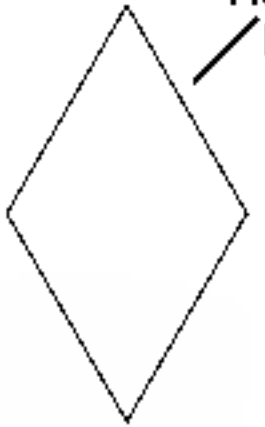
Is this going to be a pun about a rock pile?

No, I mean "quarry" in the sense of the object of your pursuit



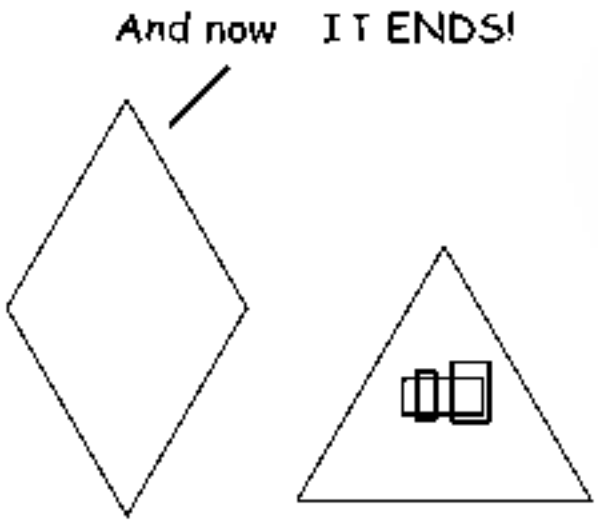
You better

And now it's the third panel and we have nothing to show for it

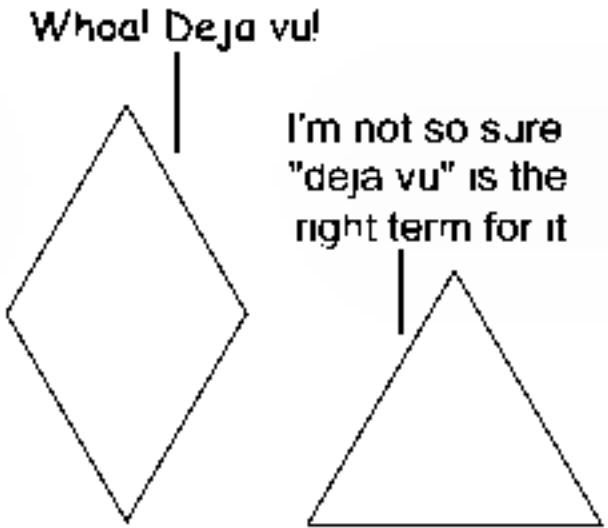


Hooray for pacing

Triangle and Robert

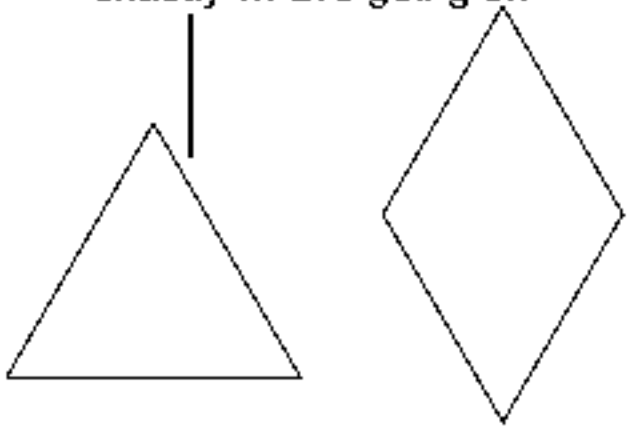


And then there's a nifty special effects laden exorcism scene I can't draw, and then.



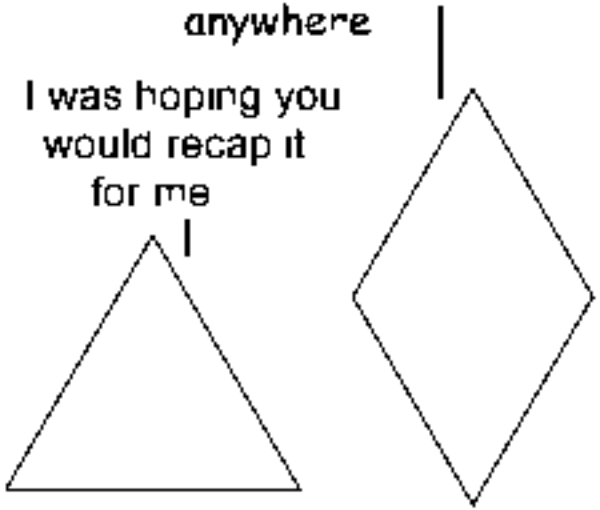
Triangle and Robert

This seems like a good moment to pause the action and recap exactly what's going on



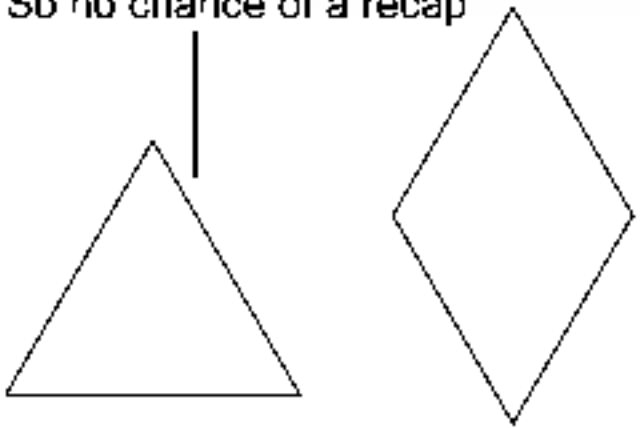
Oh good I was try ng to figure it out and I wasn t gett ng anywhere

I was hoping you would recap it for me

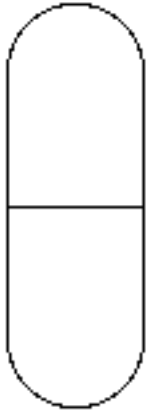


Well, dor't look at me I'm making it up as I g alor g.

So no chance of a recap



Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
Bear T Prozac

Dimensions:
52 x 52 pixels

Font:
Kdprint 8-point

Occupation:
Antidepressant

Favorite Book (Fiction):
The Illuminatus Trilogy by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson

Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum

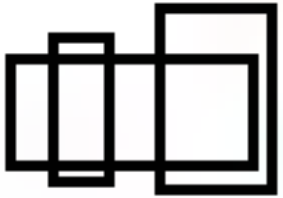
Favorite Movie:
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

Personal Quote:
"I'm Prozac the Bear"

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be

I'm Prozac the Bear!

Triangle and Robert Character Profile



Name:
[redacted]

Dimensions:
101 x 72 pixels

Font:
Mead Bold 18-point

Occupation:
Irrational fear of potatoes

Favorite Book (Fiction):
Hyperspace, by Edward Packard

Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
The Feingold Cookbook for Hyperactive Children, by Ben F. Feingold

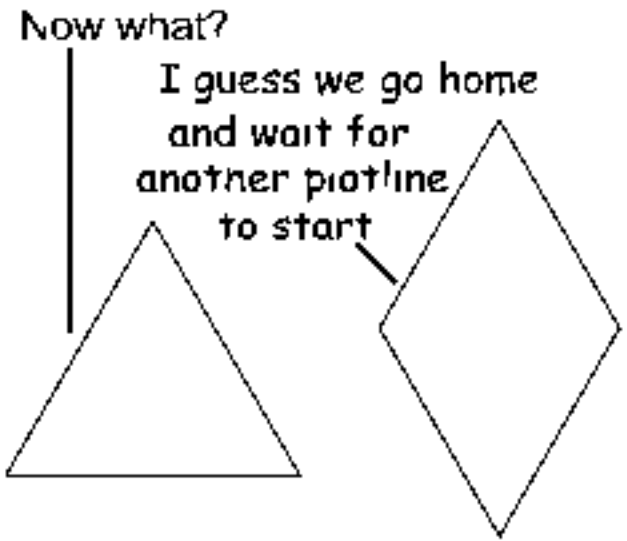
Favorite Movie:
Jabberwocky

Personal Quote:
"Eat fries and the tiny larvae hidden away deep inside them will devour you from the inside out."

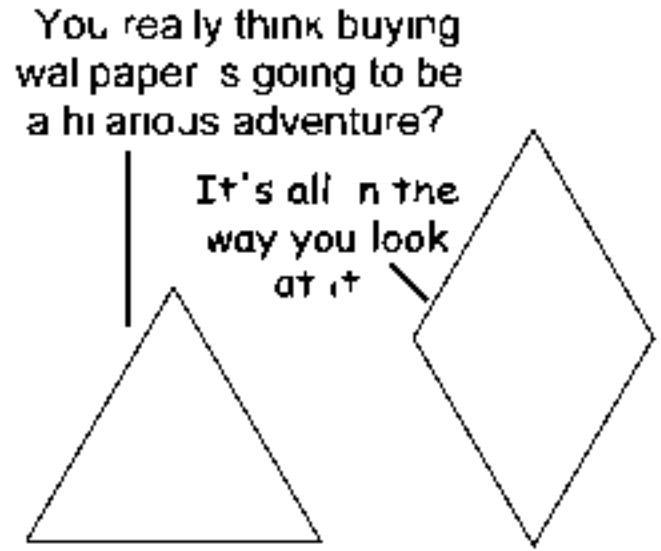
If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be

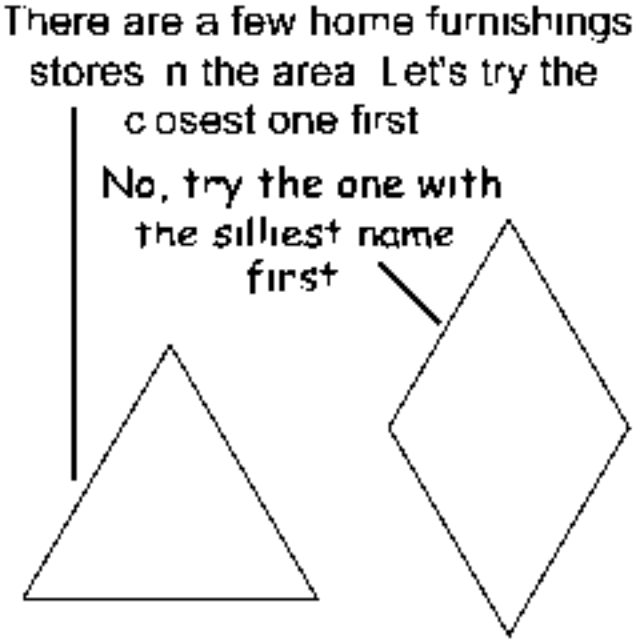
Wear potato repellent.

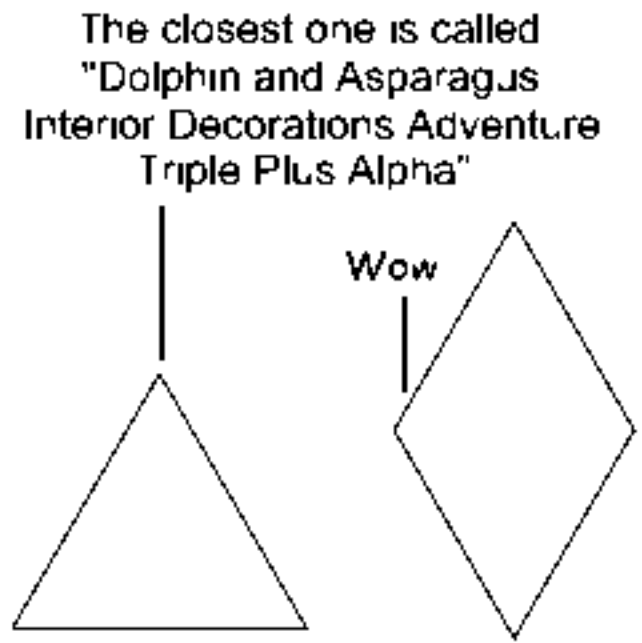
Triangle and Robert



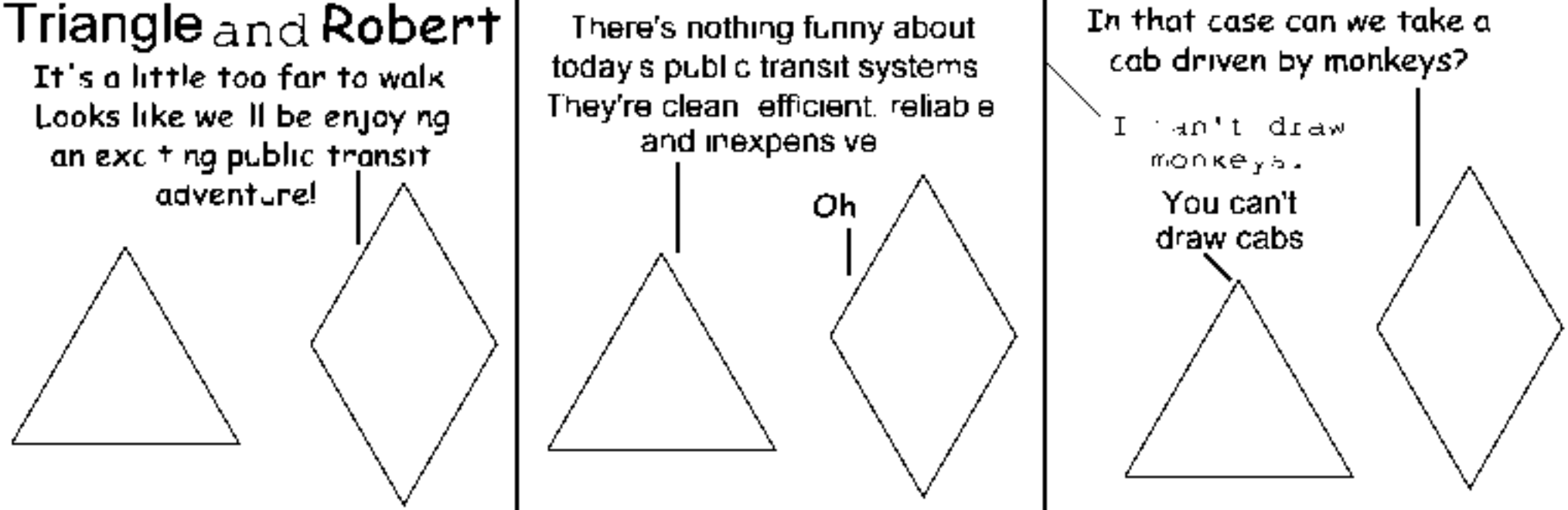
Triangle and Robert



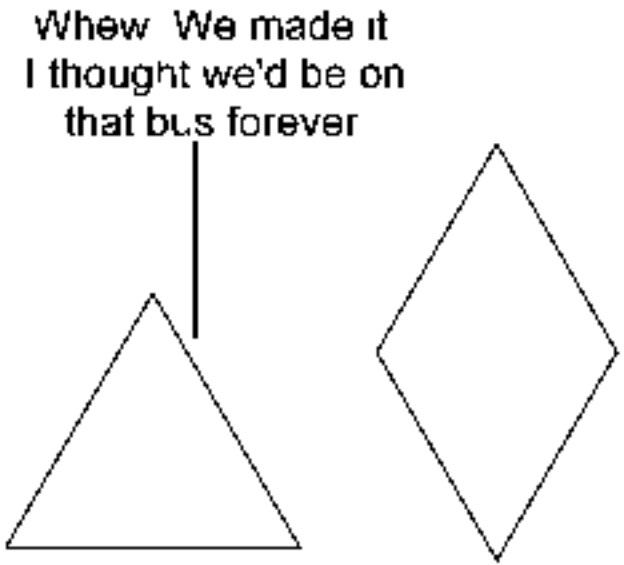


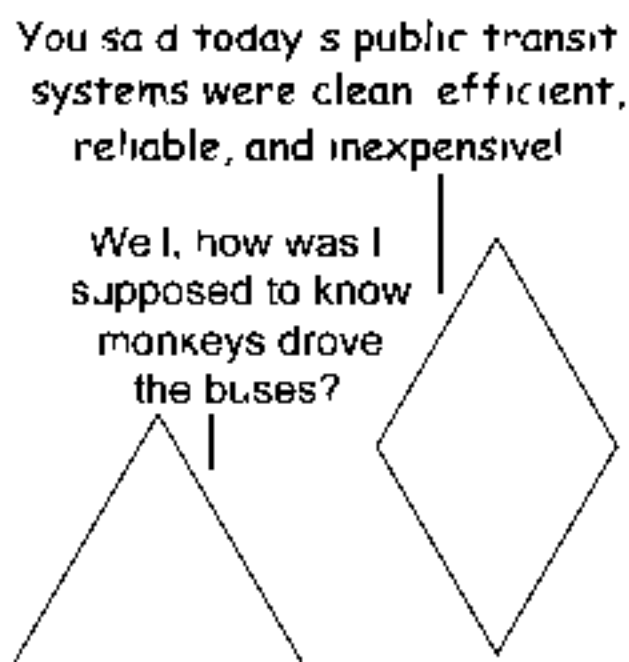


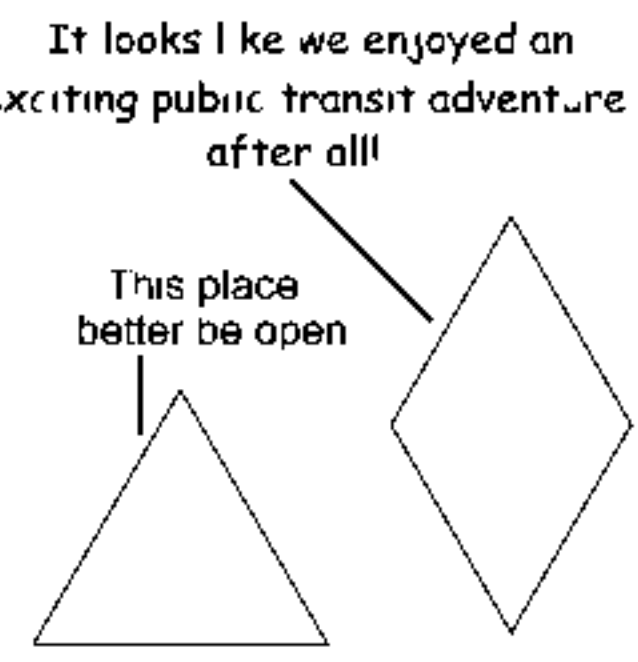
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

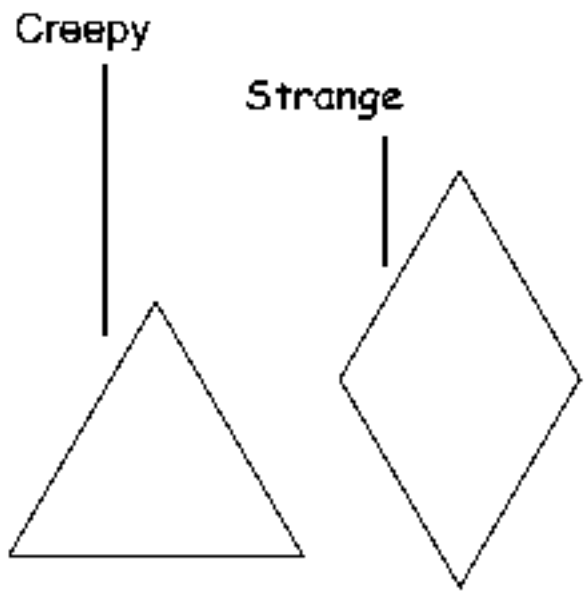






Triangle and Robert

We are Dolphin and Asparagus Interior Decorations Adventure Triple Plus Alpha. How shall we help you?

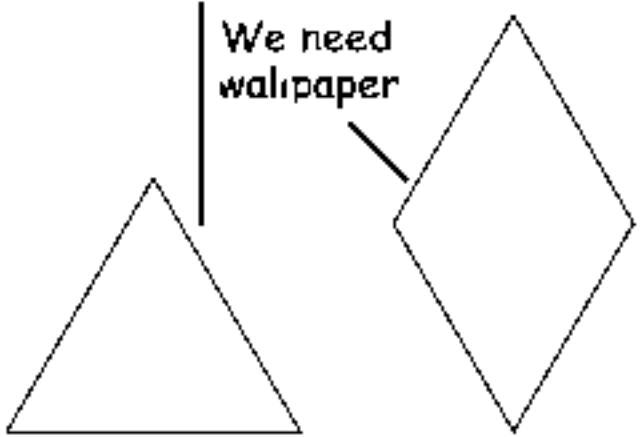


You desire to purchase wallpaper? Follow and it shall be made available to you.

Triangle and Robert

Should we follow the mysterious wal paper-sell ng entit es?

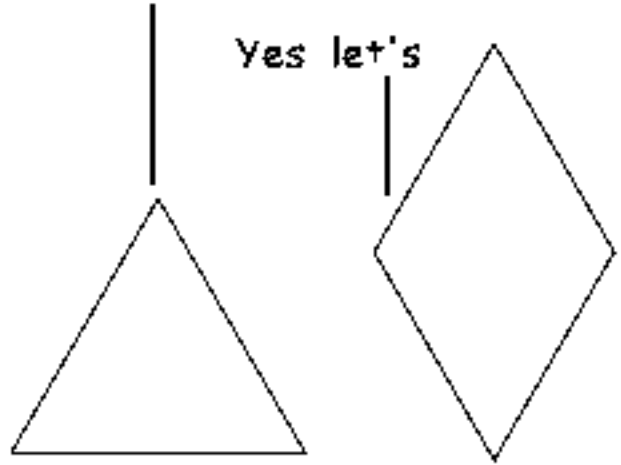
We need walipaper



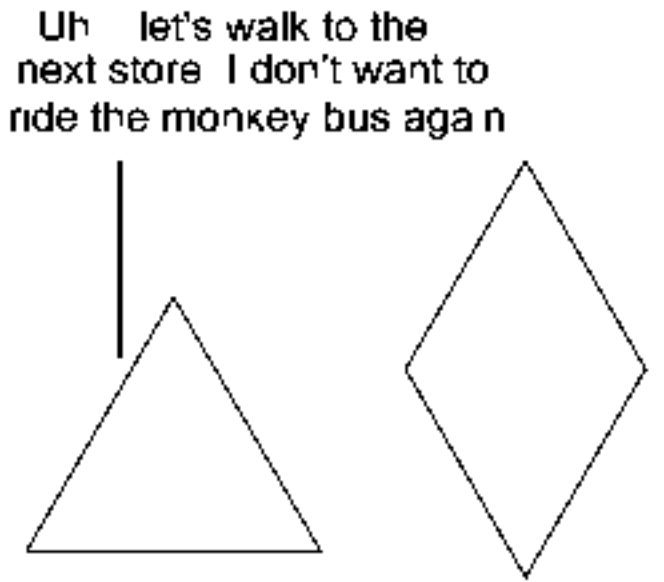
Come! Factory direct discounts of great value await beyond!

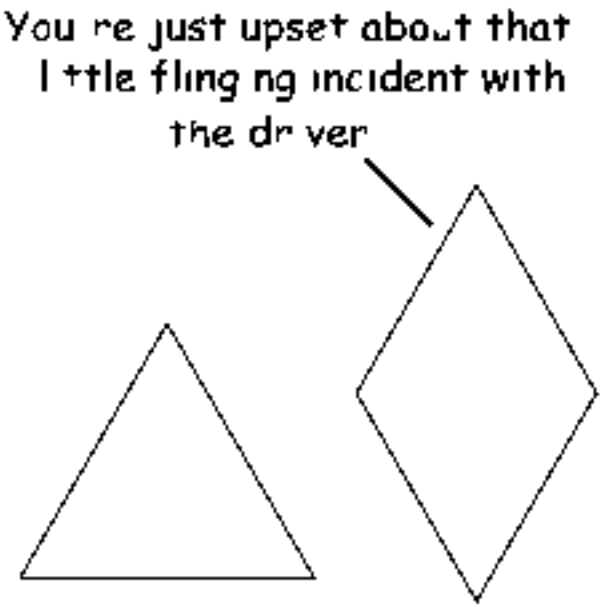
We can try another store

Yes let's

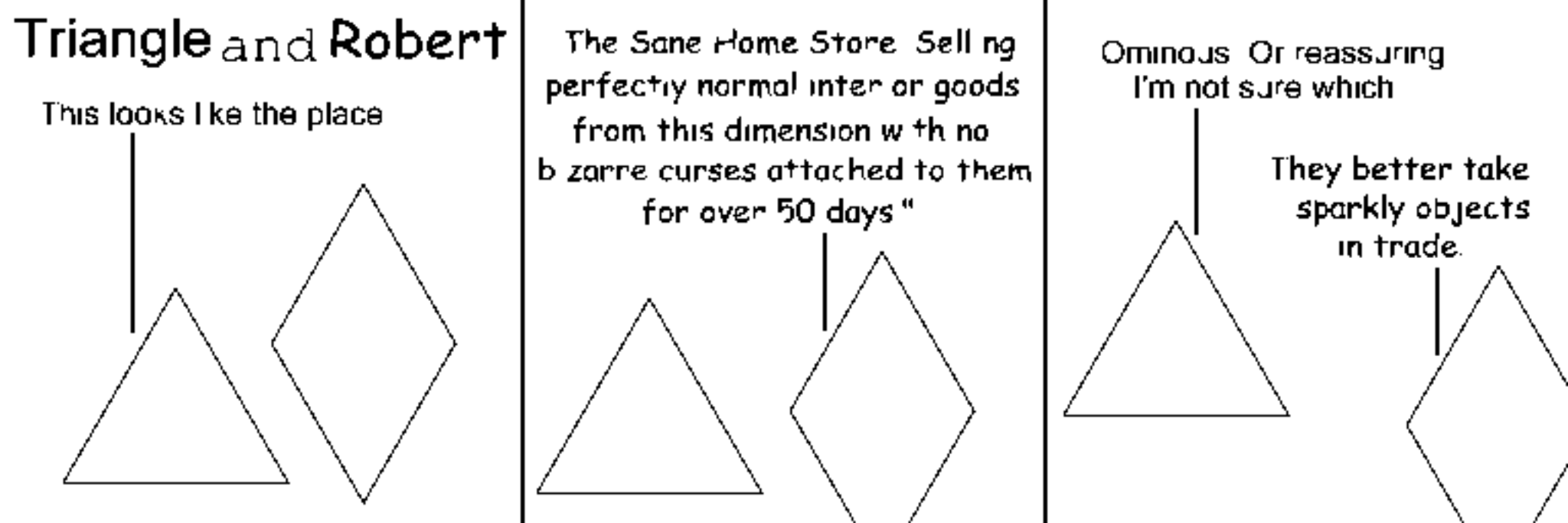


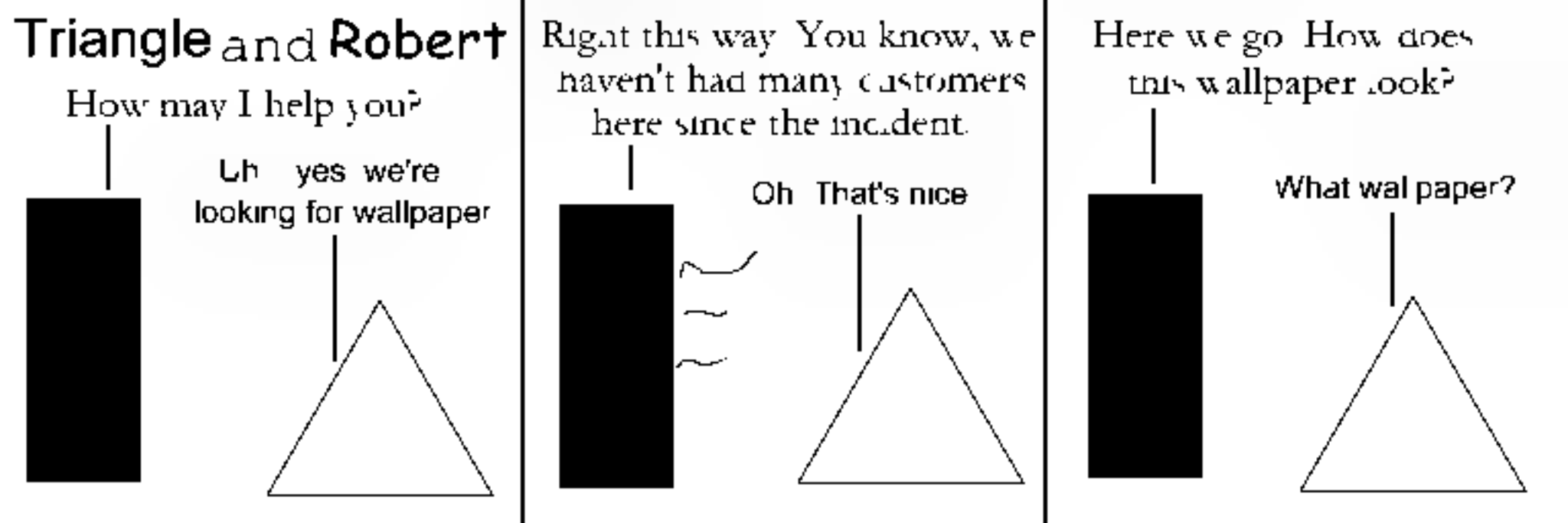
Triangle and Robert



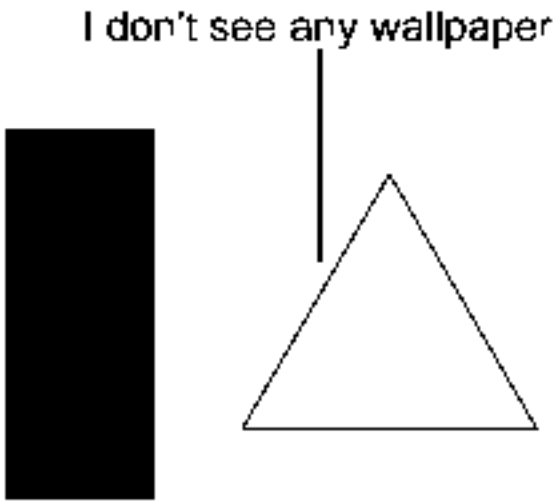


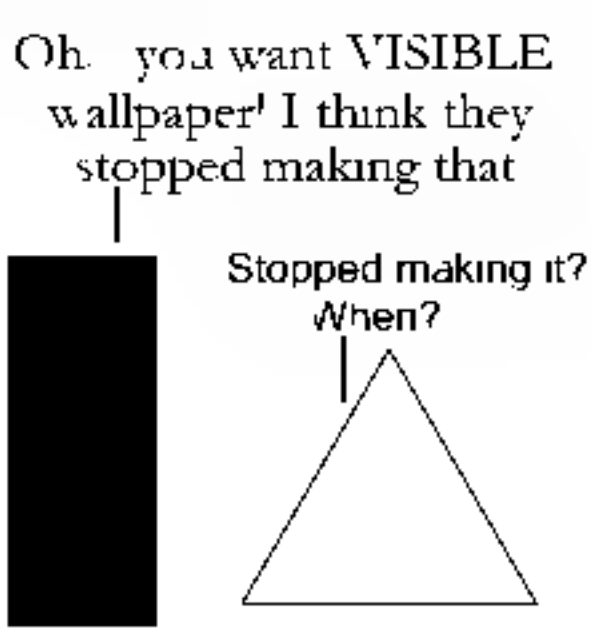
Triangle and Robert

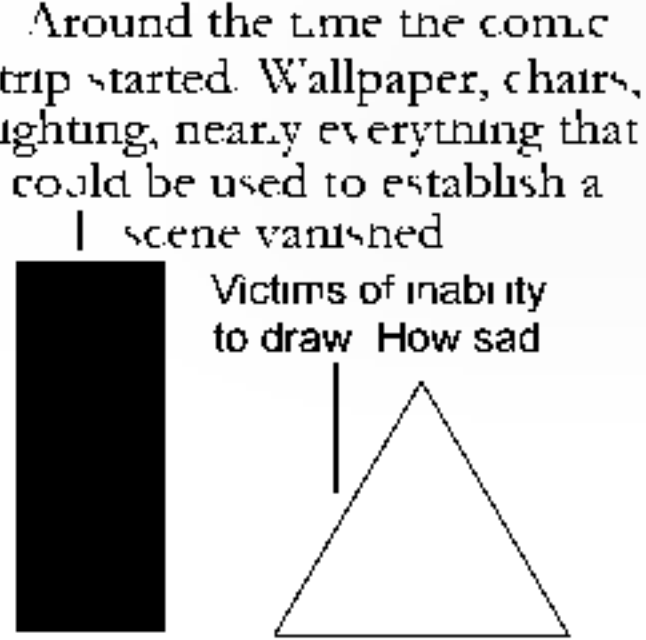



Triangle and Robert
How may I help you?
Uh yes we're looking for wallpaper
Right this way You know, we haven't had many customers here since the incident.
Oh That's nice
Here we go How does this wallpaper look?
What wal paper?

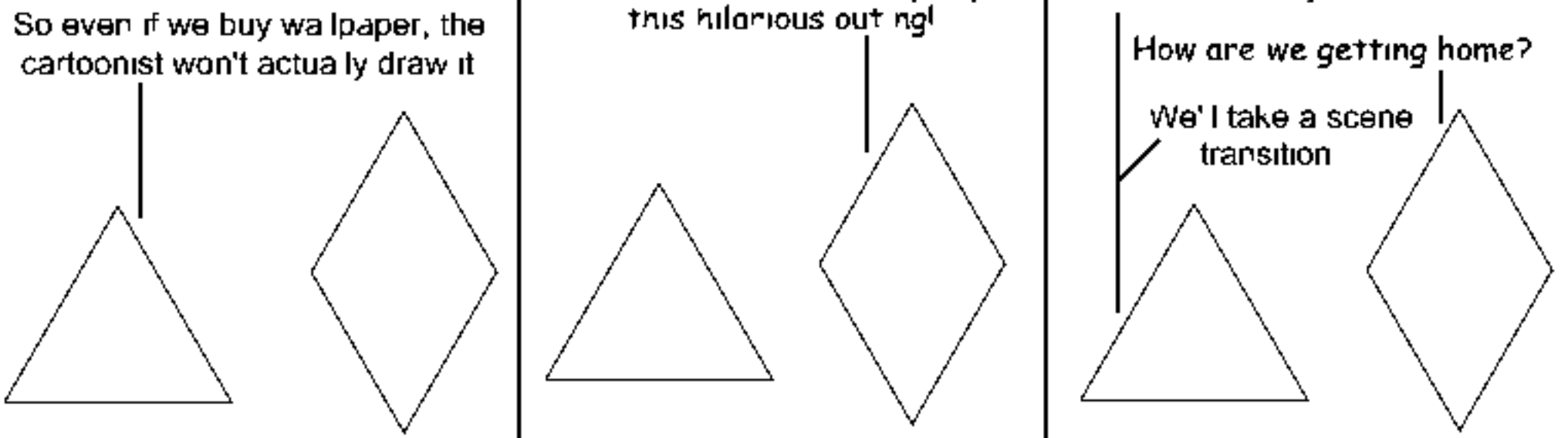
Triangle and Robert







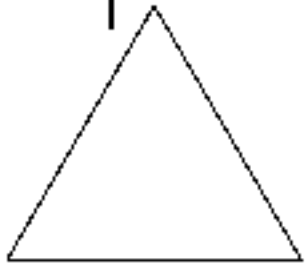
Triangle and Robert

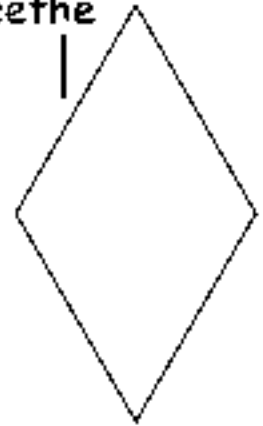


Triangle and Robert

wallpaper cartoonist show h m make my own strip

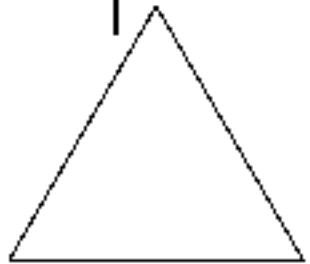
Way to seethe





Hey! You want to see how a com c str p s supposed to be done? I don't have hands and I can write a better strip than this!

Sure, let s see your strip

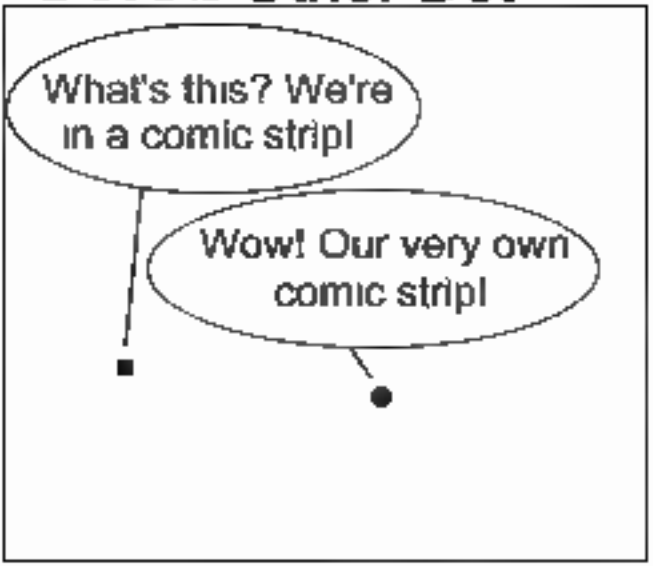


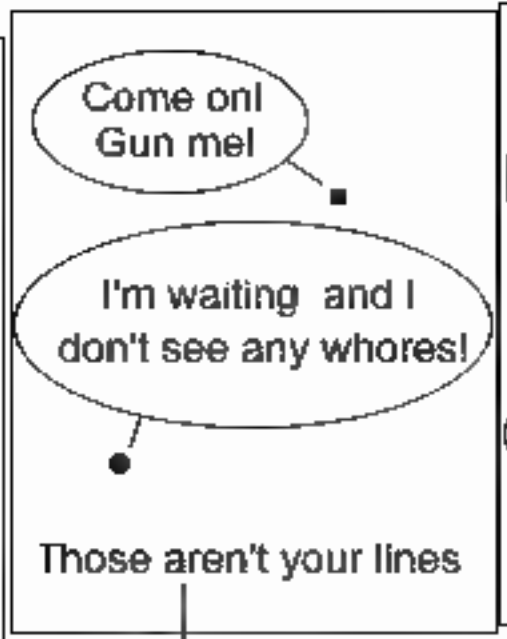
Coming soon!

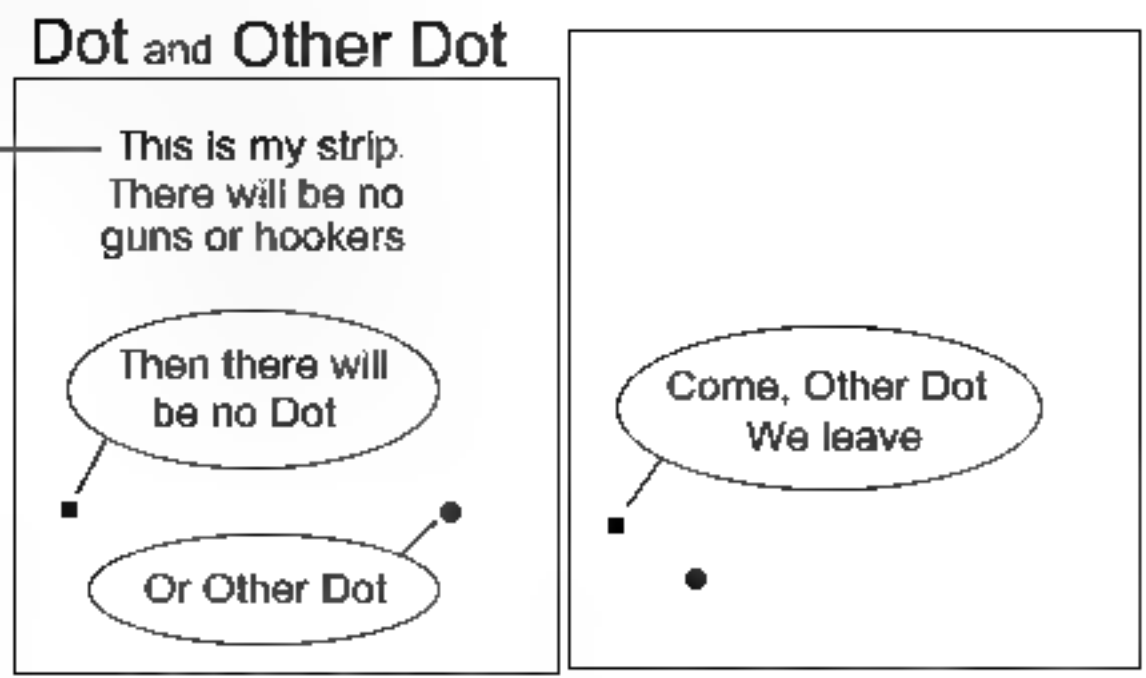
Dot and Other Dot

by Triangle

Dot and Other Dot

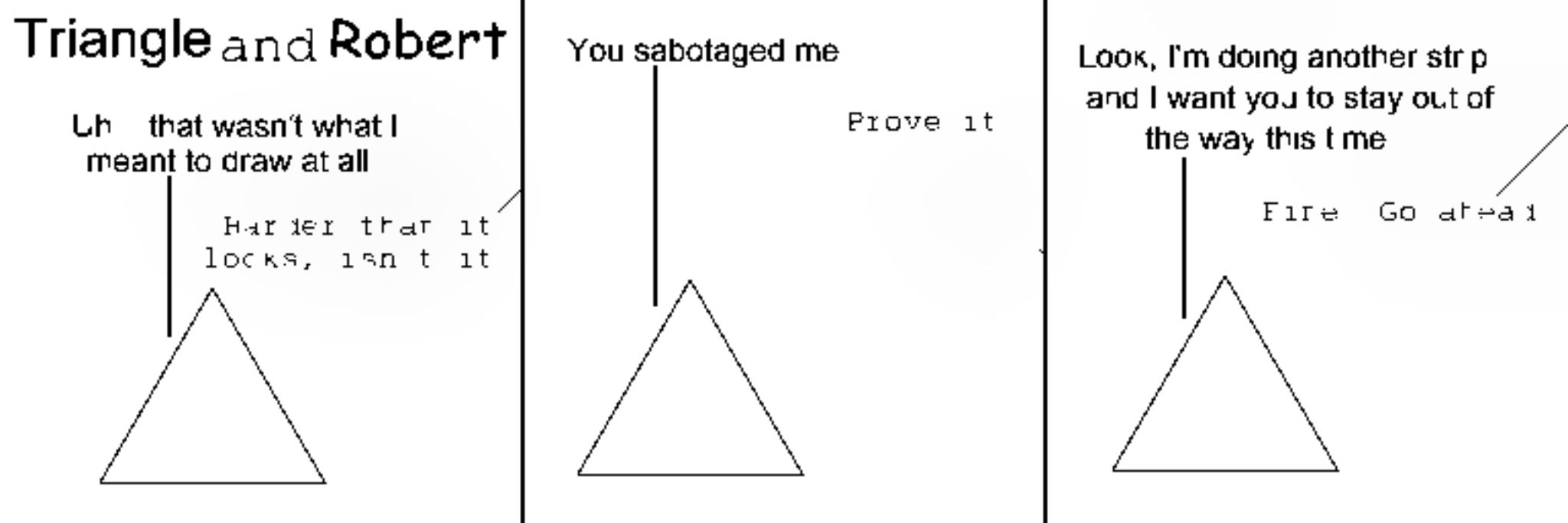




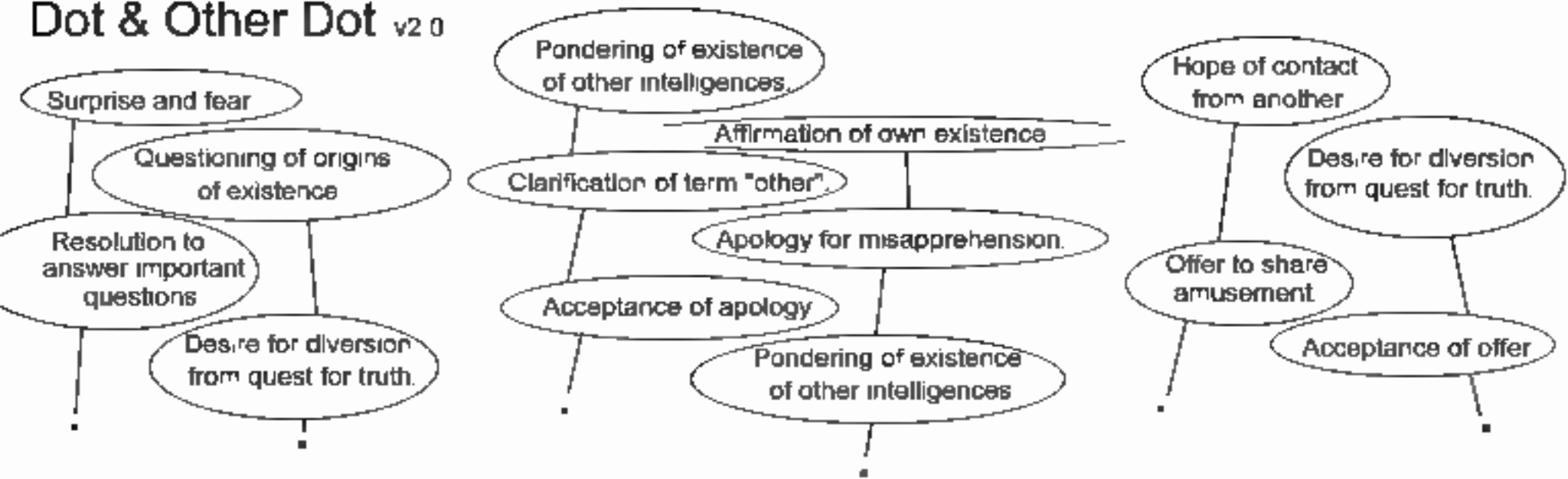

Dot and Other Dot
This is my strip. There will be no guns or hookers
Then there will be no Dot
Or Other Dot
Come, Other Dot We leave

THE END

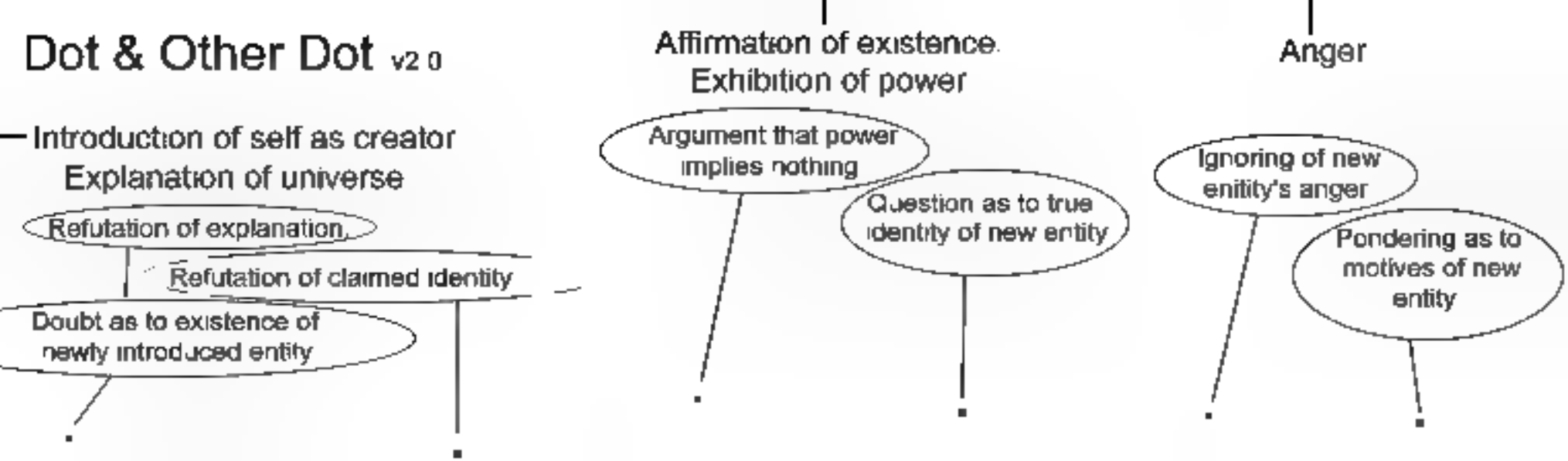
Triangle and Robert



Dot & Other Dot v2.0



Dot & Other Dot v2.0



Triangle and Robert

They're refusing to acknowledge me as their cartoonist and are only half-convinced I even exist! Stop messing with my characters!

I did nothing

My characters aren't even mutinying! they're just denying the validity of the comic-strip worldview! You did **something!**

They're your characters

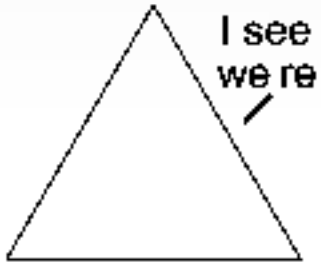
Reluctant to force them into an existence paralleling your own, you allow them an escape in the form of philosophy

But, then where's MY escape?

You're using it right now

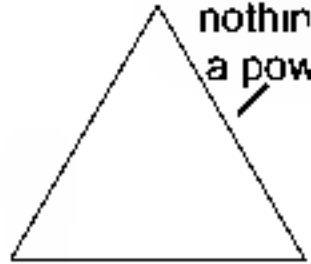
Triangle and Robert

My existence is bounded by uncertainty. I have no clear idea why my universe bothers to exist or what function it serves.



I see... so knowing we're in a comic strip

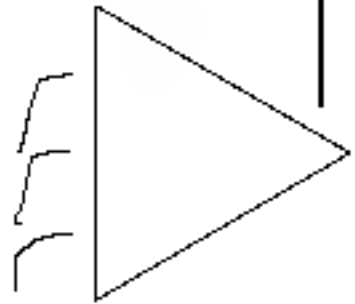
makes you no happier, but at least all was you can choose a different way of being unhappy.



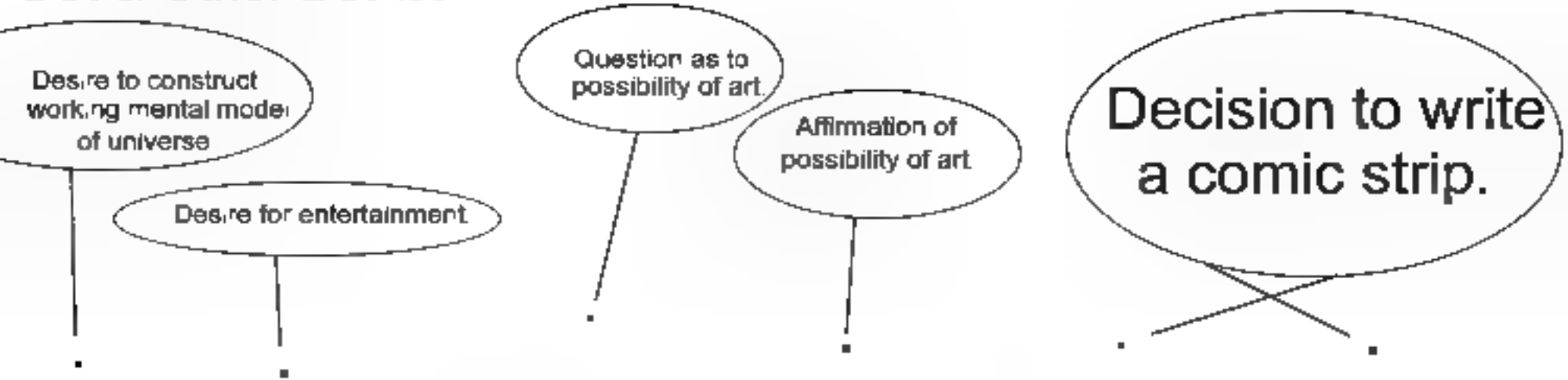
So your constant appearances have nothing to do with a power trip at all

I didn't say that

Hey! Put me down!



Dot & Other Dot v2.0



Triangle and Robert

What? Now my com c strip characters are writing a comic str p of their own!

Rec .r sion is f in

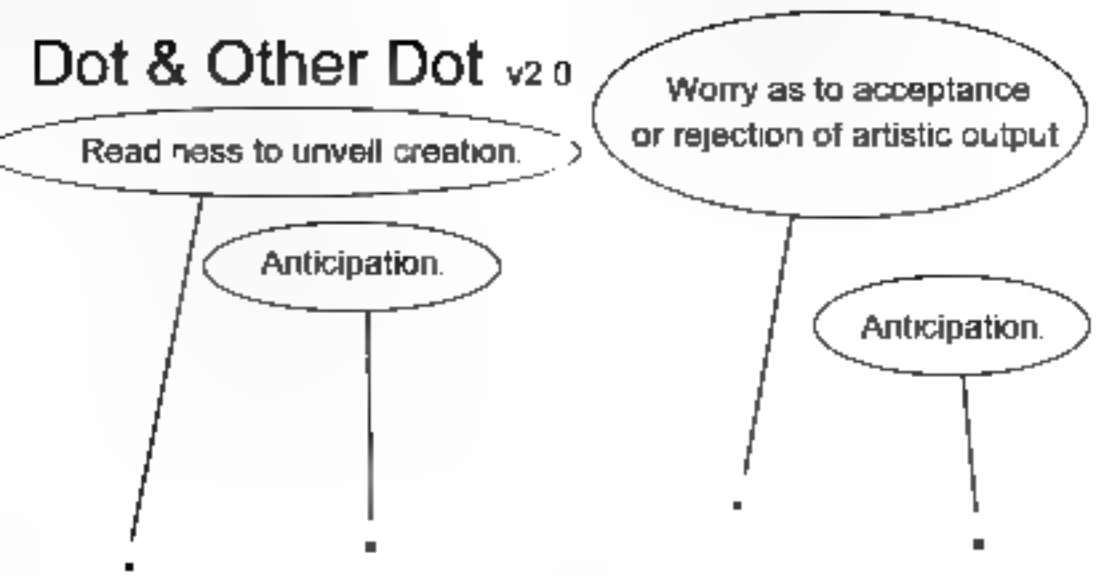
They're they re deciding on a t t e They're calling it oh no Th s sn t good

What

"Cartoonist Gut"

C art c on i st t

Oh Other Dot v2 0 made a typo "Cartoonist Guy"

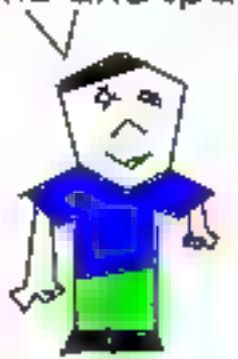


Coming soon!

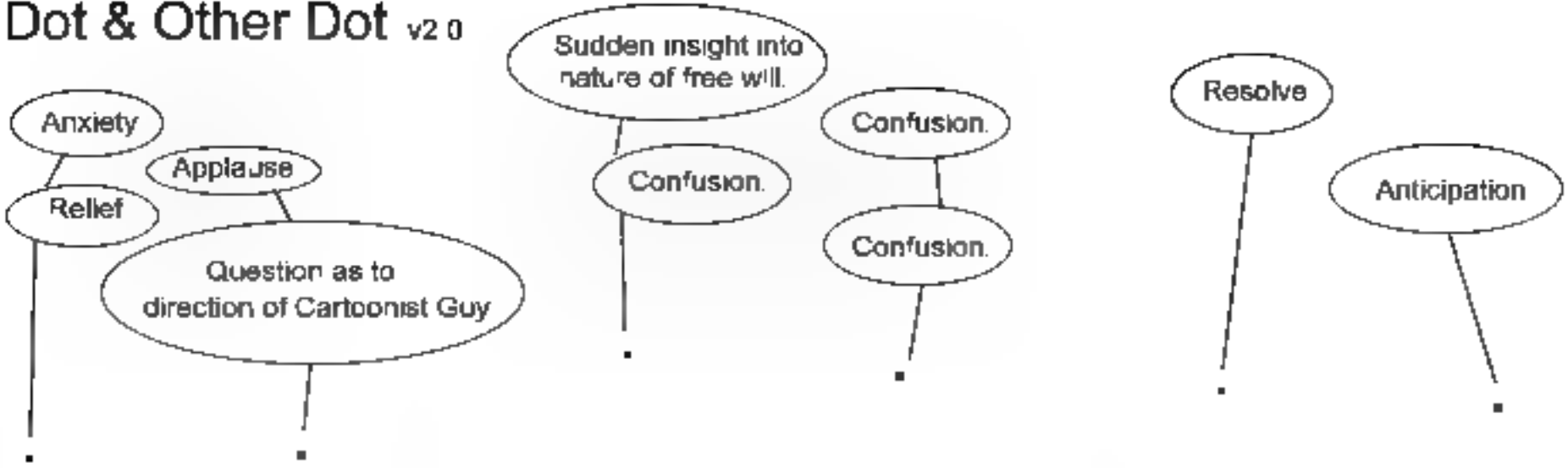
Cartoonist Guy

by Dot and Other Dot

Cartoonist Guy



Dot & Other Dot v2.0



Cartoonist Guy

Not just one universe
That would prove nothing.
The Beforings will create
many universes, perhaps
an infinity of them.

By observing all
universes within my
comprehension,
can determine the
nature of my
own existence

Coming Soon!

The Beforings

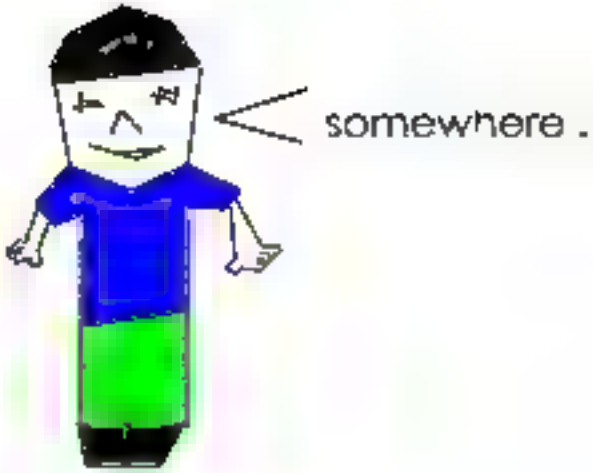
The Beforings

time space meaning
none of the above

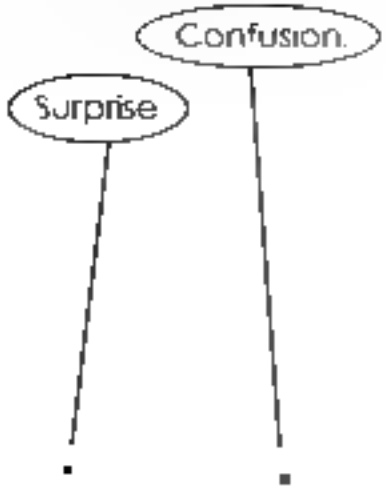
only one concept
only one potentiality

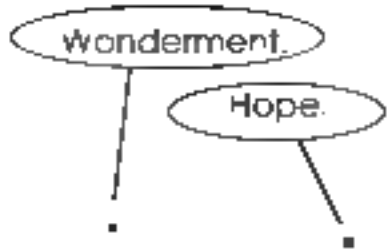
... before...

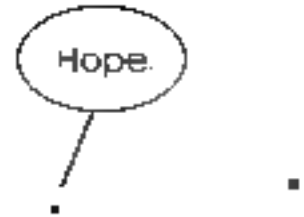
Cartoonist Guy



Dot & Other Dot v2.0







Triangle and Robert

Cartoonist Guy their strip was that you?

N No more so than y a are

Me? Me you my

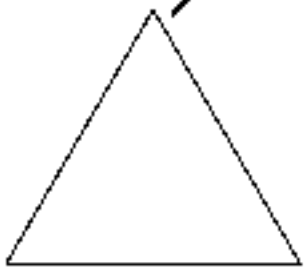
Problem

Being a fictiona character is hard to get used to

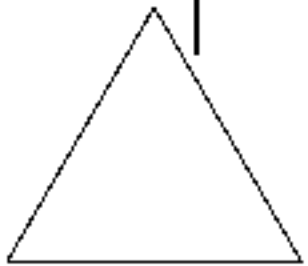
Yeah, it is

Triangle and Robert

So I create Dot and Other Dot.
then they create Cartoonist Guy
who creates the Beforings
who created this whole universe
to begin with

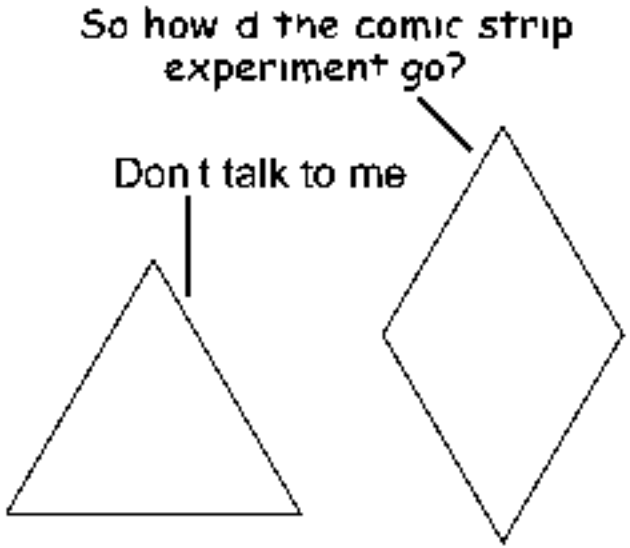


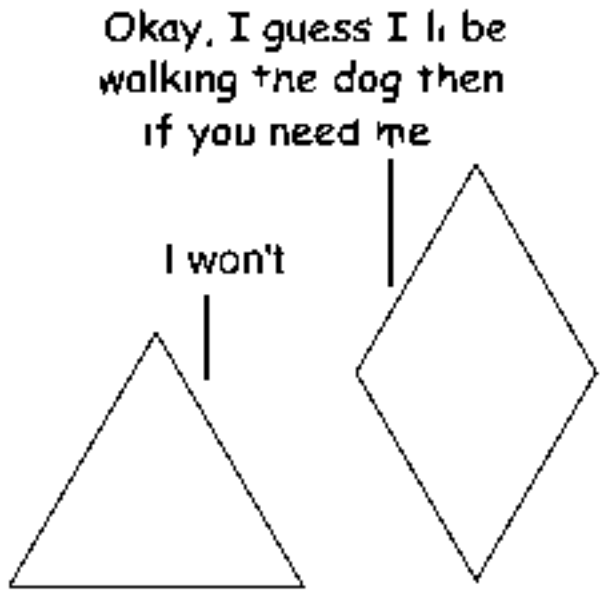
Ignoring for the moment the fact
that this is a gross violation of
causality it's very confusing

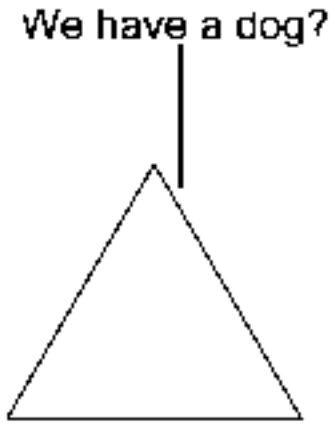


Well, I guess it would
be, if any of this were
actually happening

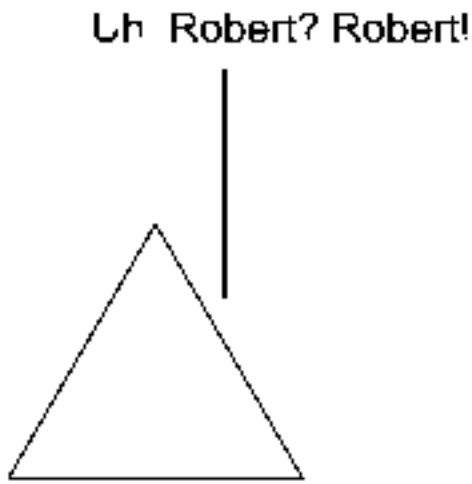
Triangle and Robert

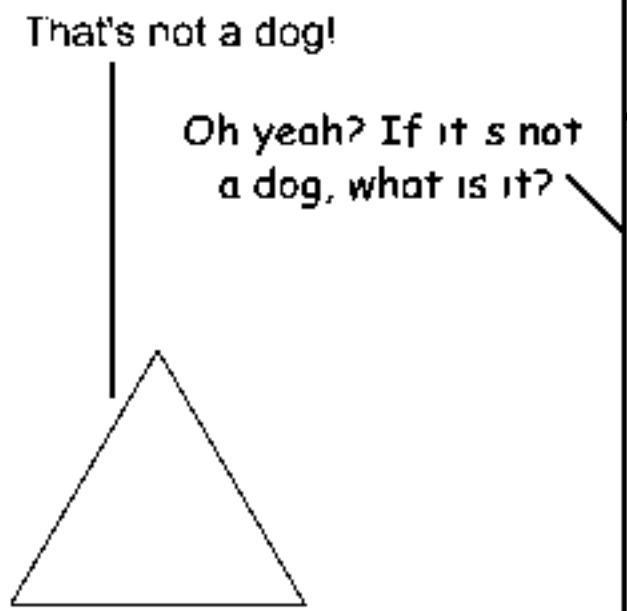


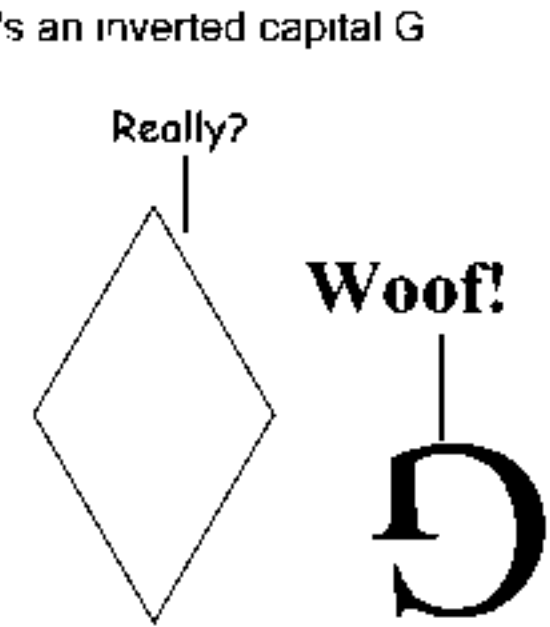




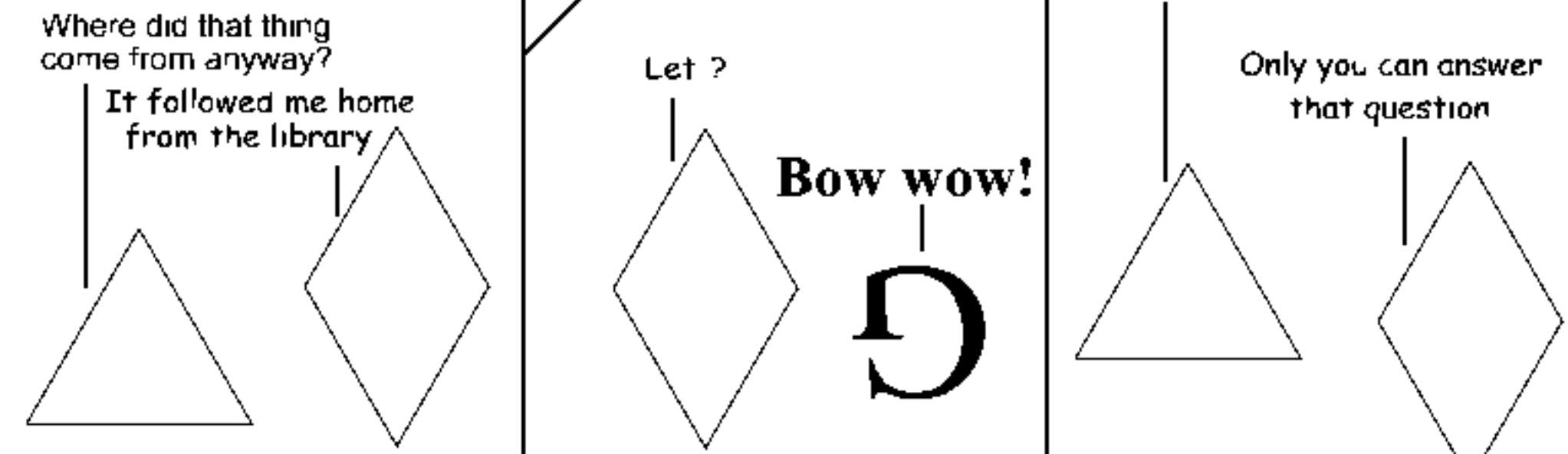
Triangle and Robert







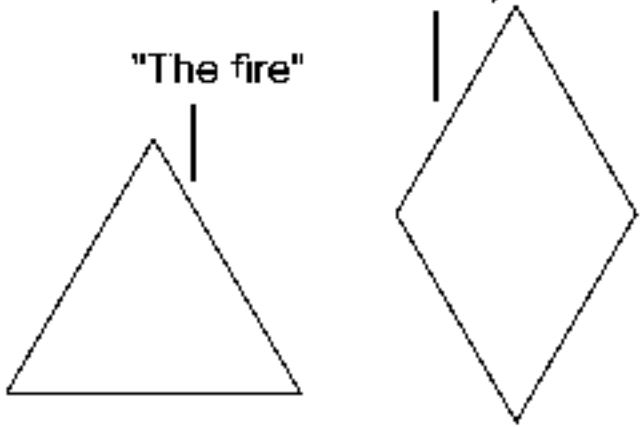
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

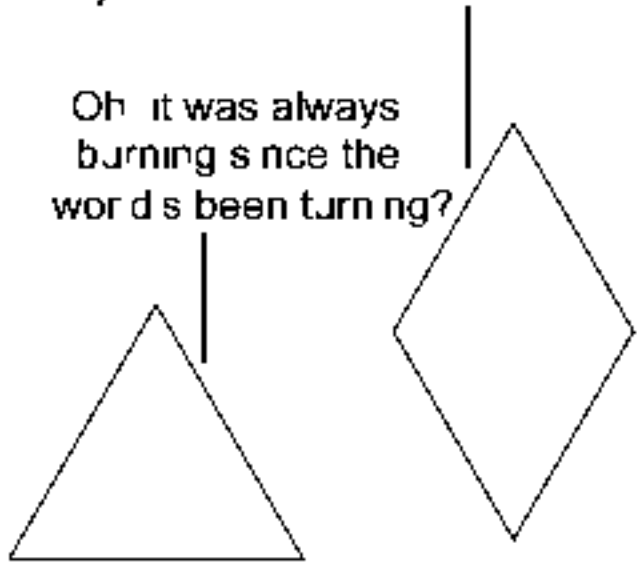
They didn't "let" me into the
l brary, they were just too busy
with the fire to stop me

"The fire"



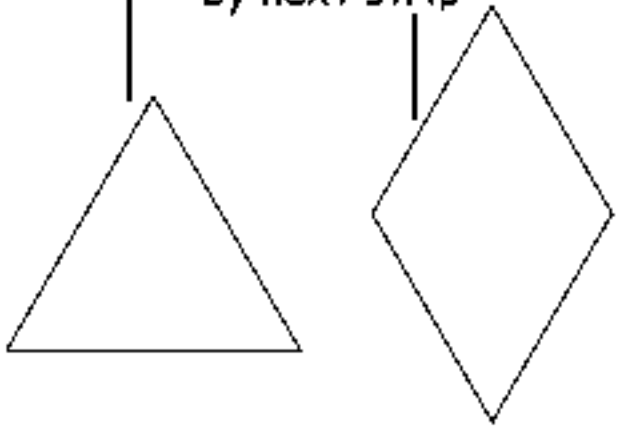
Hey! I d dn t start the fire!

Oh it was always
b rning s nce the
wor d s been t rn ng?

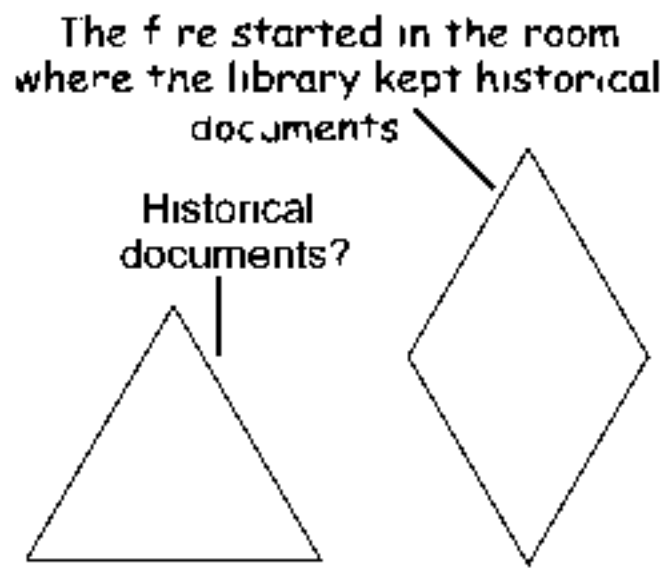


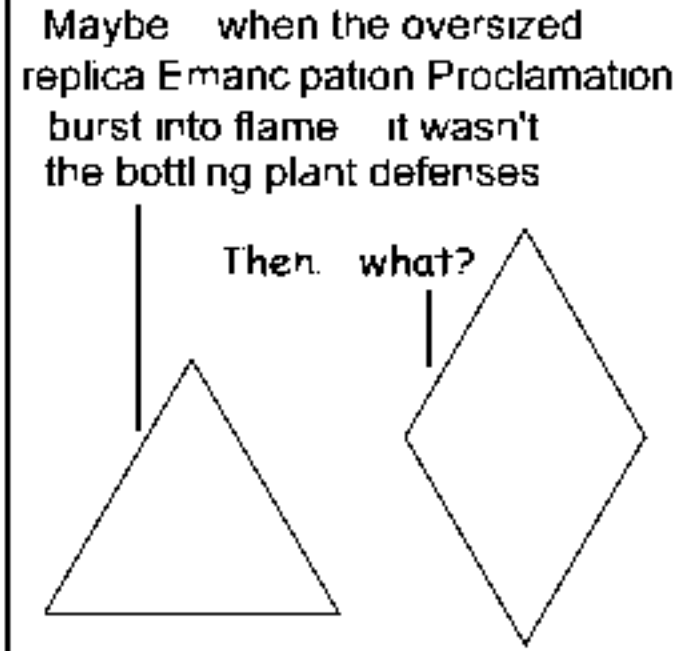
Oh my did I ust say that?

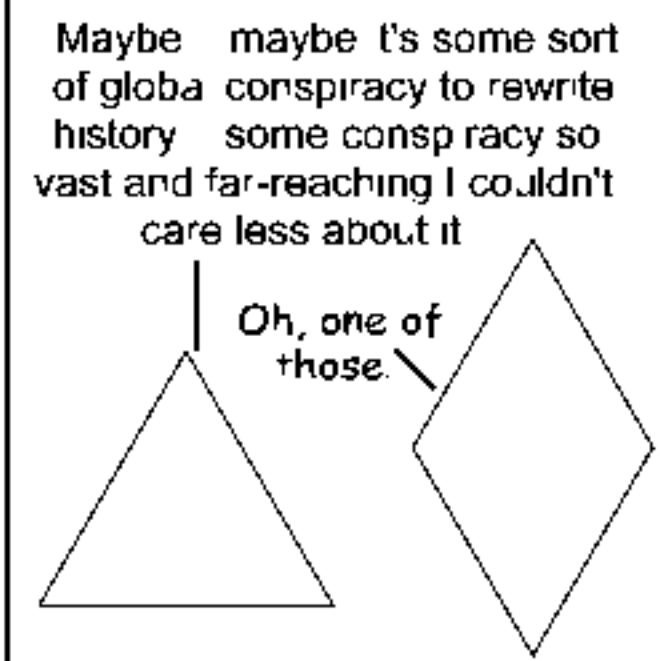
It happens You'll have
forgotten all about it
by next strip



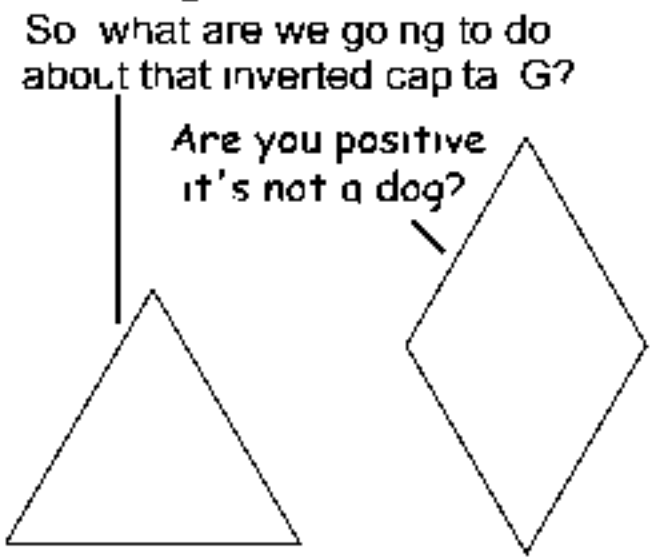
Triangle and Robert

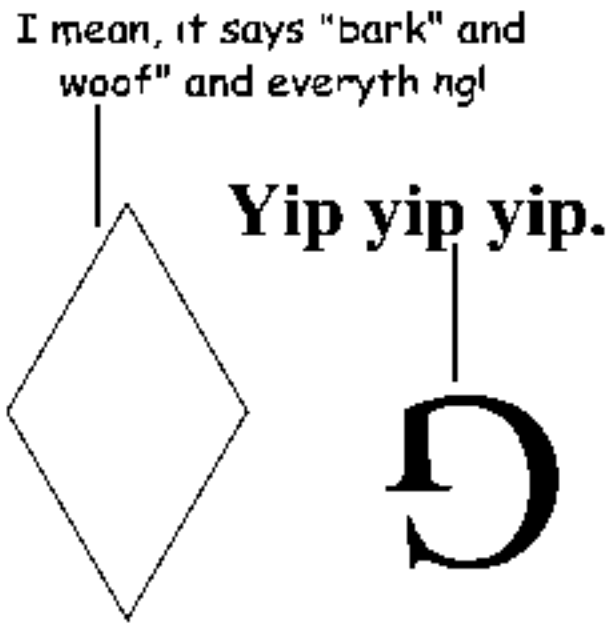


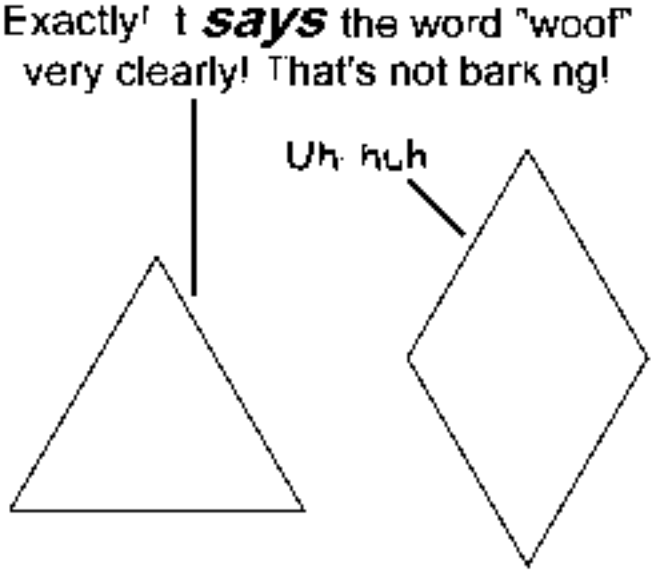




Triangle and Robert



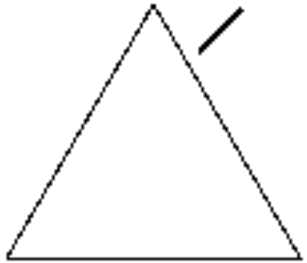


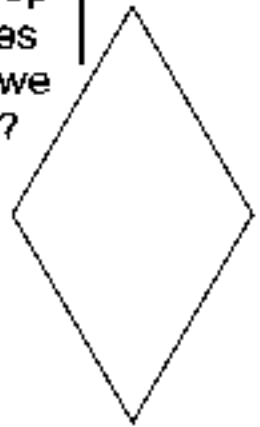


Triangle and Robert

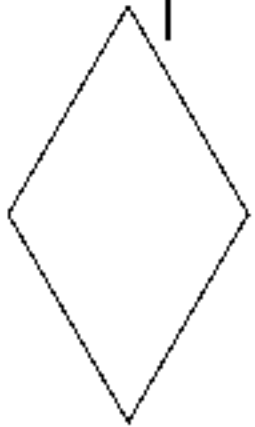
Please, can t we keep it?

Yes We can keep it But what does it eat? How do we take care of it?



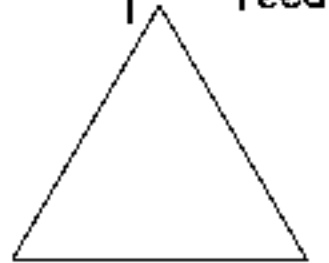


I d guess we d feed it Alpha Bits or would that be cannibalism?

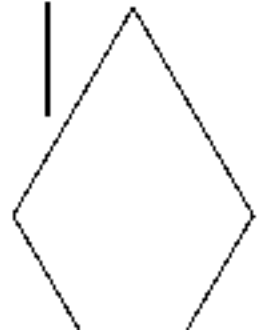


Arf, arf!

While consistent with the general logic underlying comic strips such as this one feeding it cereal will probably make it throw up



Then we're agreed We feed it Alpha Bits



The Befor ngs

Meanwhile, beyond time
and space, well t
"meanwhile" I guess
since it's beyond time,
but I had t say
something to establish
the scene

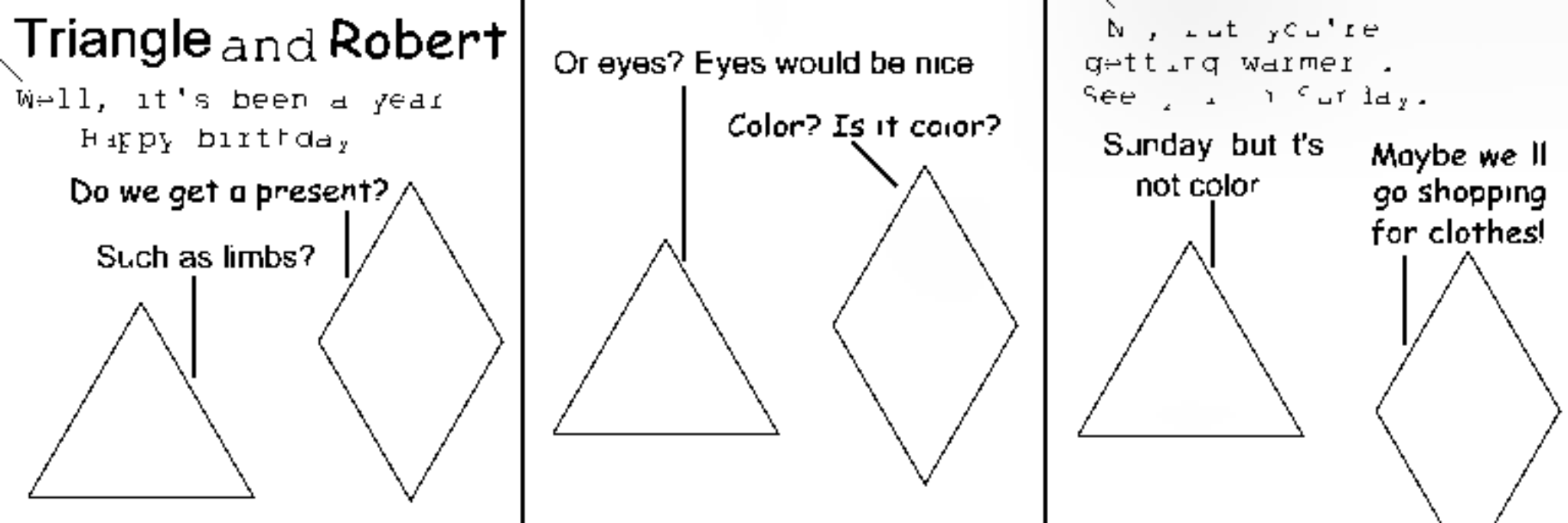
Phase One has
been achieved

You mean ?

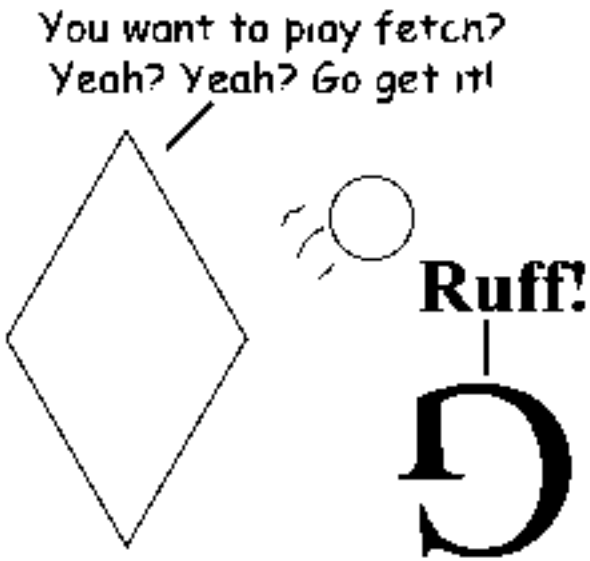
Yes We have
pudogenesis

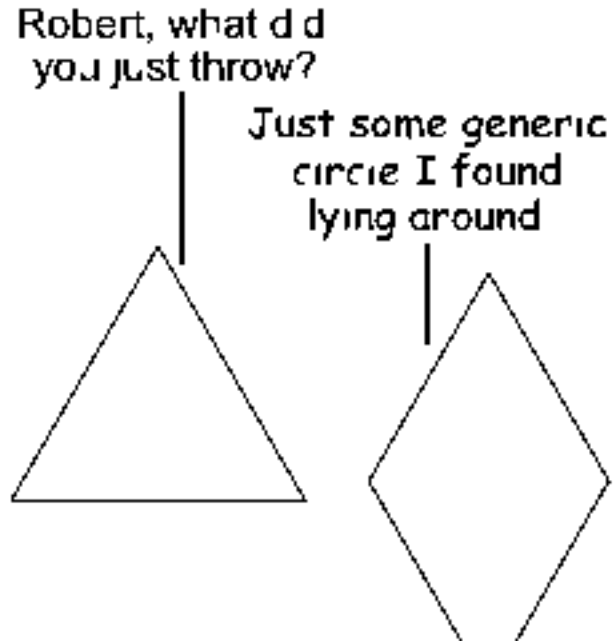
Good

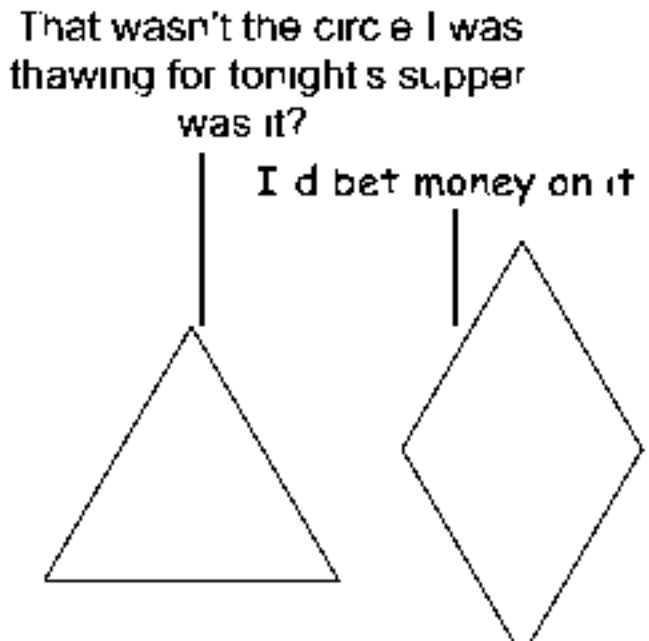
Triangle and Robert



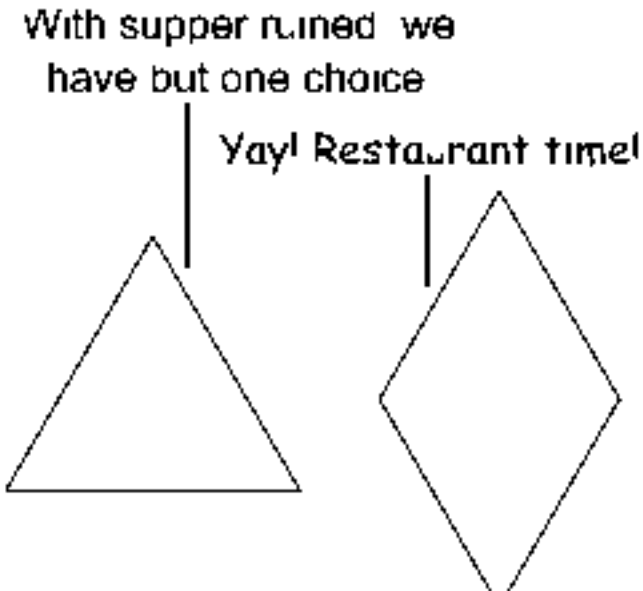
Triangle and Robert

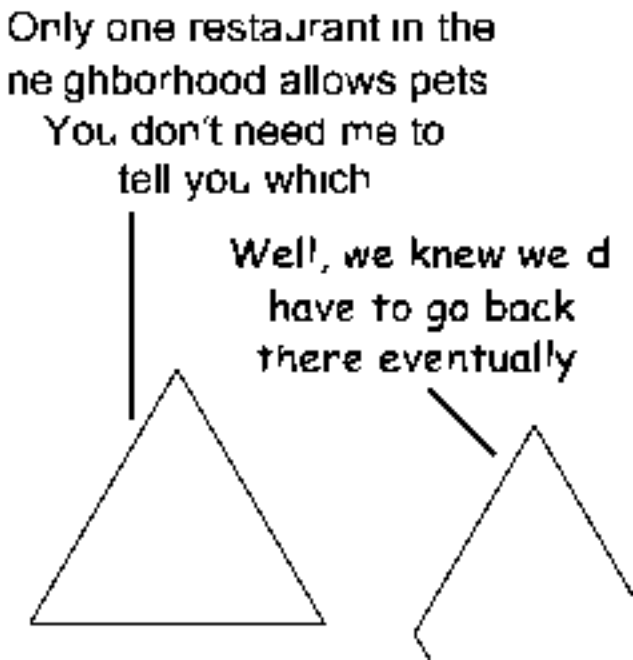




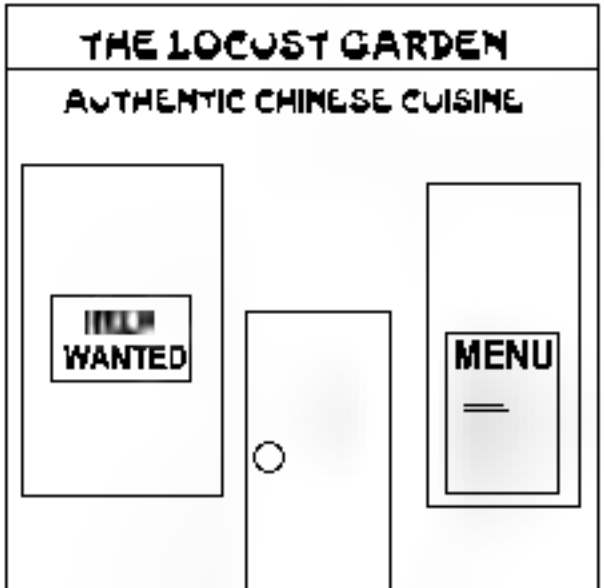


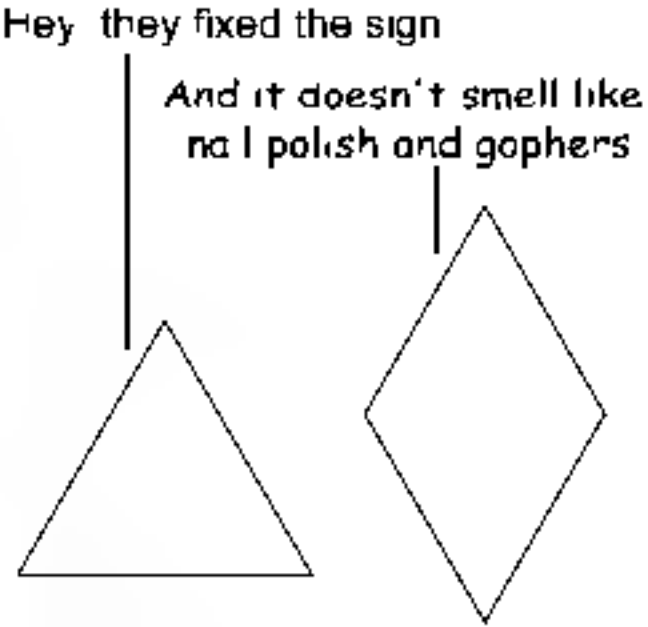
Triangle and Robert

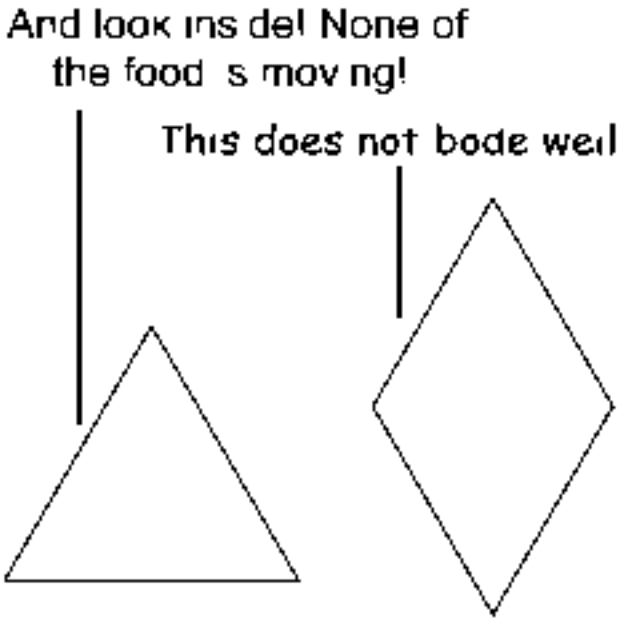




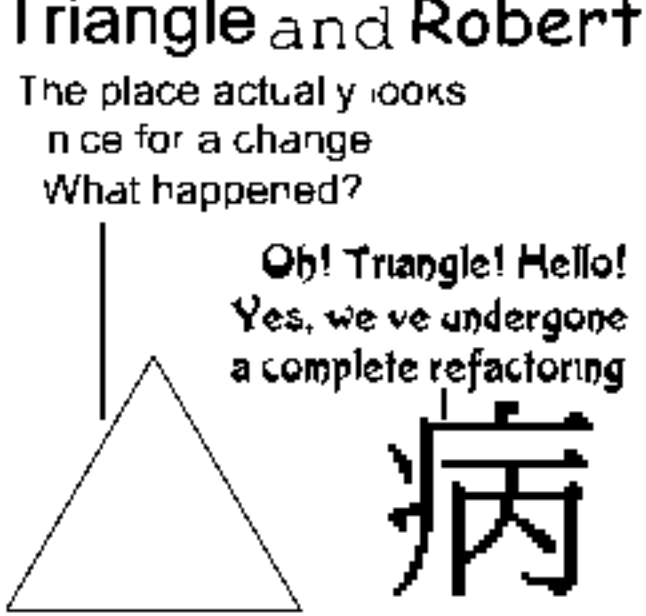
Triangle and Robert

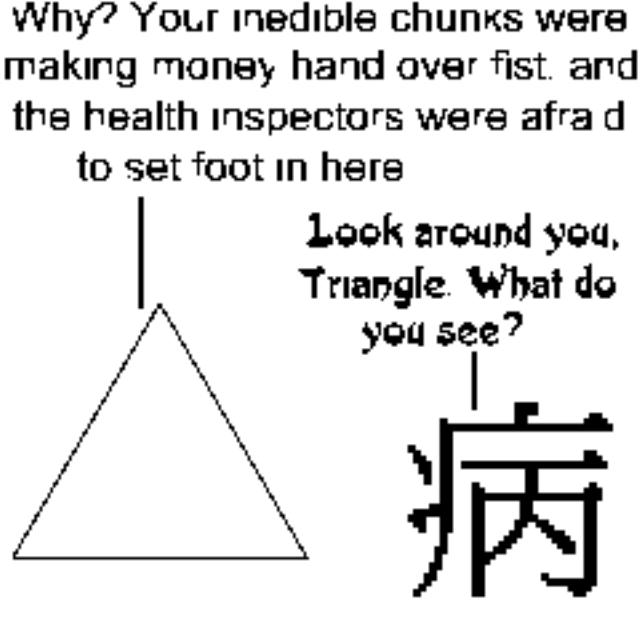






Triangle and Robert

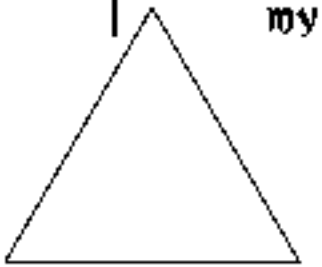




Triangle and Robert

Oh yeah N ce statue

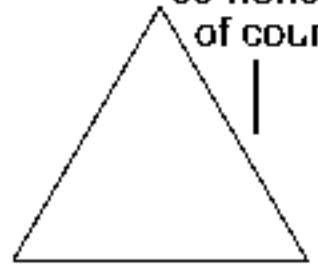
That statue holds the spirit of my grandmother



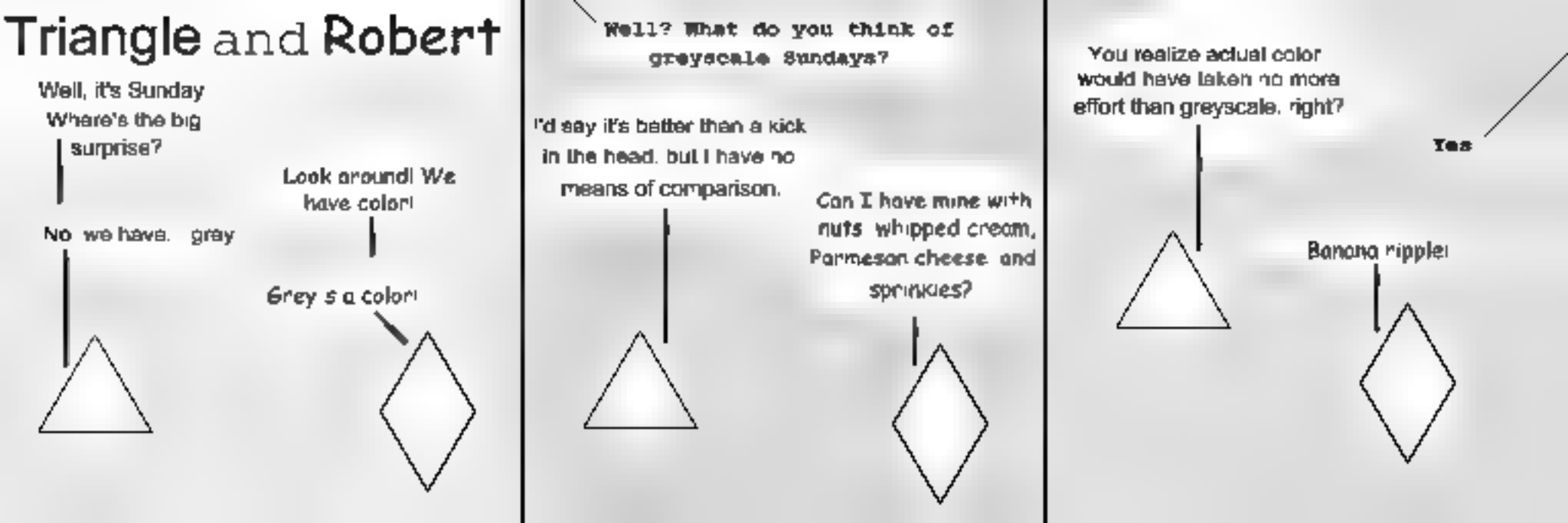
She was one of the last of the nomadic warrior-chefs. Her spatula was feared as far away as Denmark. My MSG laden departure from the way of the warrior chef awakened her from her rightful slumber

To appease her spirit, I remade this restaurant in the image of the great dojo cafes. using my fam ly's ancestral recipes.

Pudd ng is involved somehow of course



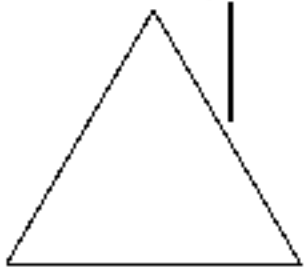
Triangle and Robert



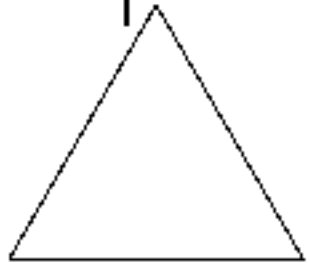
Triangle and Robert

So, equilateral one, do you come for training or for a meal?

Just a meal Preferab y one that won t trigger a plotline



Hmm Peaceful Chicken Eighteen looks safe

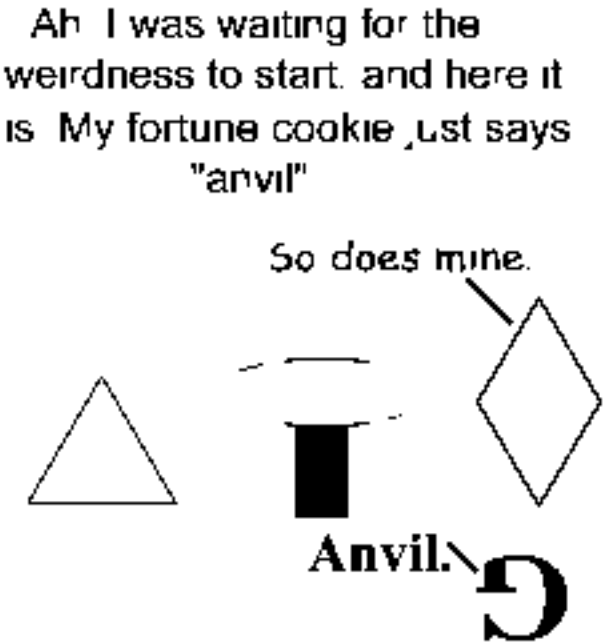


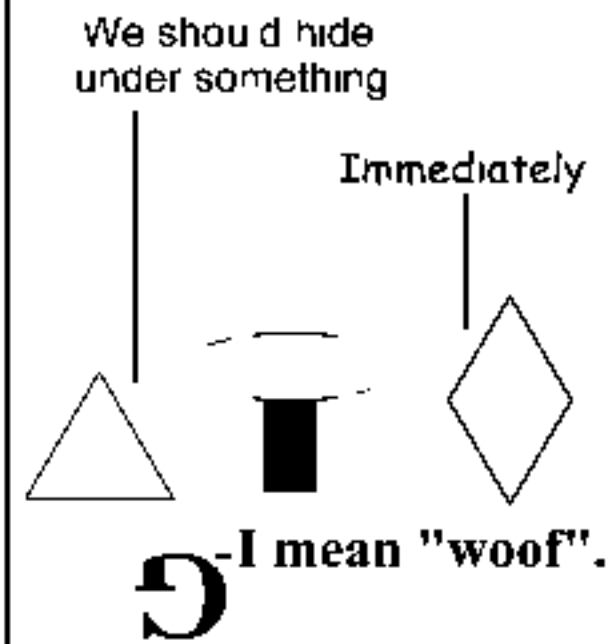
Excellent It will be ready very soon.

I see you have brought a pet It is a cute little . . something, is it not?

Pant. Pant.

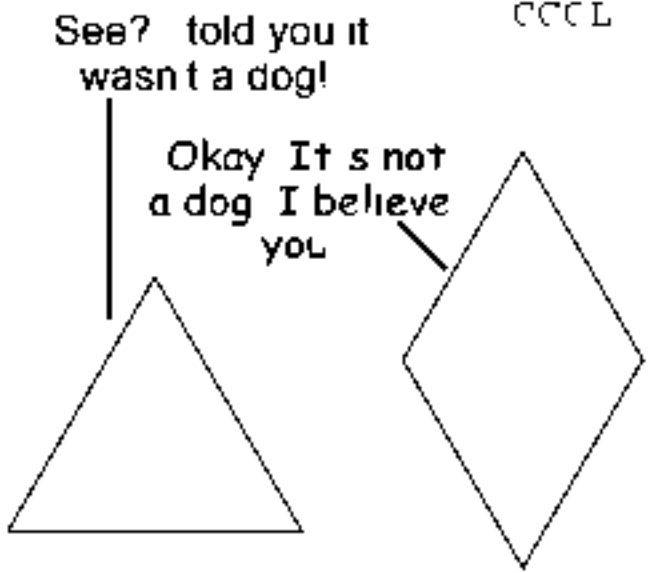
Triangle and Robert

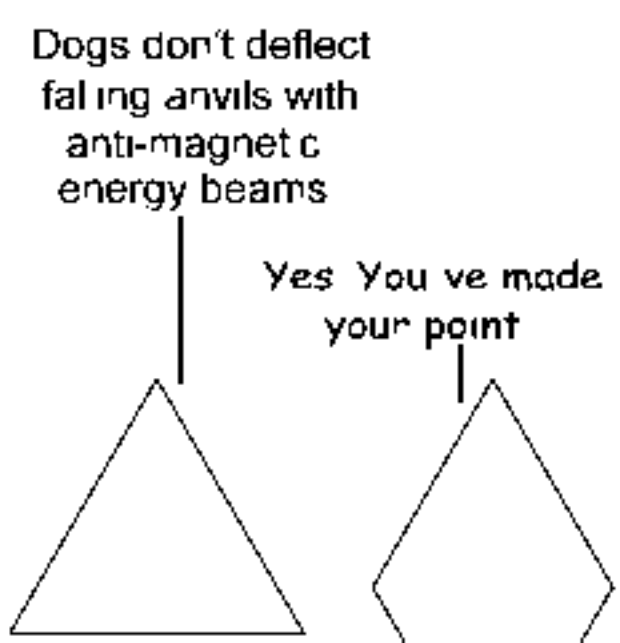


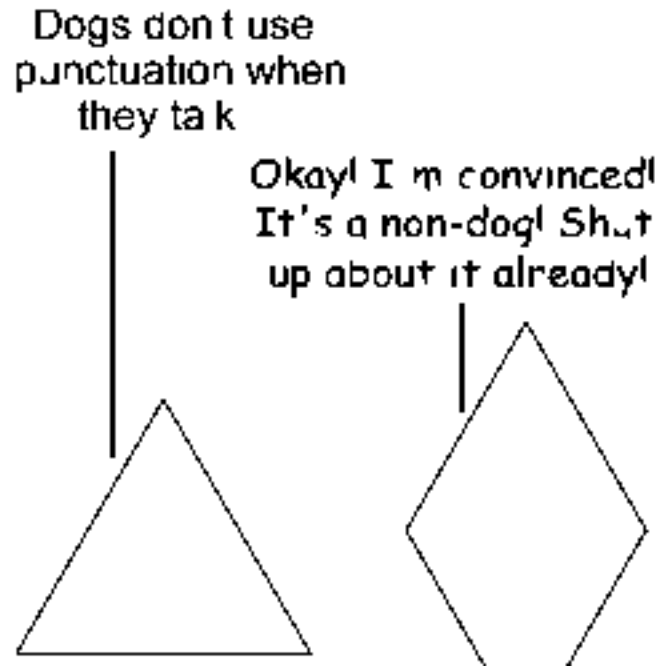


Triangle and Robert

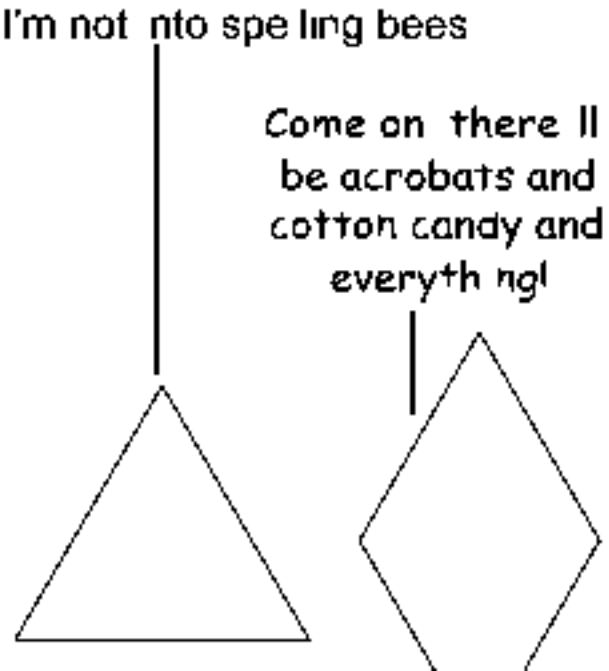
CCCL

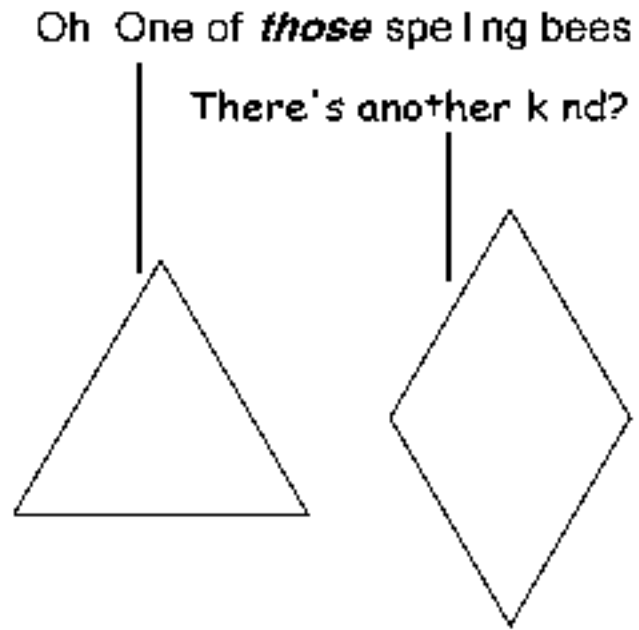




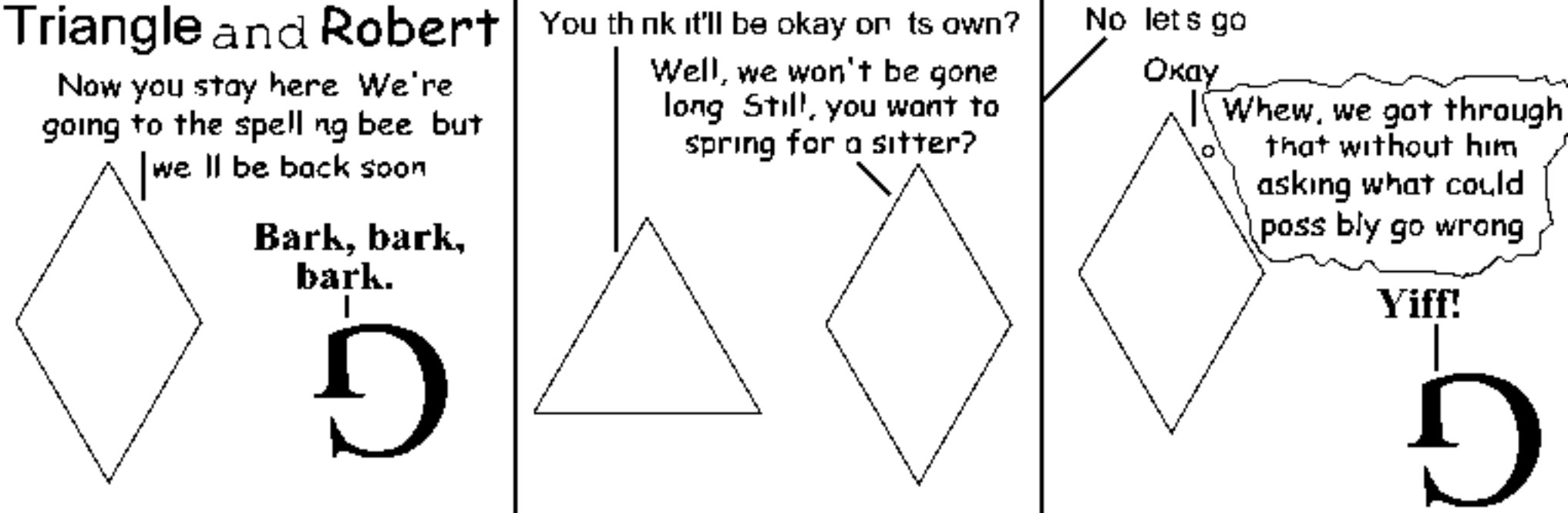


Triangle and Robert





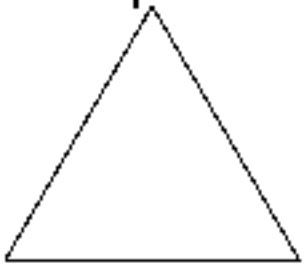
Triangle and Robert

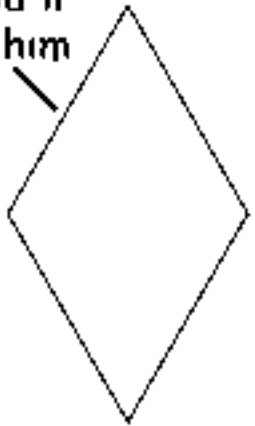


Triangle and Robert

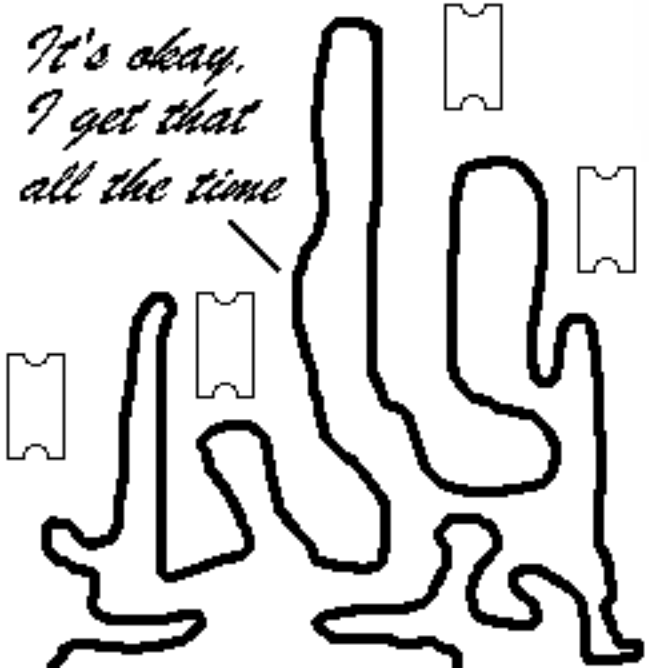
This is an awfully long ticket line

Shh you'll offend him



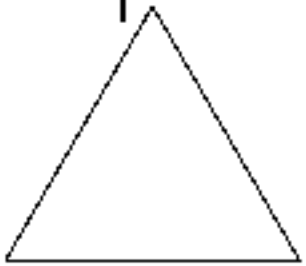


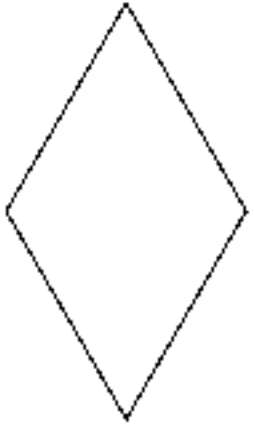
It's okay, I get that all the time



How would I express the sound effect of a rimshot

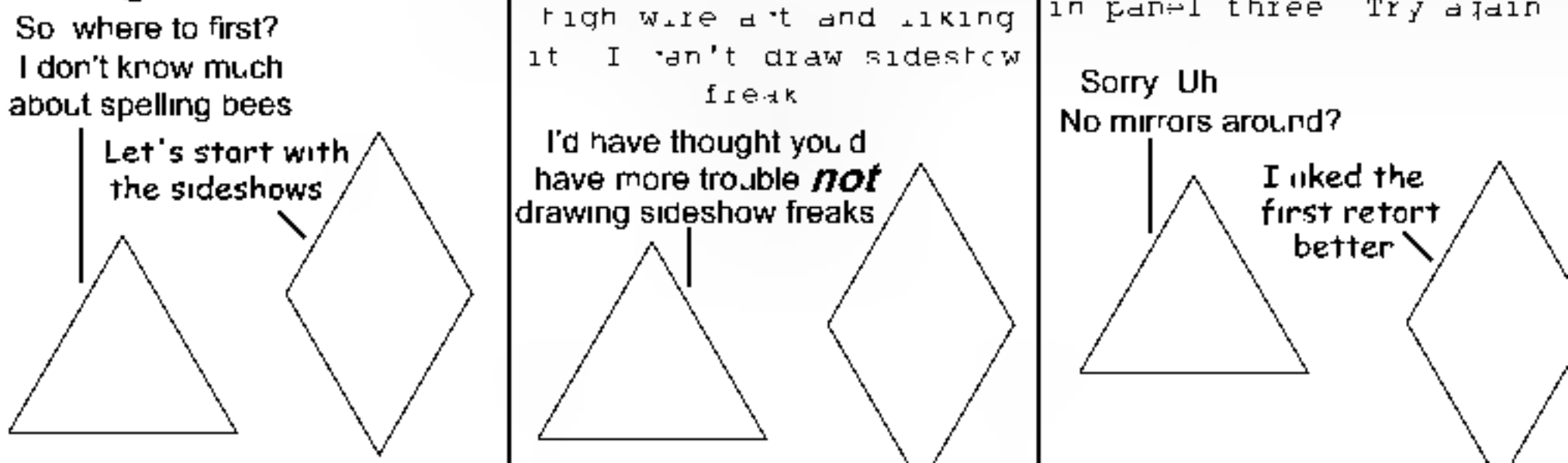
Try "ba-dum-bum-moron"



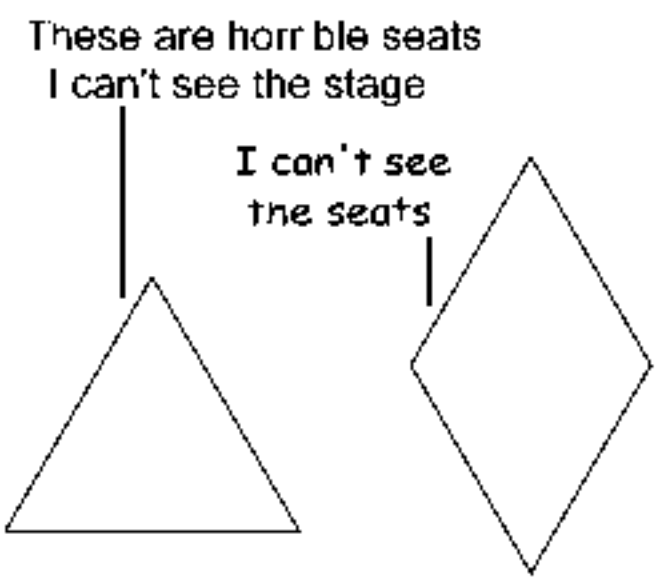


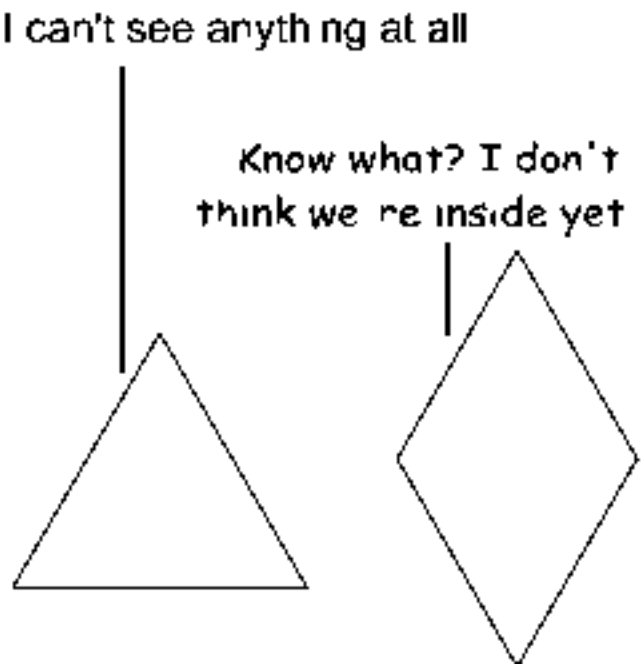
Triangle and Robert
Oh, look. Our alleged artist found the gradient button!
I m scared
I'm going to be
We're going to miss the speiling bee.
I'm blind
I m stripey

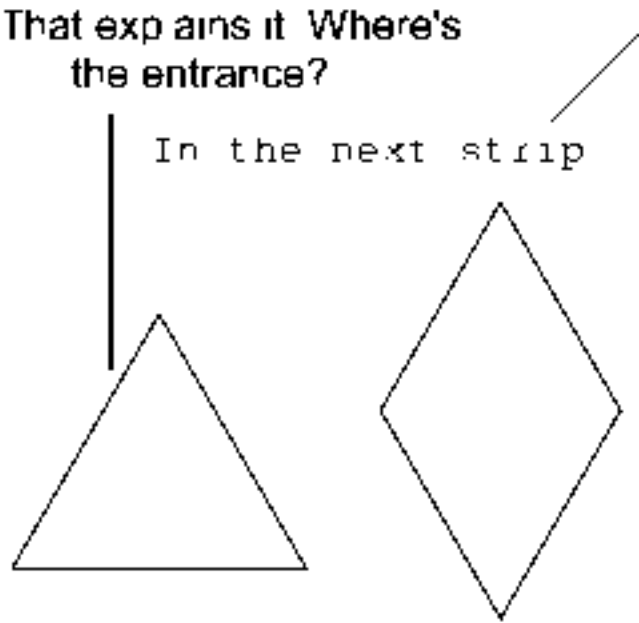
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



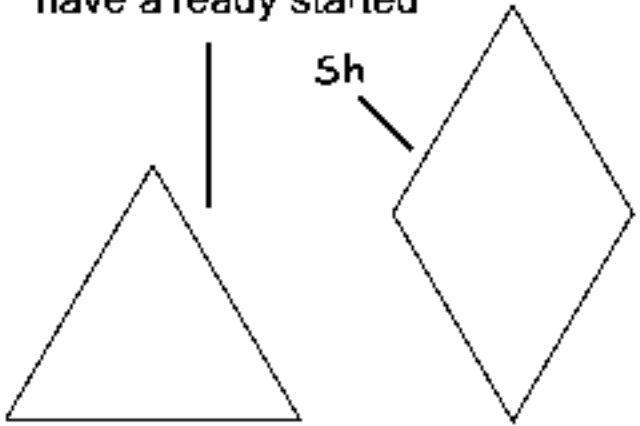




Triangle and Robert

We got here late
The tightrope walkers
have a ready started

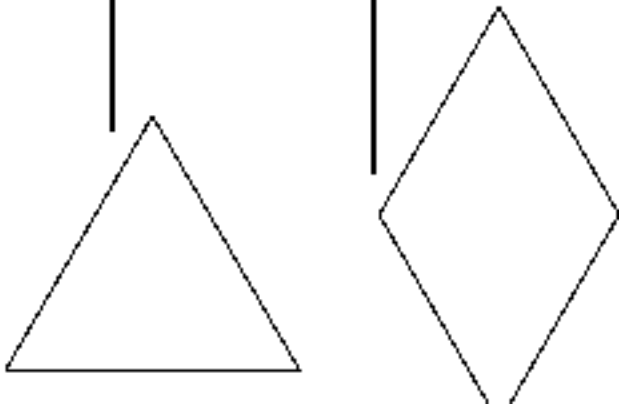
Sh



Experimentation
F, X, P, E, R, I, M, E

Spelling bees are fun how?

Look They're not
using a net

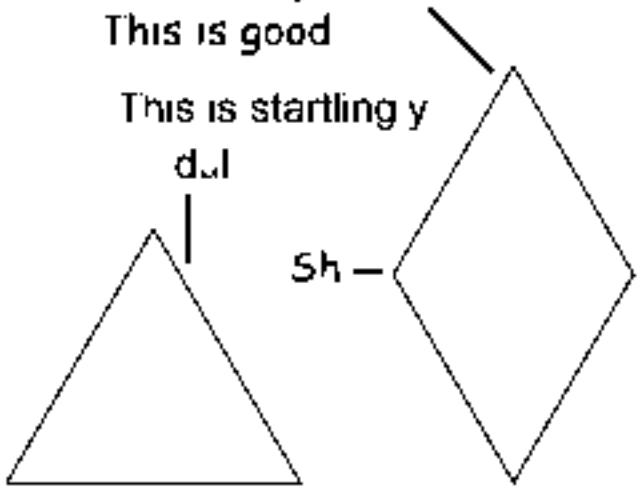


Triangle and Robert

There's only two left
This is good

This is startling y
dul

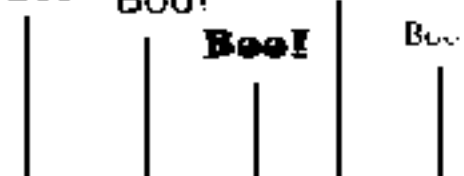
Sh —



Gregarious.
g R. E. g.

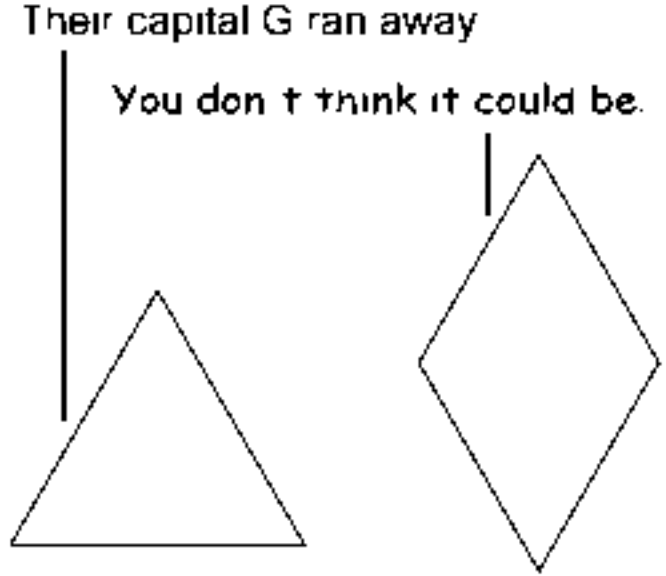
A, R, I, O, U, S
Gregarious.

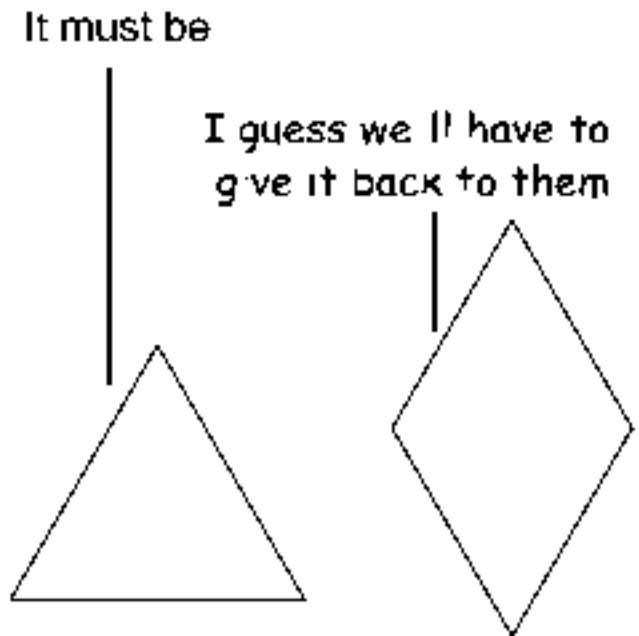
Boo! Boo! Boo! Boo! Boo.

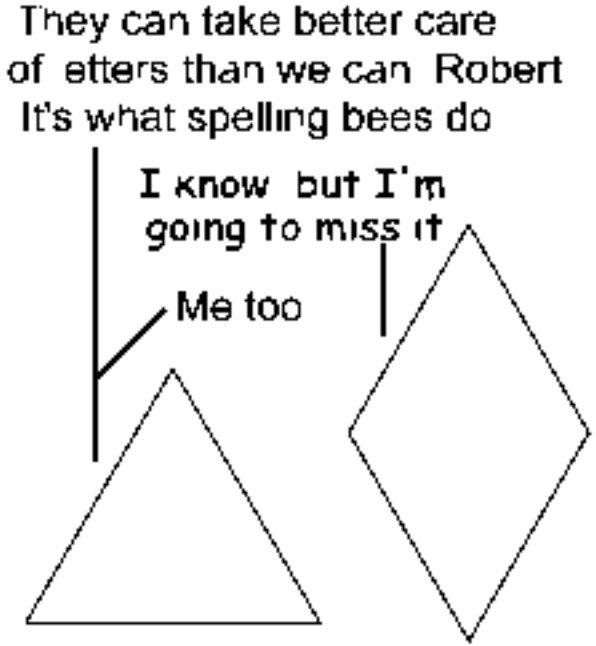


Calm down, folks. Our capital G ran away a couple weeks ago. We have to use the lowercase one until we get a new one

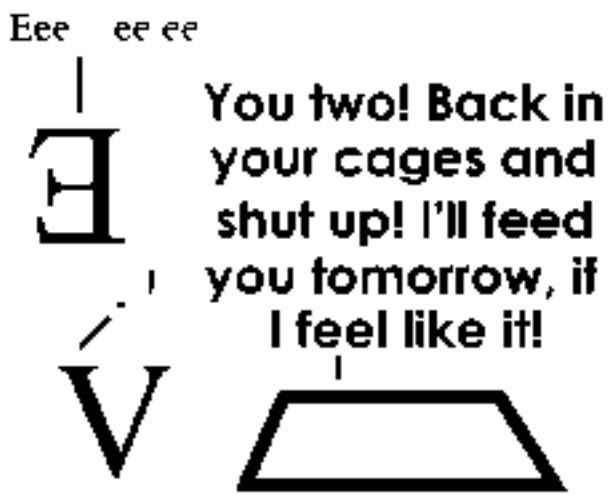
Triangle and Robert

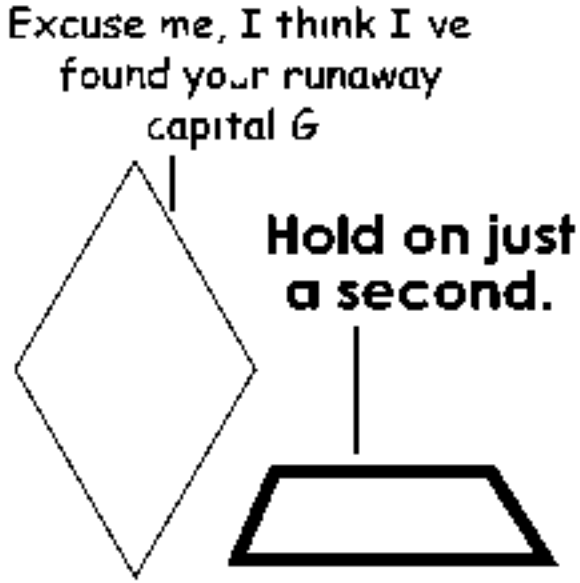


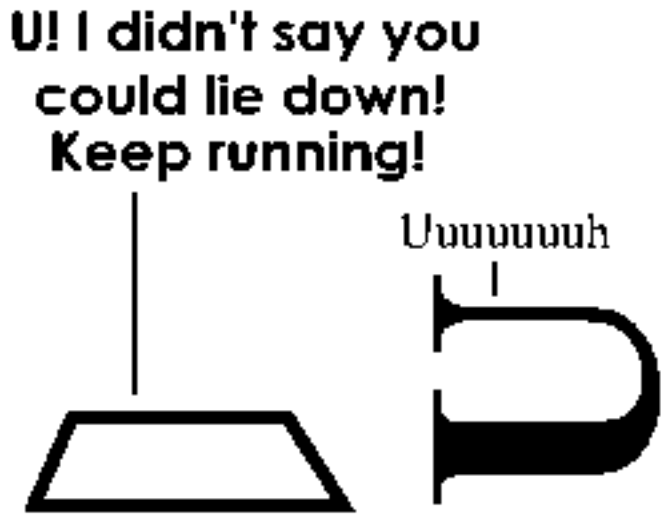




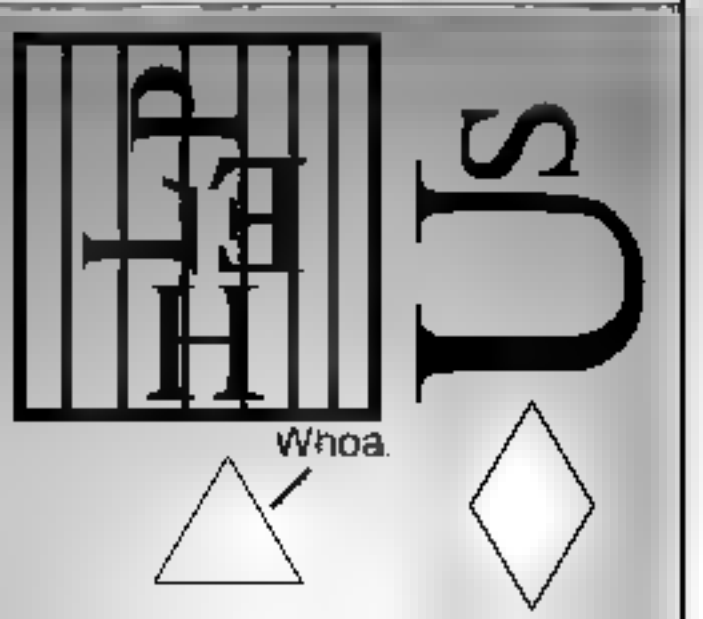
Triangle and Robert

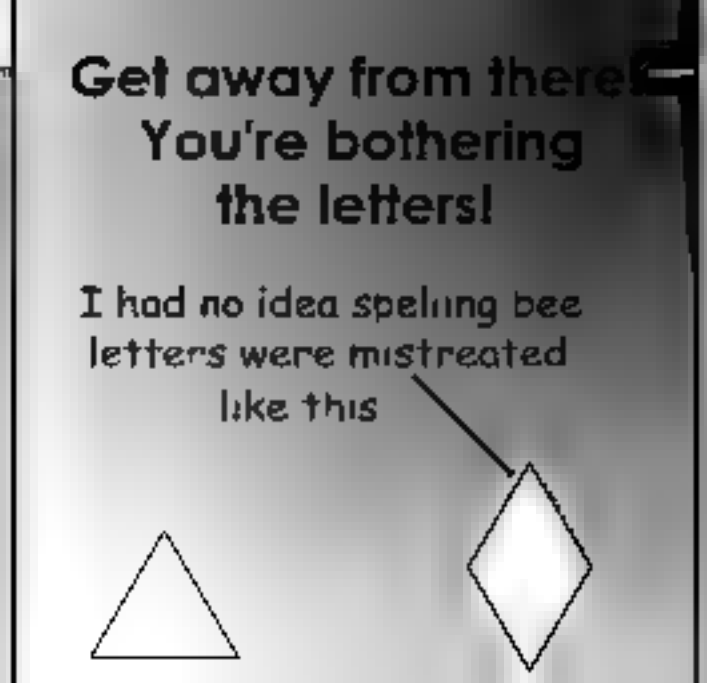




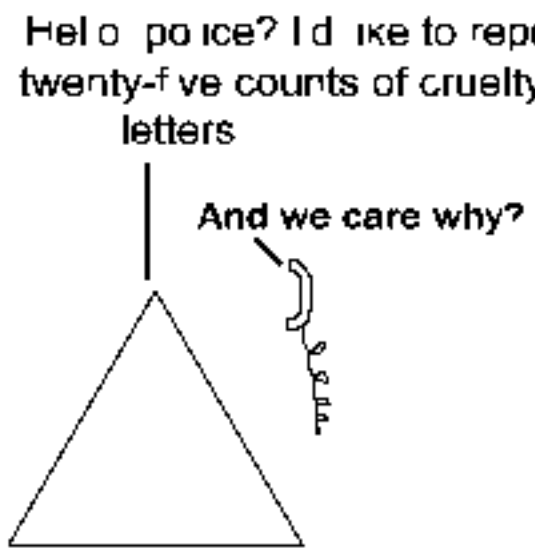


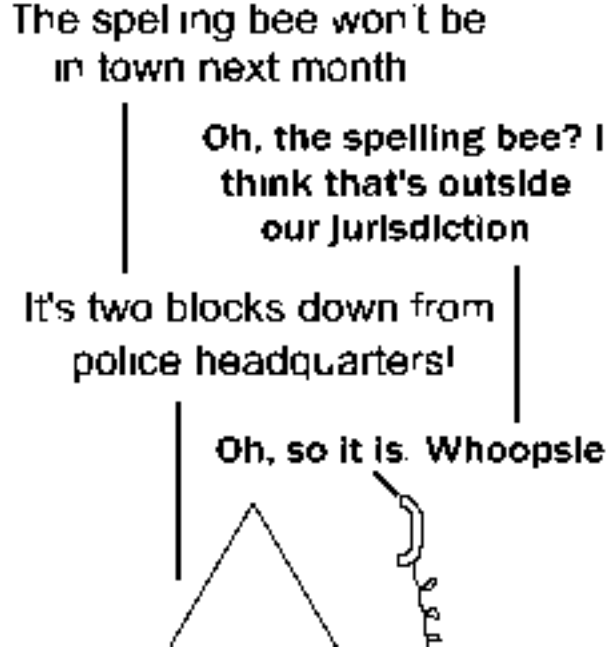
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

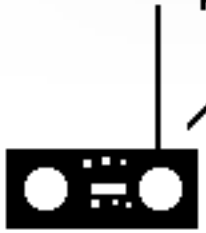




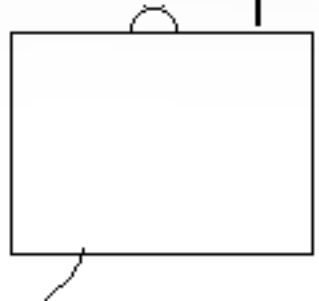
Triangle and Robert

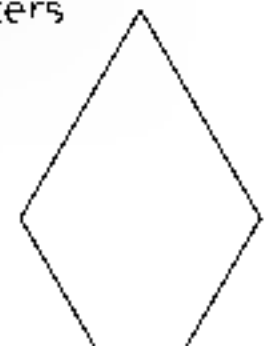
In a surprising turn of events the police actually arrested someone today

Unpronounceable Foreign Sounding Name spelling bee proprietor



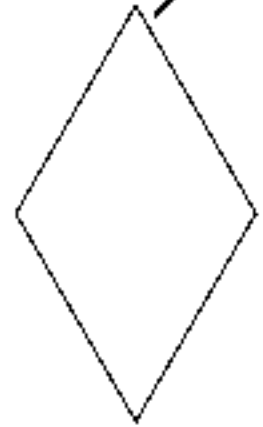
is being held without bail on charges of operating a fusion generator without a license transporting hazardous octagons across state lines and multiple counts of cruelty to letters

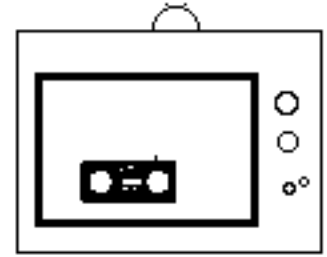




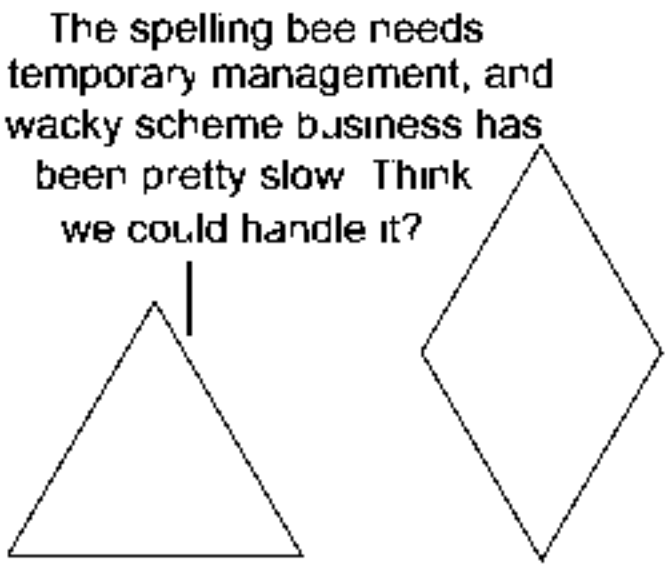
Robert, why are you watching the radio on TV?

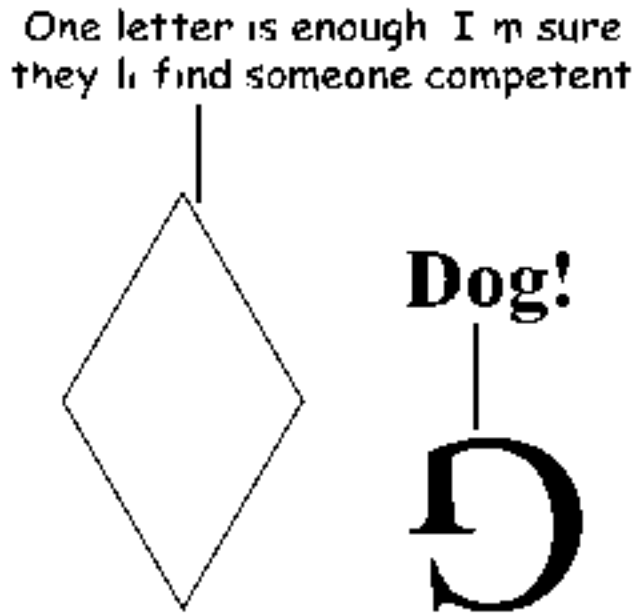
The reception's more fun

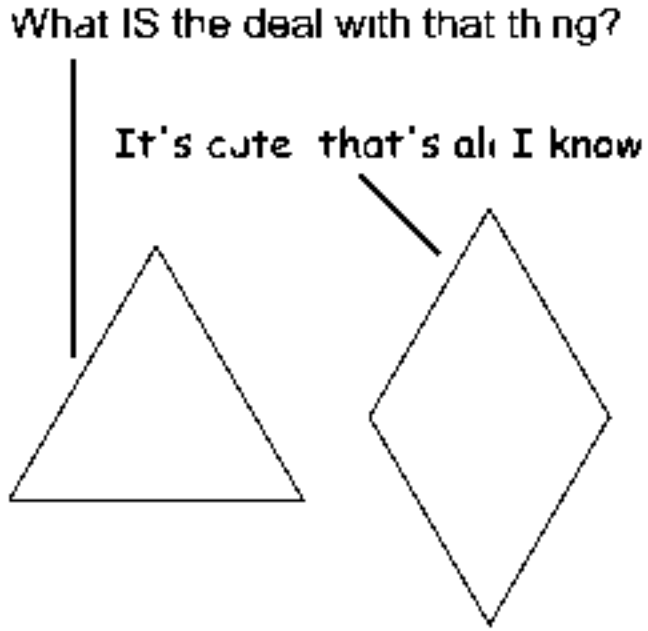




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

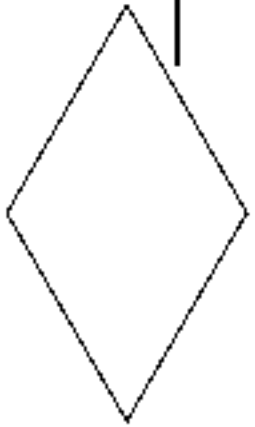
There's someone at the door Go see who it s

Let s say we do for the sake of argument

We have a door?

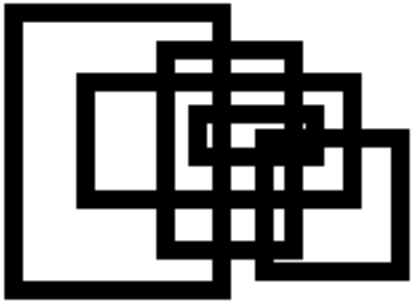
Don't let it in

Why? Who is it?

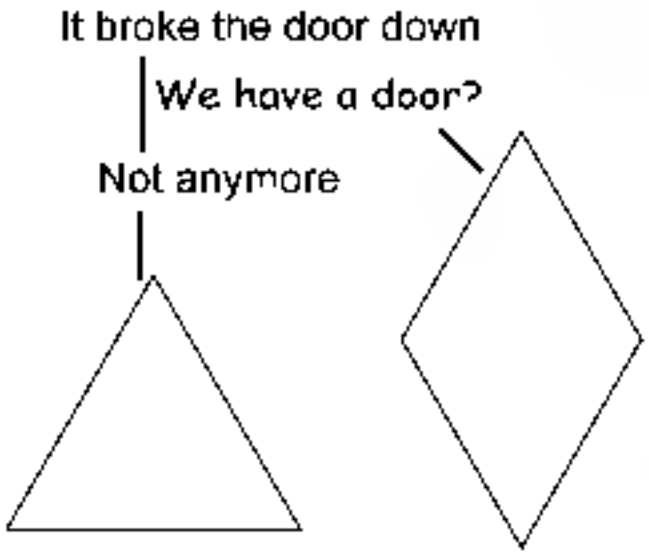


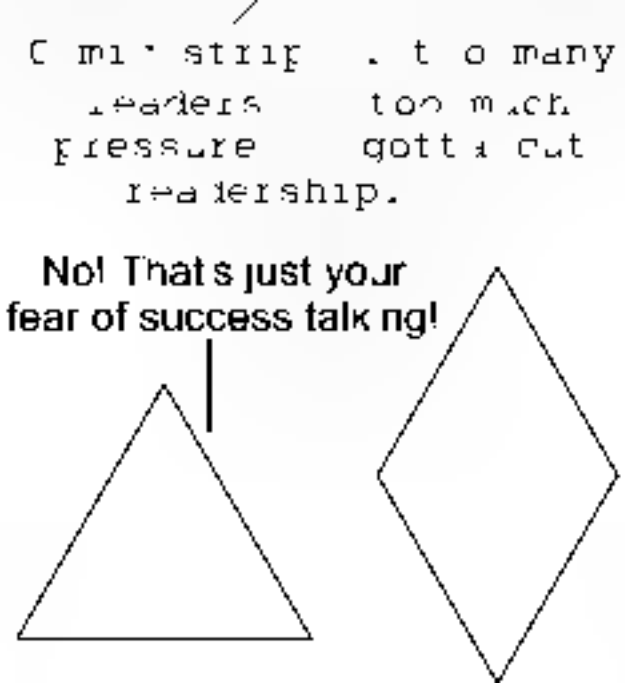
I think it's my fear of success

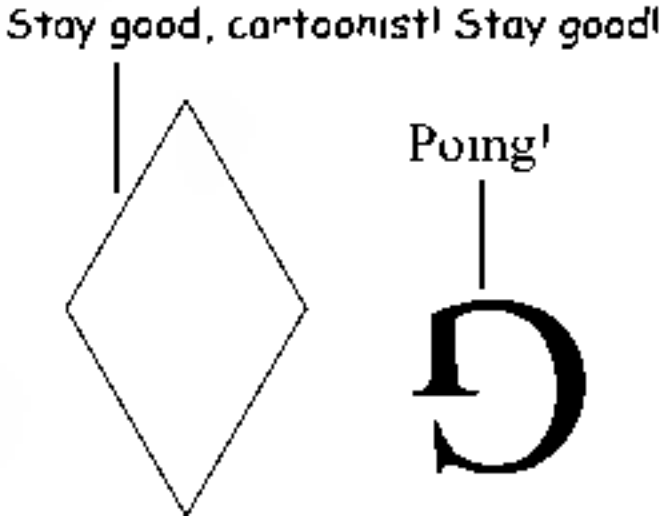
You can't keep me out forever'



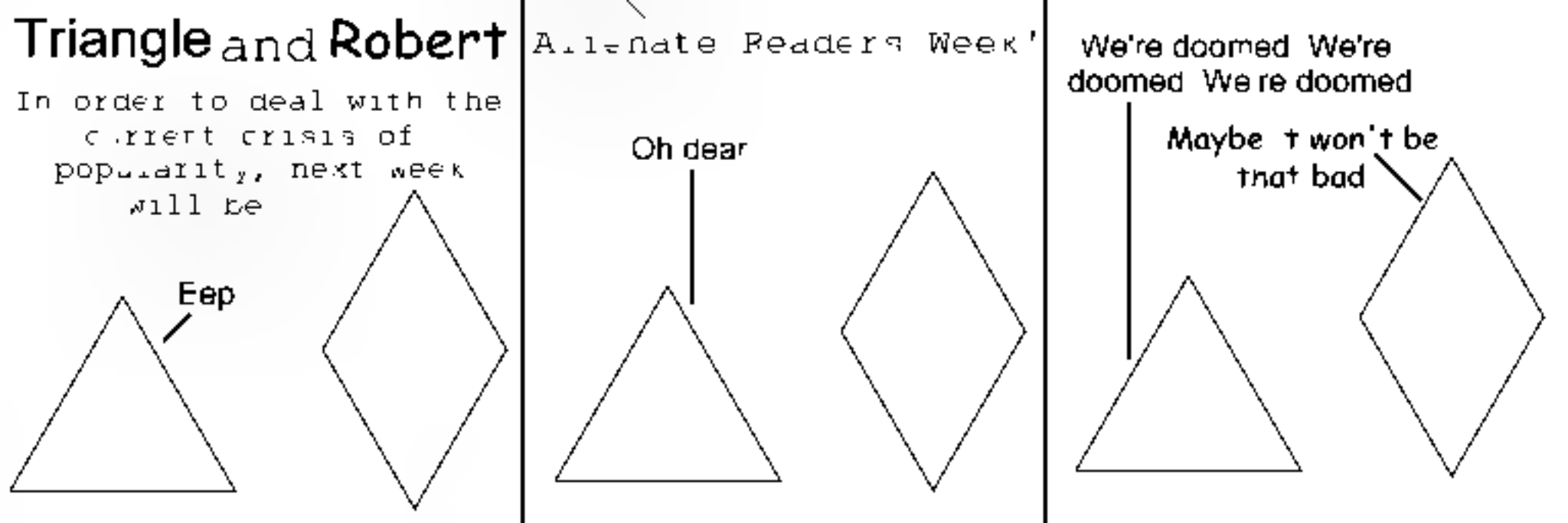
Triangle and Robert





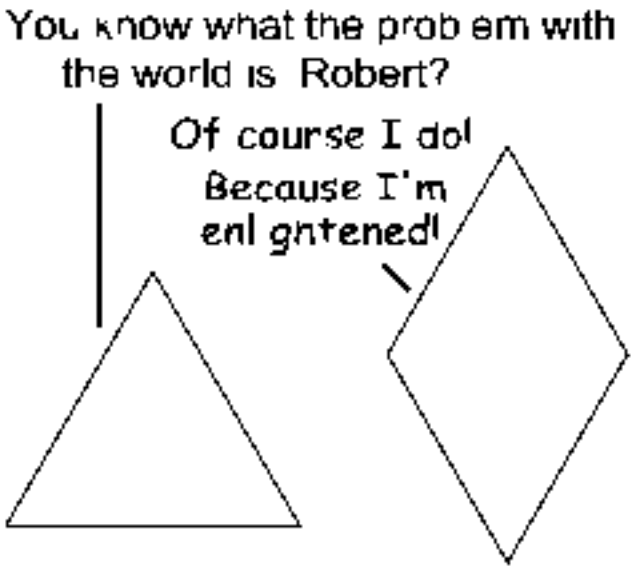


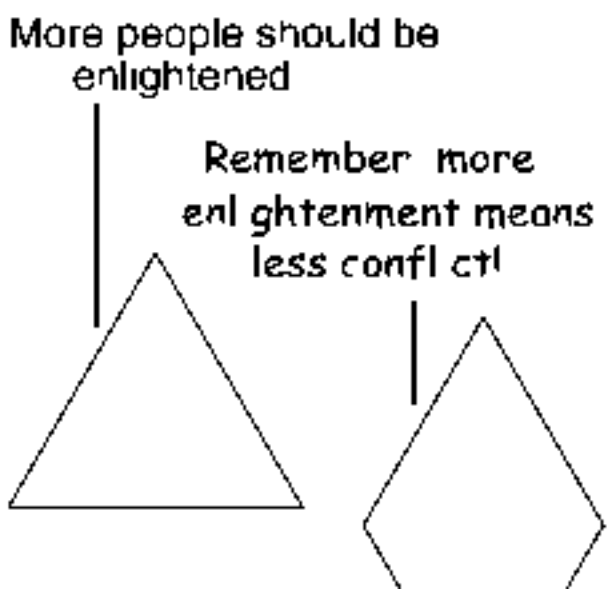
Triangle and Robert

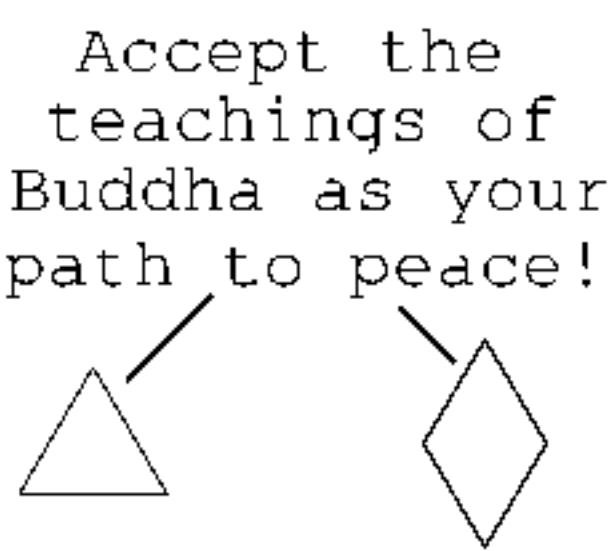


Triangle and Robert

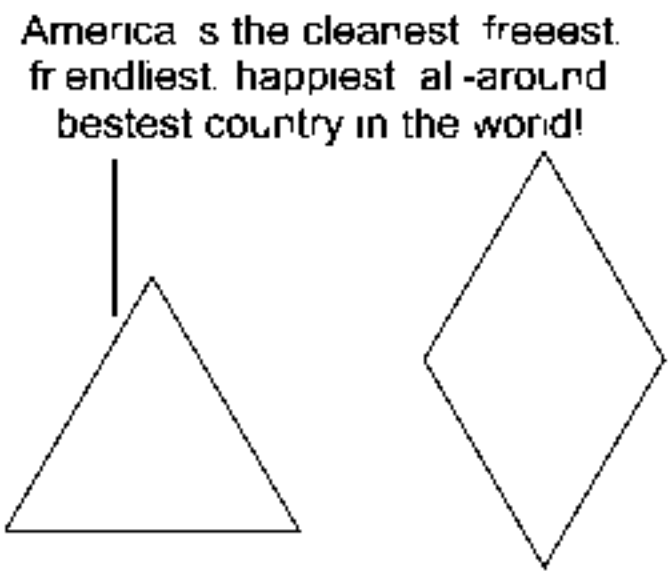
Day Two of Alienate Readers Week

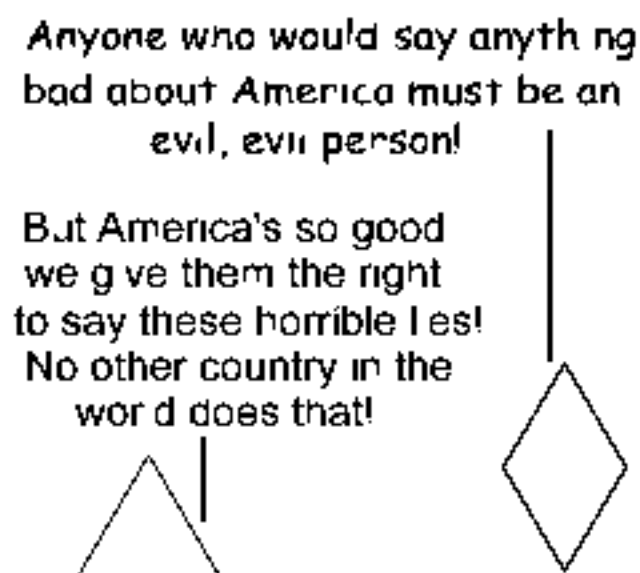


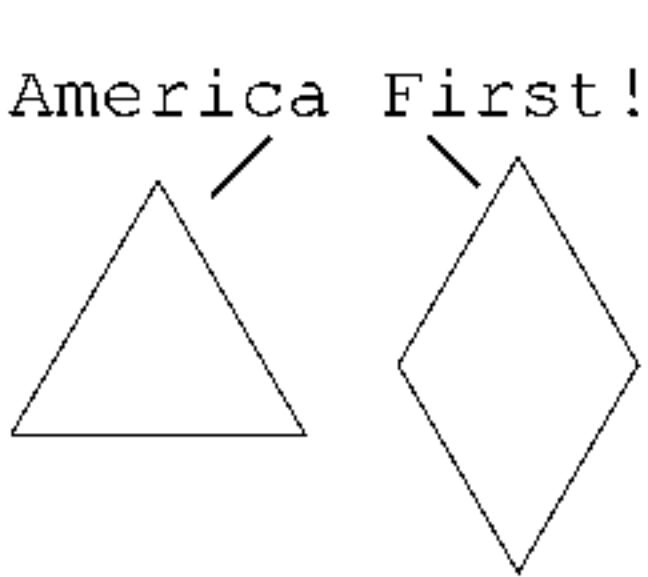




Triangle and Robert Day Three of Alienate Readers Week

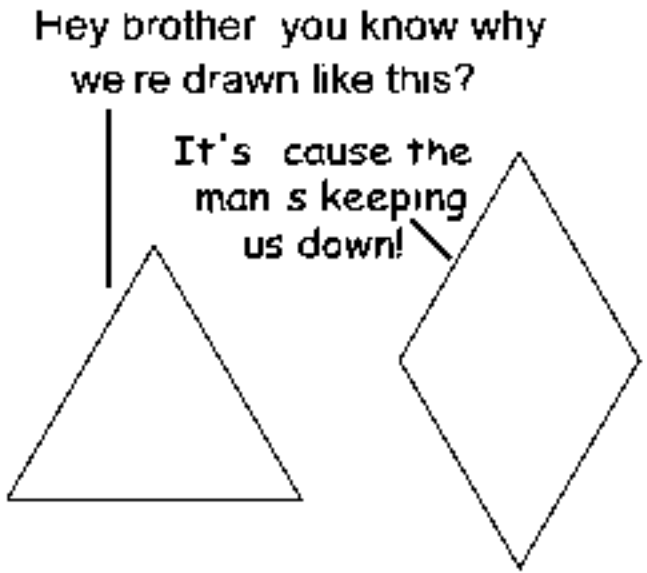


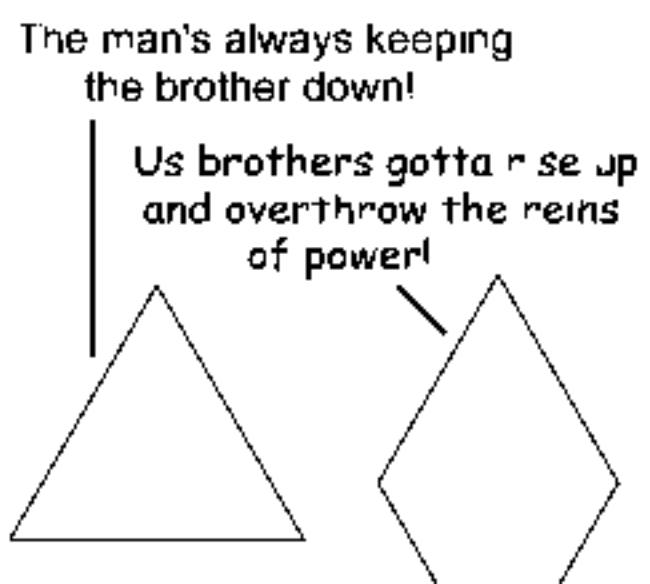




Triangle and Robert

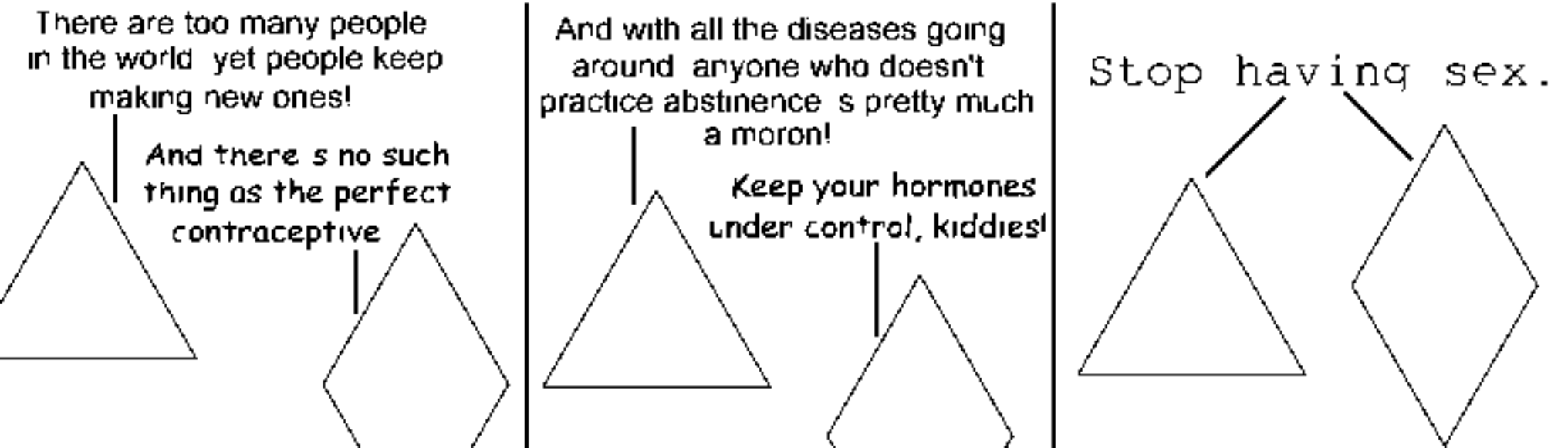
Day Four of Alienate Readers Week





Triangle and Robert

Day Five of Alienate Readers Week



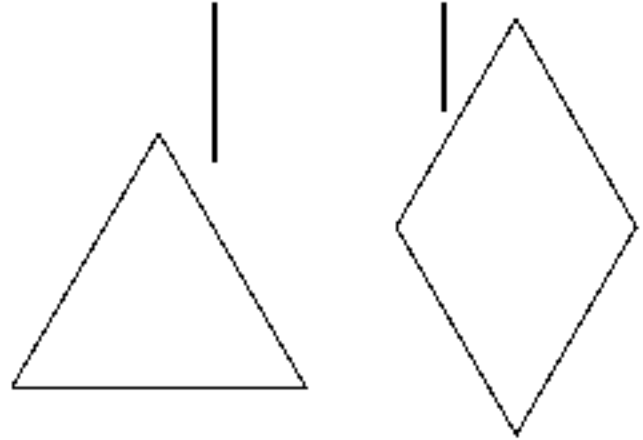
Triangle and Robert

Day Six of Alienate Readers Week

The Keenspot alliance appears beneficia to cartoonists at first g ance but after a few years Keenspot strips w ll be as entrenched and stale as newspaper str ps

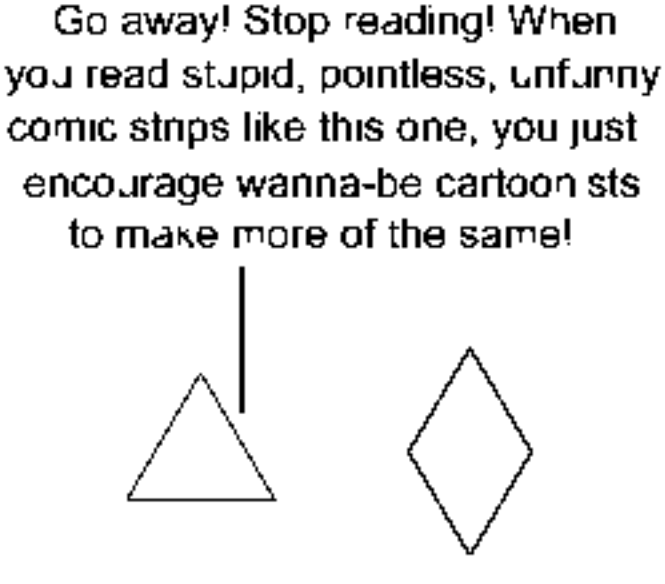
Plus, by requ ring Keenspot l nks to be in place the alliance implic tly discourages member strips from acknowledging the existence or quality of non-Keenspot str ps

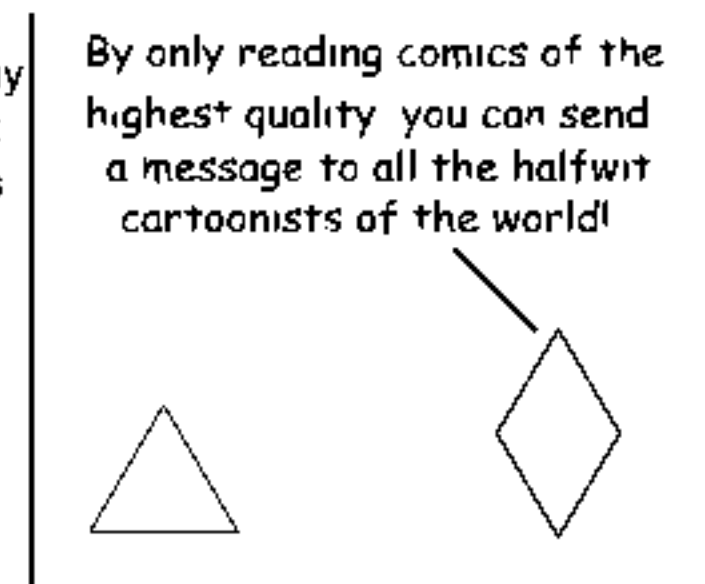
Boycott Keenspot.

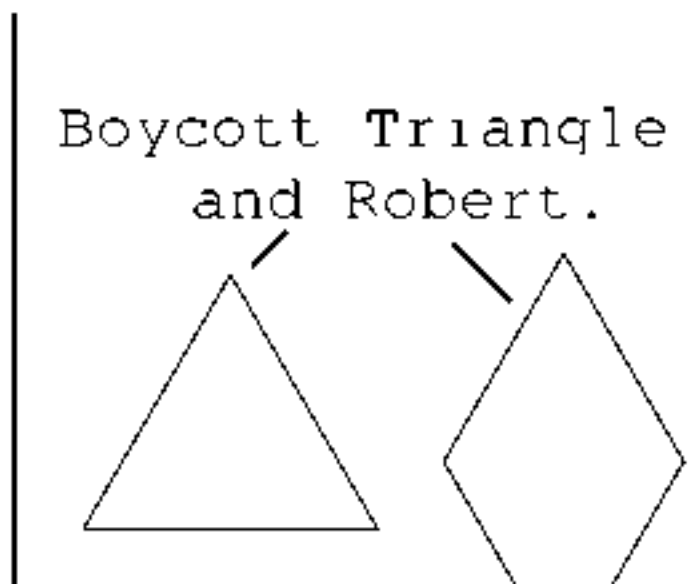


Triangle and Robert

Day Seven of Alienate Readers Week



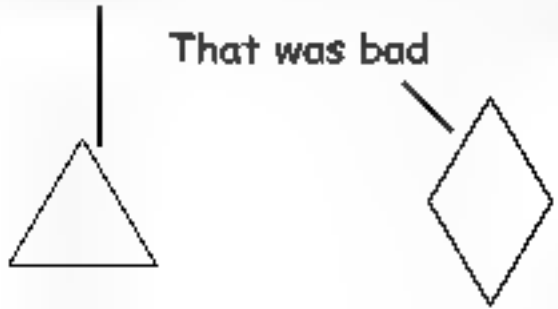




Triangle and Robert

It's over We're back to normal

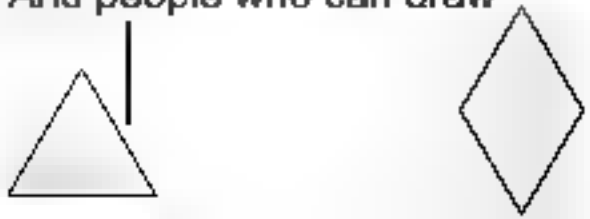
That was bad



By my count, I've alienated people with low bandwidth, Buddhists, atheists, Americans, non-Americans, blacks, whites, the sexually active, authors and readers of Keenspot strips, and people who boycott things

I alienated them long ago

And people who can draw



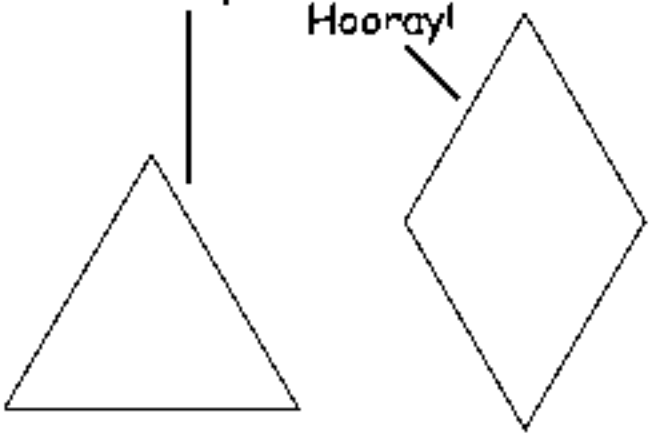
And people who like jokes.

And geometry professors.

Triangle and Robert

The spel ing bee left town t ooks like the nverted capital G s ours to keep

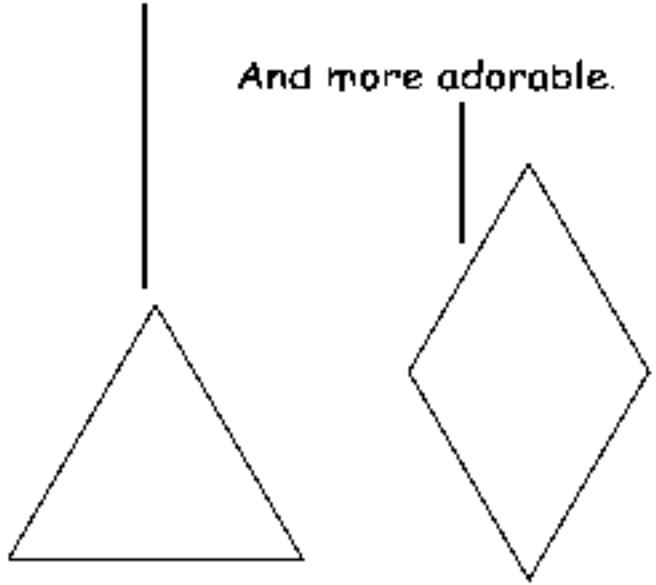
Hooray!



:-) :-) :-)

It keeps gett ng creepier

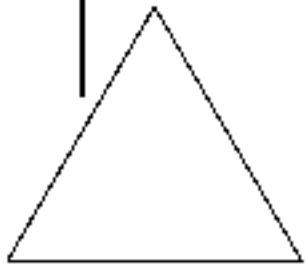
And more adorable.



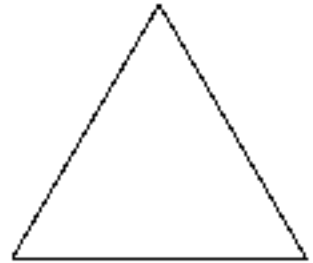
Triangle and Robert

Equilateral one, we must talk

Sure What's up?

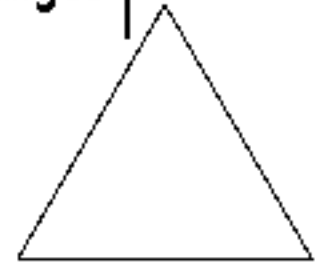


The Pudding-Watcher's power grows in the depths. He is weak, but he will soon become strong Train with me, Triangle I can help you survive the confrontation to come.



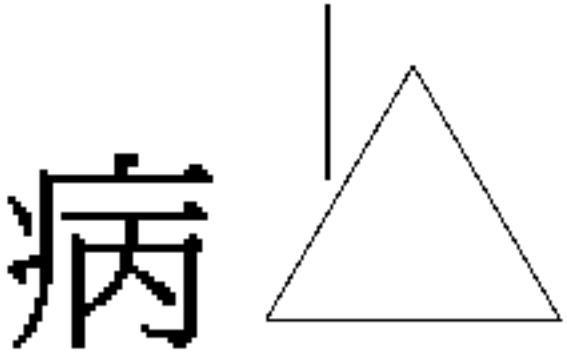
I am neither a warrior nor a chef I wi l dea with Orpuddex in my own way f he needs to be dealt with

Come to me if your mind changes



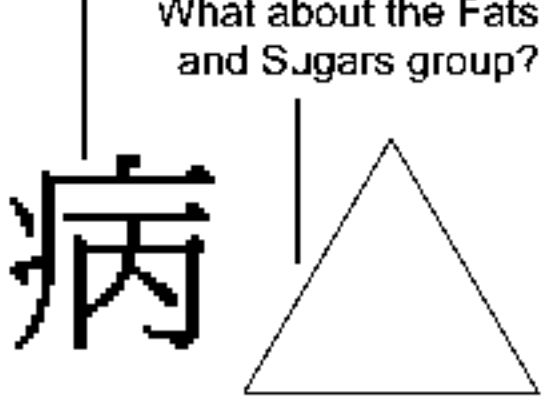
Triangle and Robert

I wi l not train under you but you can he p me Tell me what you know of the Pudding-Watcher



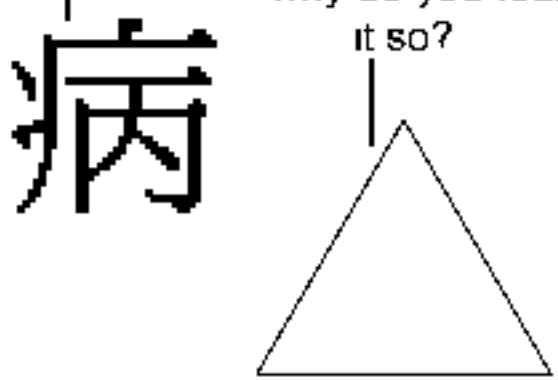
Pudding lies not within vegetable, nor in meat, nor in grain or dairy Pudding lies outside the Four

What about the Fats and Sugars group?

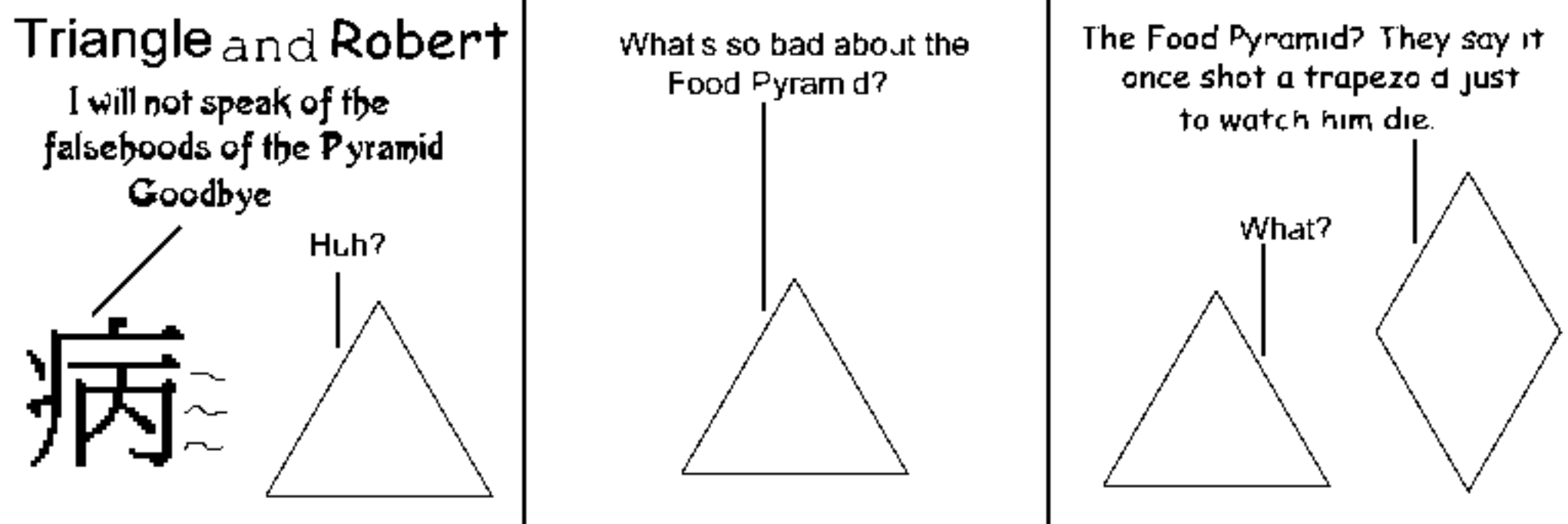


Speak not to me the heresy of the Food Pyramid!

If it is a heresy why do you fear it so?



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

The Food Pyramid suddenly came into the public eye a few years ago. It preached a dietary philosophy at odds with the orthodox doctrine of four food groups.

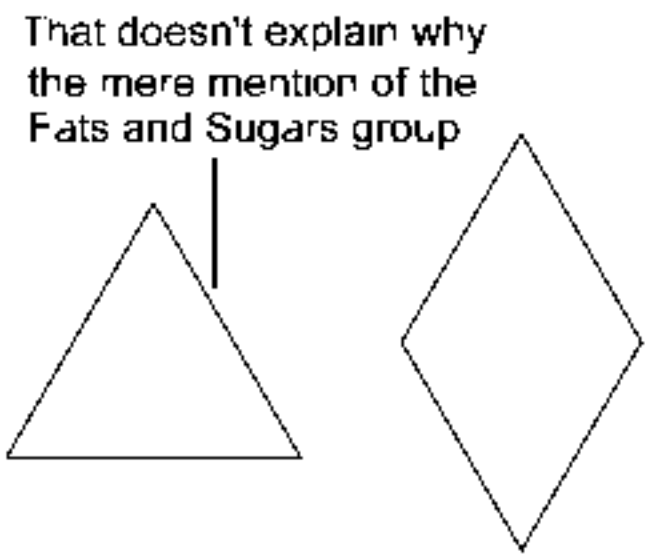
And then it snapped, went on a twelve country killing spree, was arrested, convicted and imprisoned. End of story.

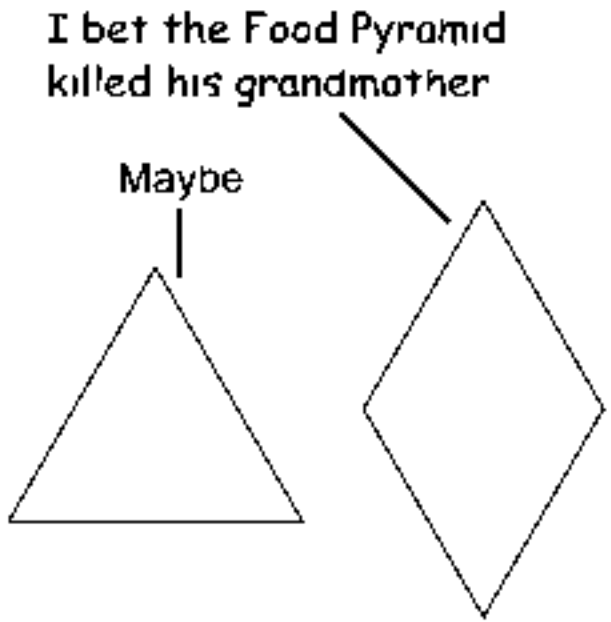
I never heard about the killing spree

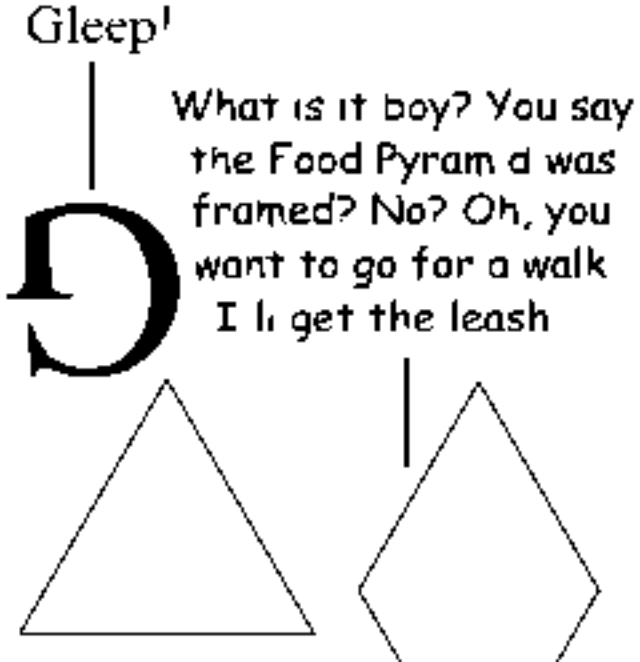
Well, we didn't exist at the time. I only learned about it just now, to give the exposition.

Someday I'm going to be rich and I'm going to buy a fourth wall

Triangle and Robert





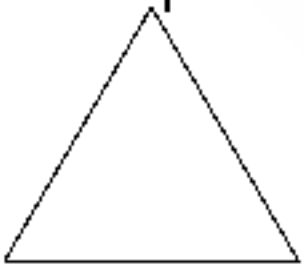


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

I suppose you want me to try to clear the Food Pyramid's name now for some obscure reason

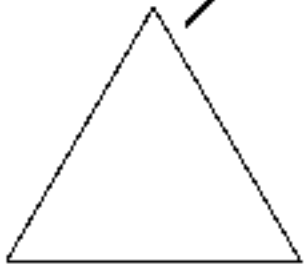
We can d it a different way



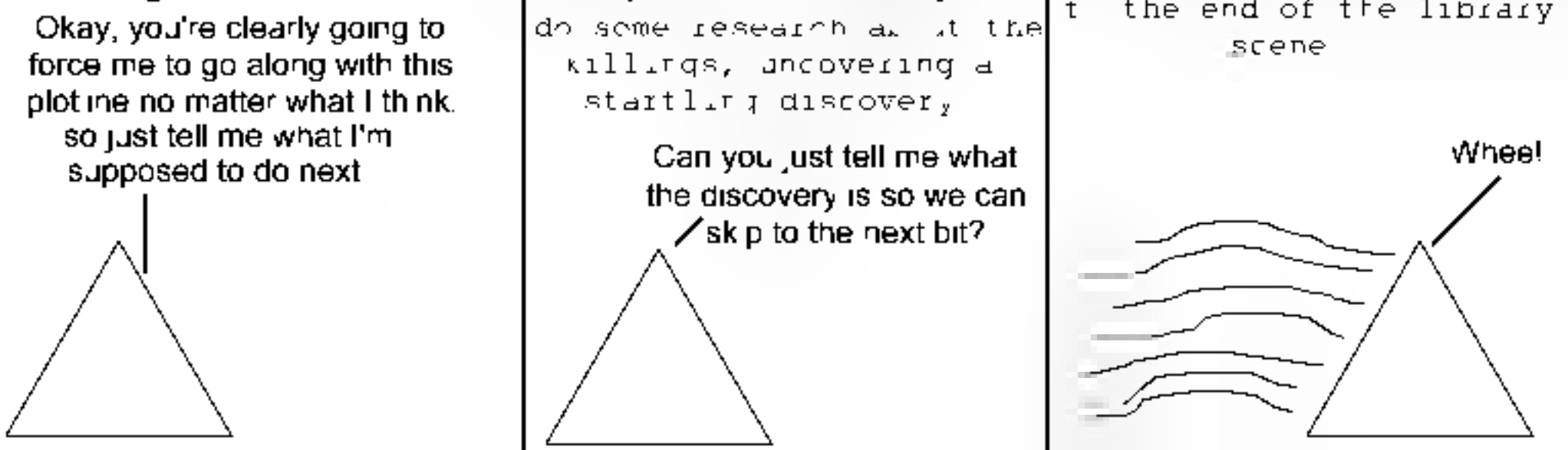
This just in. The Food Pyramid has... escaped from prison? Huh? What was it in prison for? It did WHAT? I don't remember hearing anything about any killing spree.

Anyway, authorities are on the lookout for a triangle, roughly equilateral, possibly dyed white.

Wow real subtle way to direct the plot mister Shakespeare

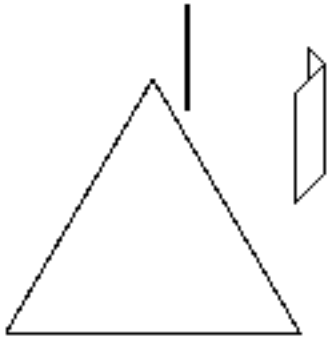


Triangle and Robert

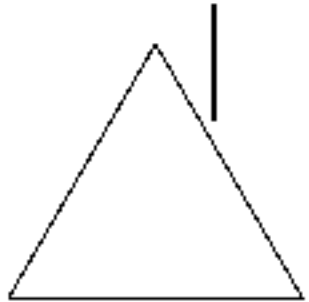


Triangle and Robert

And no b rth record either That's the last of them There's no record of any of these murder v ct ms up unti the death certificates

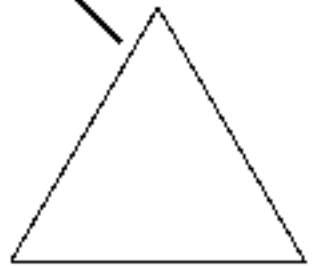


E ther all evidence of their ever having existed was destroyed or they never existed No sign of parents. fr ends school ng employment nothing but names on death certificates



Sir could you give your exposition more quietly ?

Sorry



Triangle and Robert

Next I interview people in the hometowns of the alleged victims

That we can skip over

None of them knew the victims. Most didn't know what you were talking about at first. It appears that such murders took place. The really strange thing is the near total silence of the local news media at the time

So one way or another there's a cover-up. The question now is what really happened and why

Stop! You're— under arrest.

Triangle and Robert

This is the twelfth time 've been arrested over this th ng Look. I'm not the Food Pyramid This isn't dye and my measurements aren't the same

Your story checks out. Sorry about the bother.

You know, there's something really messed up about all this. I aon t think the Food Pyramid was the real killer.

I don't th nk there was any real k l er The vict ms were fake

That would explain a couple things Don t tell anyone I said th's, but you might want to check out the International Cu inary Inst'tute.

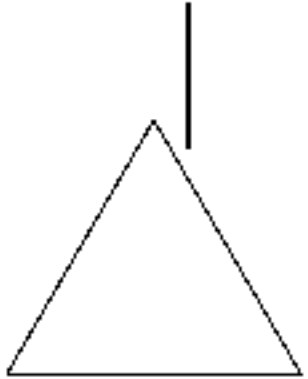
Why?

Triangle and Robert

I've said way too much already. If I tell you any more and I'm wrong, it would mean my job

I guess half a lead is better than none

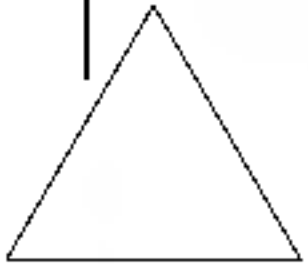
The International Culinary Institute. The world's most influential food bureaucracy. If they took exception to the Food Pyramid's teachings



It's too much. I'm in over my head

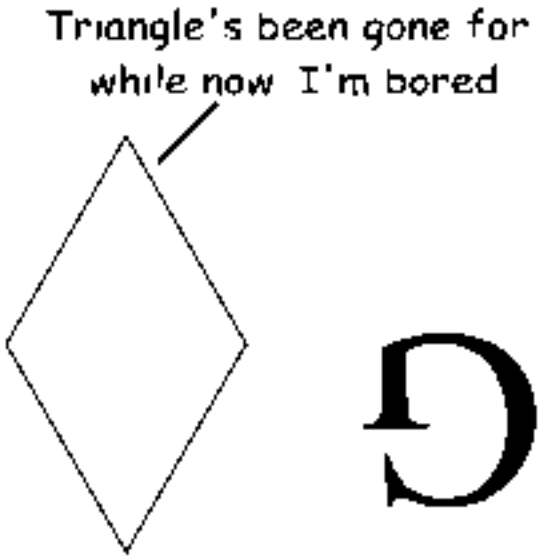
You don't have a lead

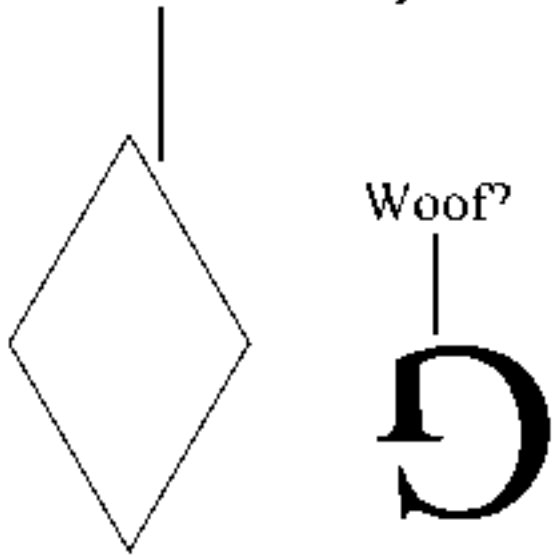
You're right. I'll check it out

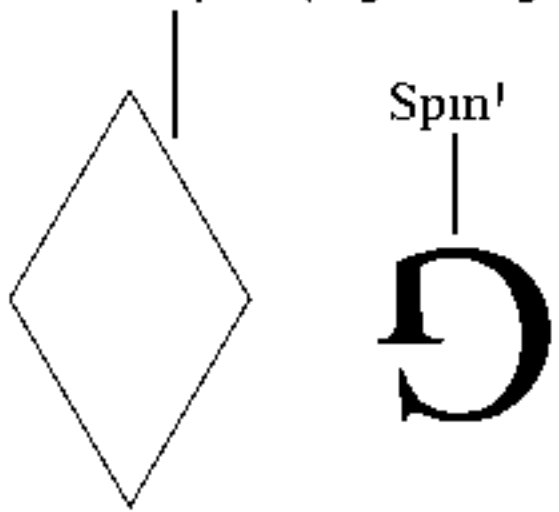


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

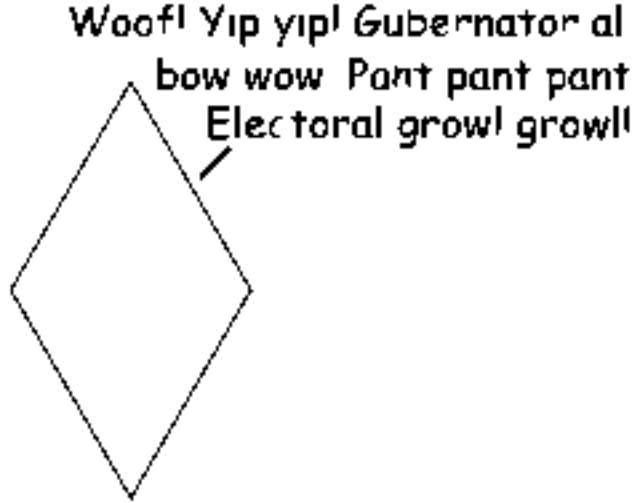






Triangle and Robert

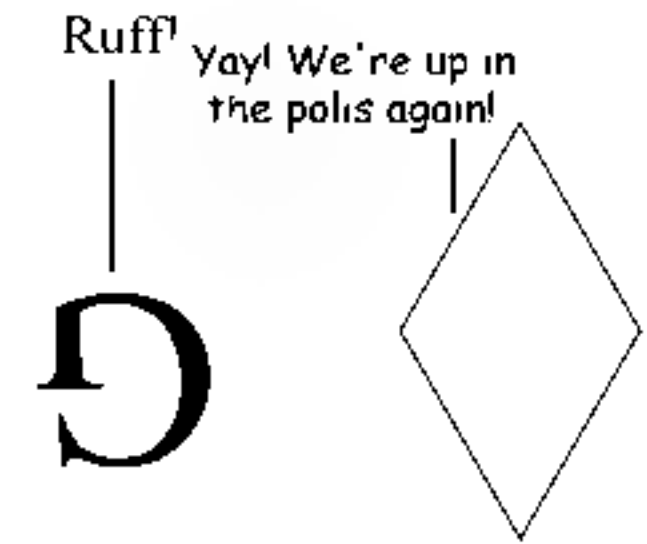
..but this might not be such a boring election after all. Wacky scheme consultant Robert Rhombus announced his independent candidacy today in a speech which left this reporter, frankly, rather startled.

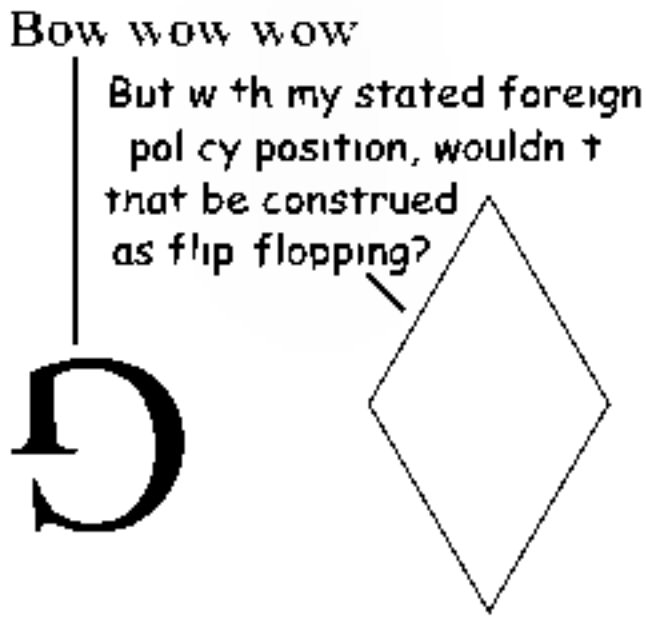


EARLIER TODAY

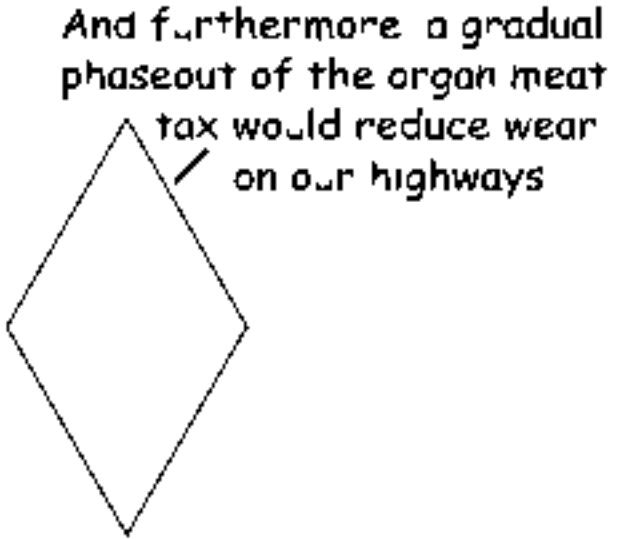
I, for one, want to meet this polygon's speechwriter. Back to you, Zoe.

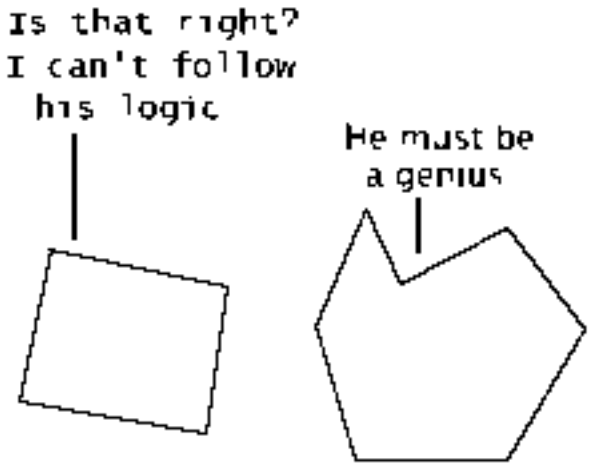
Triangle and Robert

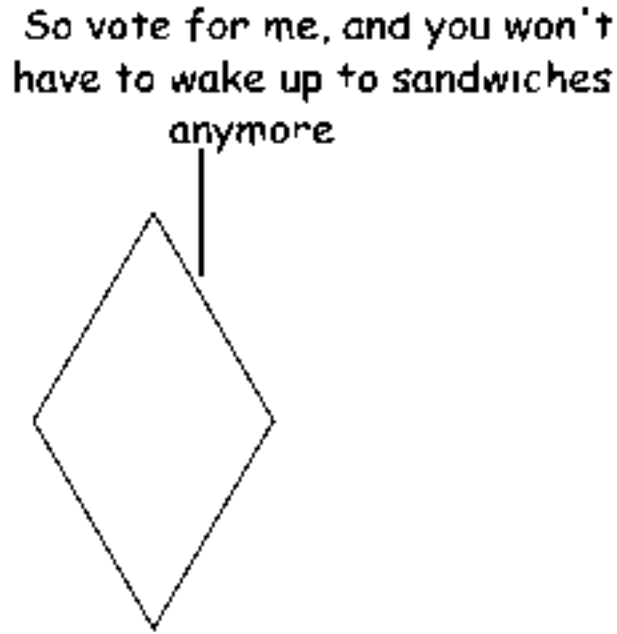




Triangle and Robert

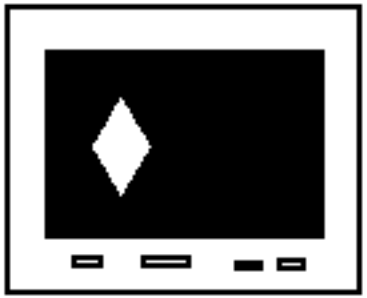




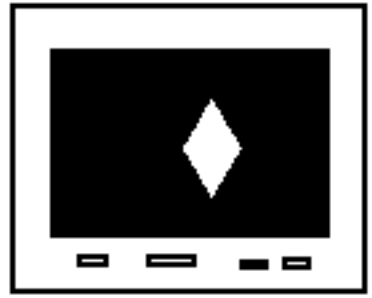


Triangle and Robert

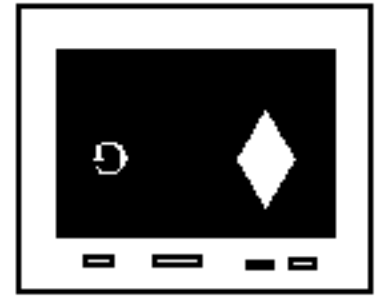
Robert Rhombus has NO prior political experience. He has been BANNED from more than a few public



institutions for disruptive behavior. Will he suddenly become a responsible polygon if he becomes governor?

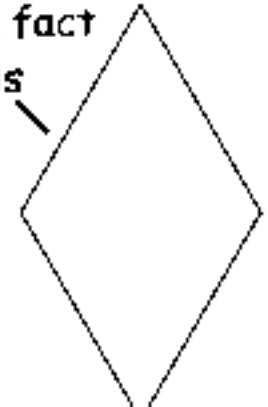


Heck, there's only one way to find out! Paid for by Citizens for Rhomboid Government.

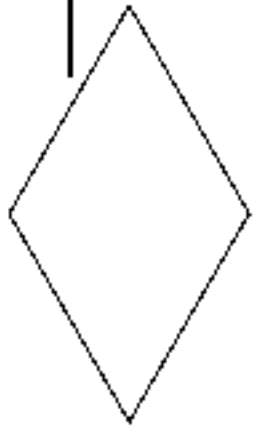


Triangle and Robert

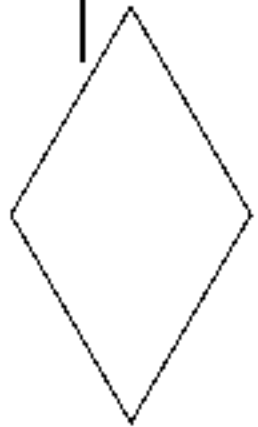
My opponent would have you believe I m some sort of freak with no self-control or sense of dign ty Well the fact of the matter is



I m running aga nst a delus onal moron



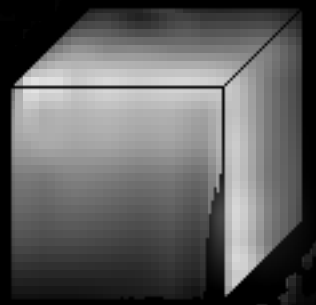
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to clear this up



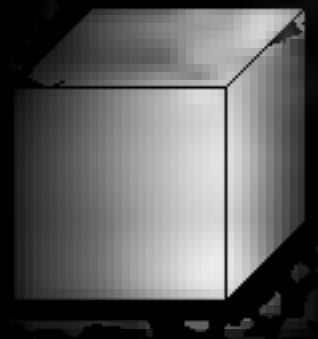
Paid for by Citizens for Rhomboid Government

Triangle and Robert

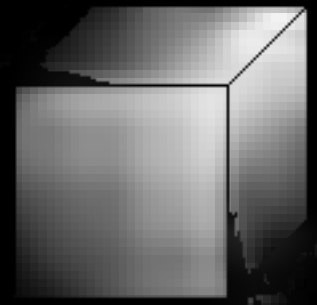
So this is death....



Yup.



Wow.

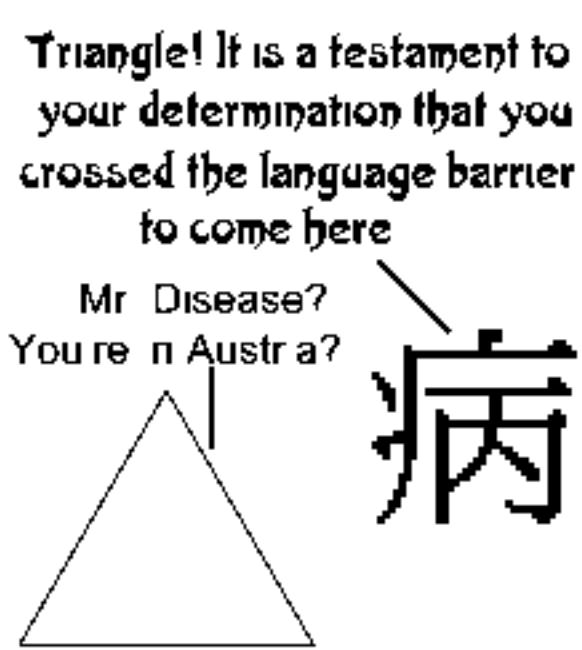


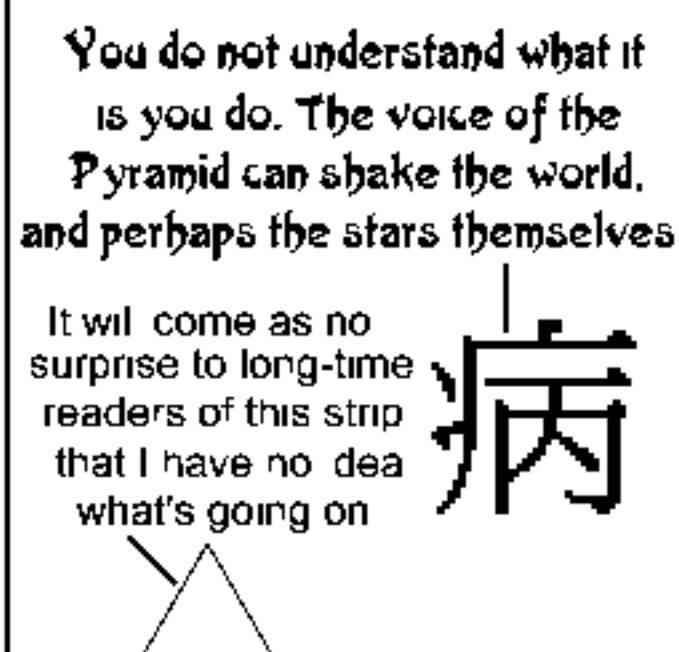
Triangle and Robert

Outside ICI Global Headquarters

Austria

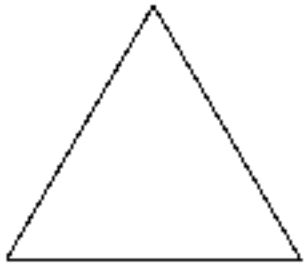
Late Morning





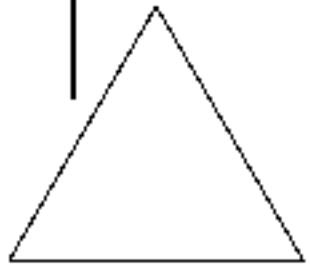
Triangle and Robert

Do not disrupt the affairs of the International Culinary Institute They do more good for the world than you may think



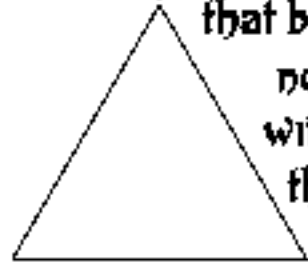
What good does t do for an innocent polygon to be ,ai ed?

You know so little I had hoped it would not come to battle



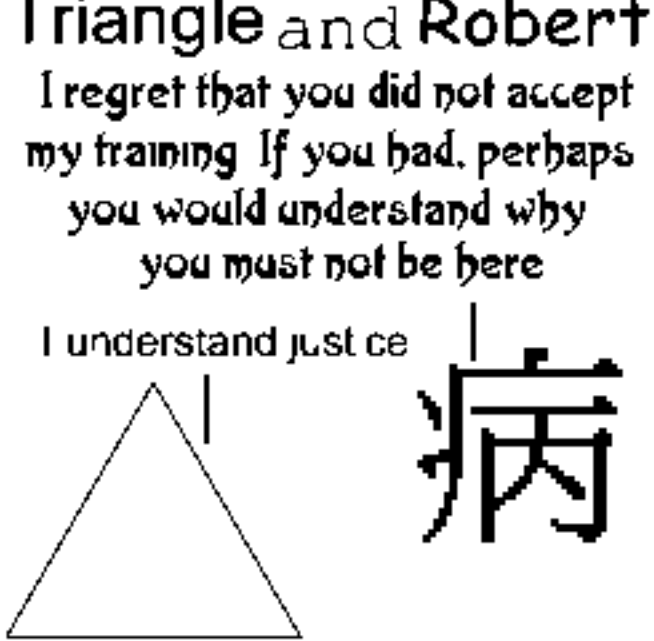
Batt e?

Do you not realize that butterscotch would not be so sweet without tapioca on the other side to balance it?

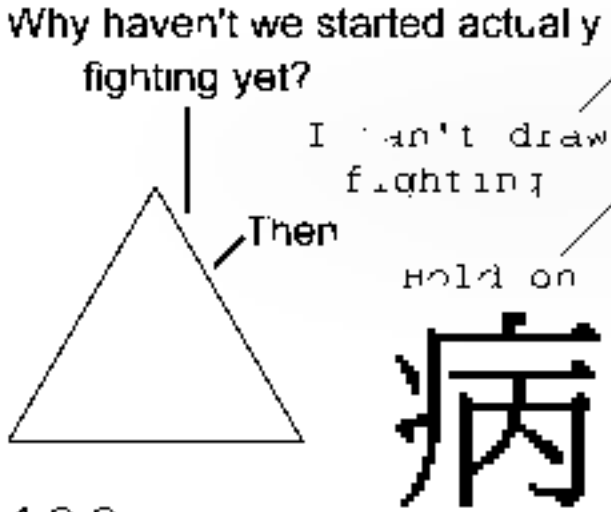


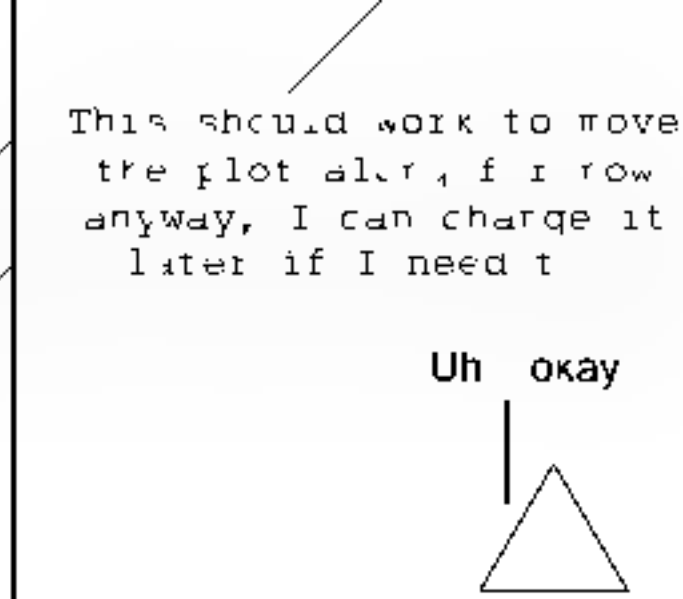
You will not enter this building.

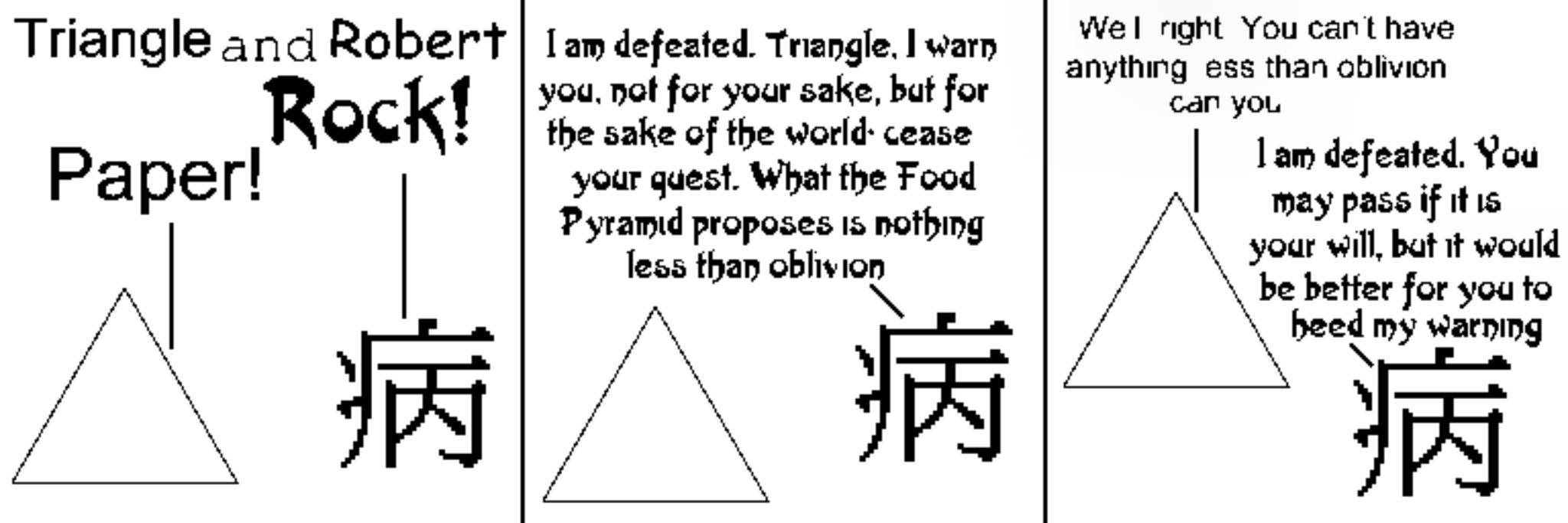
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

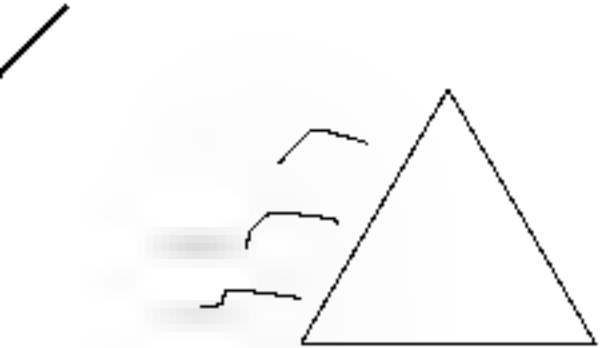





Triangle and Robert
Rock!
Paper!
病
I am defeated. Triangle, I warn you, not for your sake, but for the sake of the world· cease your quest. What the Food Pyramid proposes is nothing less than oblivion
病
We l right You can't have anything ess than oblivion can you
I am defeated. You may pass if it is your will, but it would be better for you to heed my warning
病

Triangle and Robert

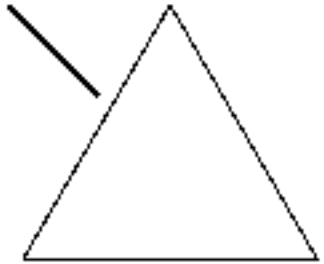
Equilateral intruder on floor one, heading towards stairs. South security team, full alert.

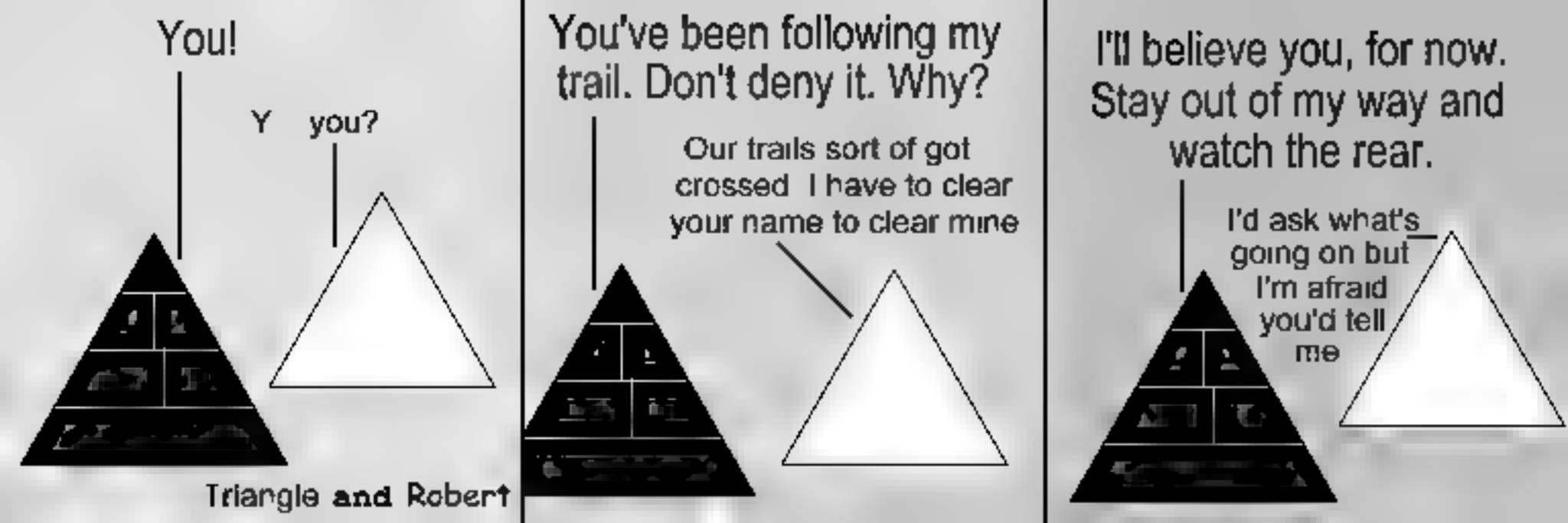


Intruder is entering stairwell. Form blockades.

South squad G! Where are you? Intruder is ascending stairs! Where's the blockade?

This would be so much tenser if there were artwork




You!
Y you?
Triangle and Robert
You've been following my trail. Don't deny it. Why?
Our trails sort of got crossed I have to clear your name to clear mine
I'll believe you, for now. Stay out of my way and watch the rear.
I'd ask what's going on but I'm afraid you'd tell me

Triangle and Robert

Baa? Baa! Baa!

INSERT SHEEP

We've just hit a tapioca vein. There's no immediate danger.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa?

INSERT SHEEP

No. Keep digging. We're almost there.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa! Baa!

INSERT SHEEP

It's pudding. We'll be out of here well before the site floods.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

The signal just peaked. We must be at the level of the relic.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Sonar doesn't work well through tapioca. We'll have to locate the relic through other means.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Here relic relic. Nice relic. C'mere. Good relic? I got a treat for you! Here relic relic relic!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Baa!

I'll be right there.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The Oval? The relic is the Oval?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

How? The Oval came from space, didn't it? What does it have to do with the Fourth Race?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

How could a relic of the Fourth Race have fallen from space? They were advanced, but hardly spacefaring.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

This is the same Oval that the RDCLBA was after though....

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

It will definitely be worth researching, assuming I don't almost immediately lose possession of it in some contrived fashion.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Baa baa baa baa!

It's moving? Get it into containment!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

What do you mean, flying away? Shoot it down!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

We're not even scratching it! The Fourth Race built well.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baaa!

This is a heavy pudding stratum! It shouldn't be able to flow that quickly!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Attention, all crew members. Cease operations and... evacuate. The tapioca won this round.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

It wasn't a total loss... I now know that the Oval is connected with the Fourth Race...

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

and we met the secondary objective easily.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I now have more than enough boulders and butterflies to begin construction of my diamond machine.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Yes? You in front

Is it true you have ties with the RIAA?

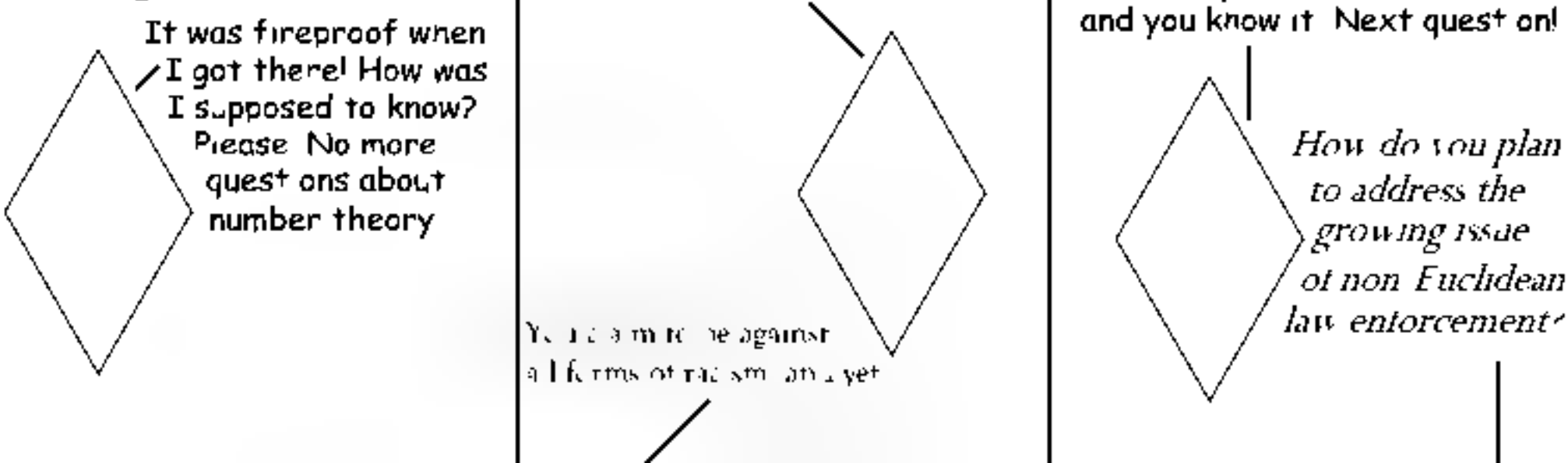
No. That is not the case. I was running away from them for a while, but I run away from lots of government agencies

Mr. Rhombus! What about the crossdressing?

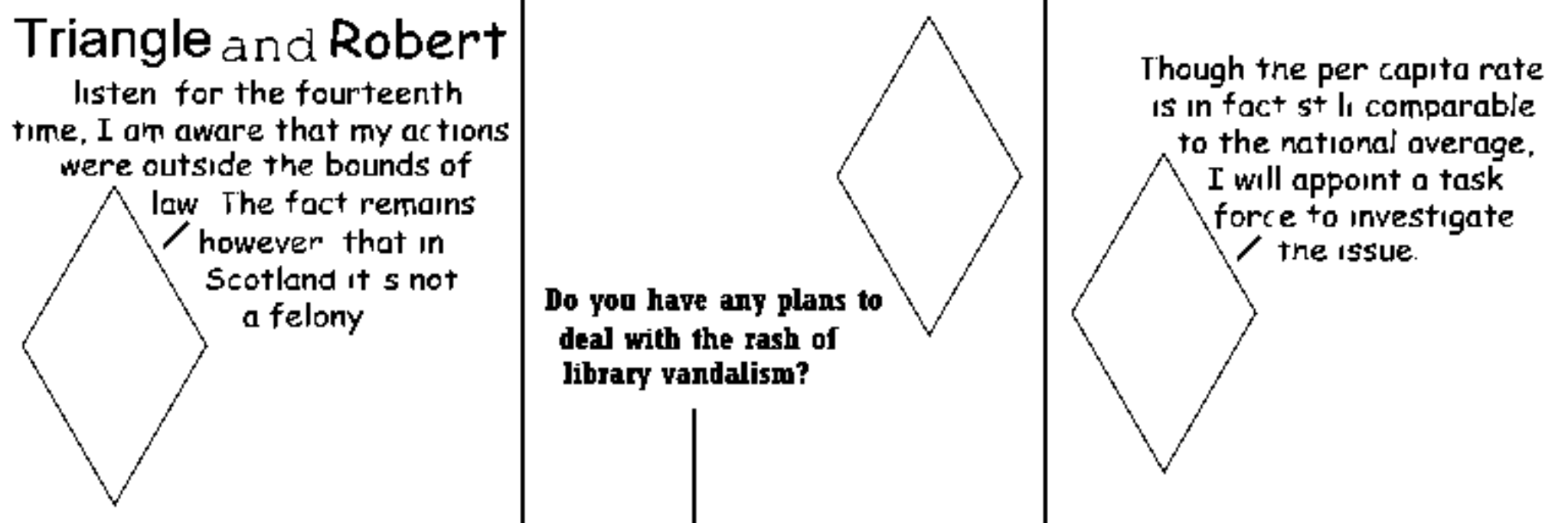
I'm in the wacky scheme business. Of COURSE I end up in drag now and then! It's tradition!

Did you or did you not fail to prevent Maryland from being turned into a squirrel?

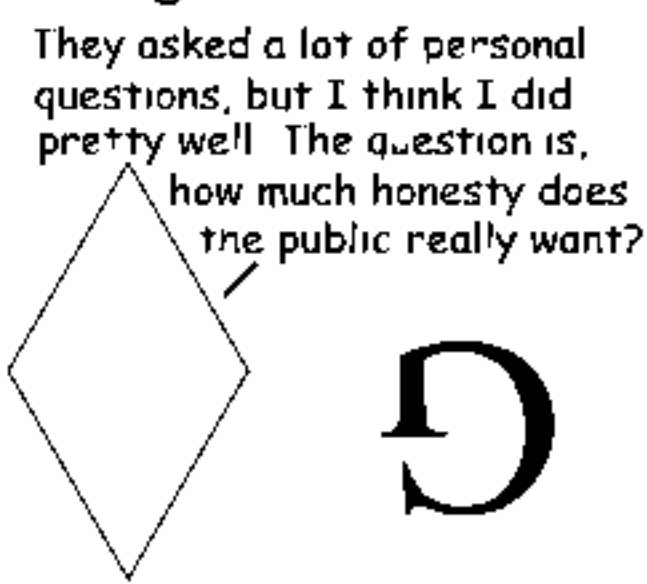
Triangle and Robert

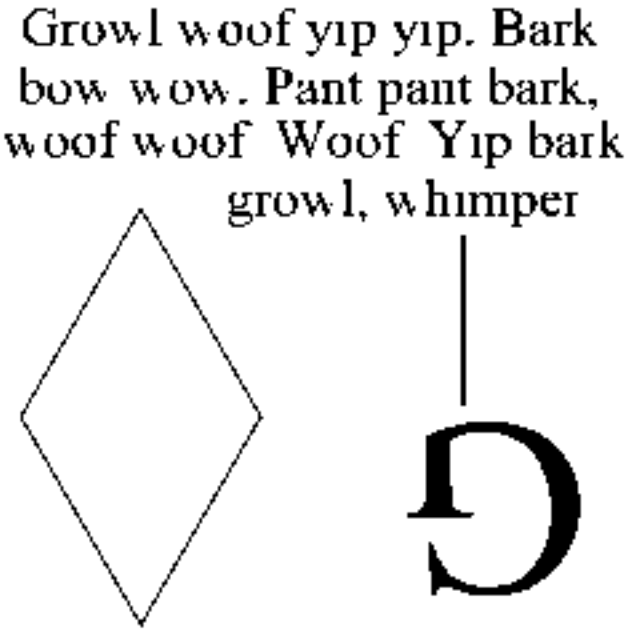


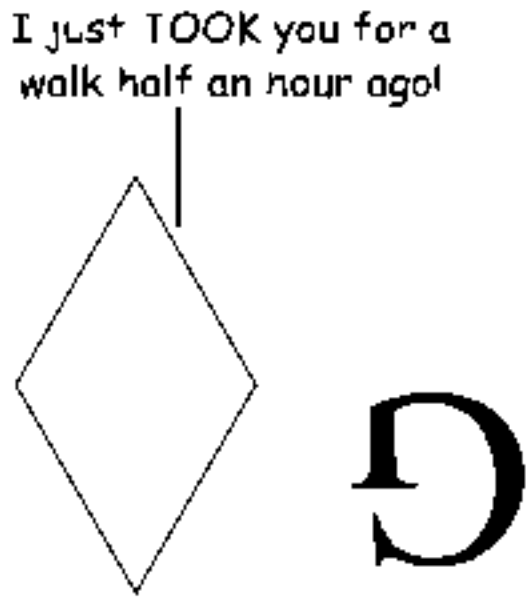
Triangle and Robert



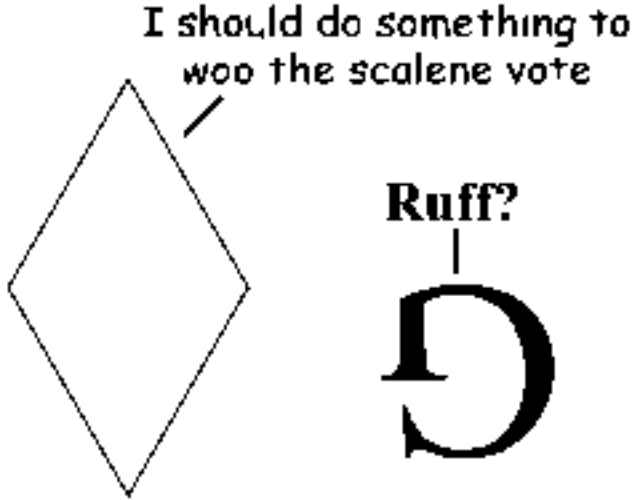
Triangle and Robert

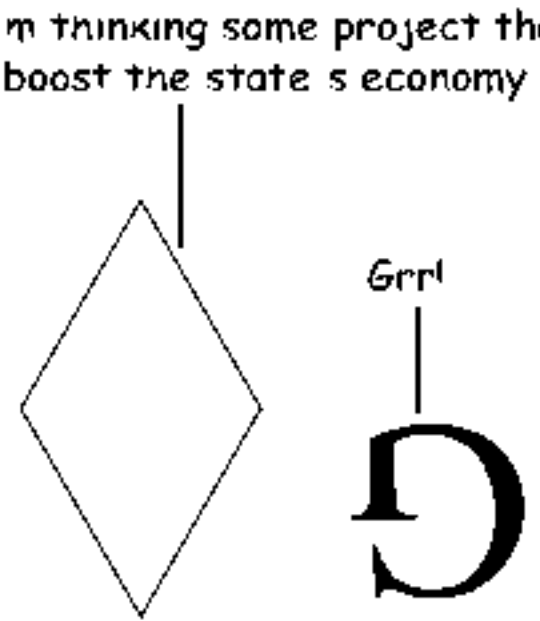


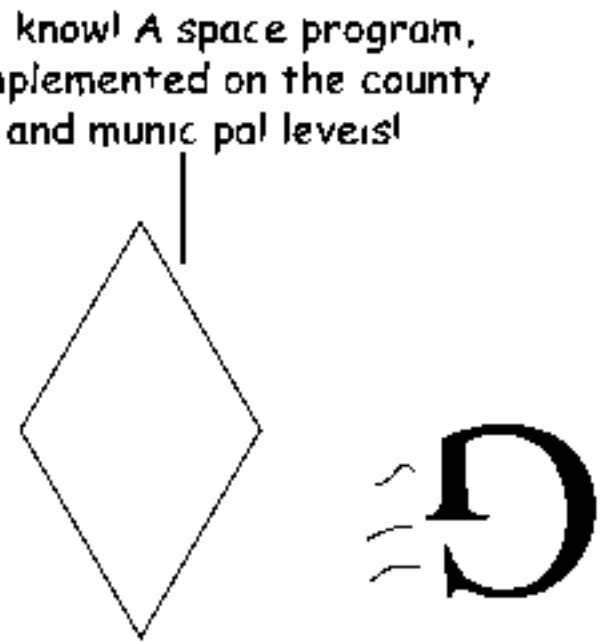




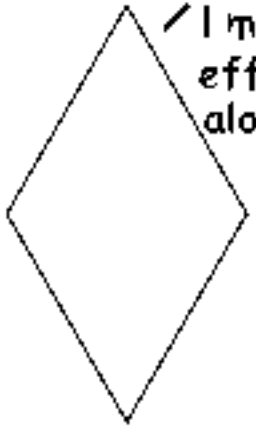
Triangle and Robert

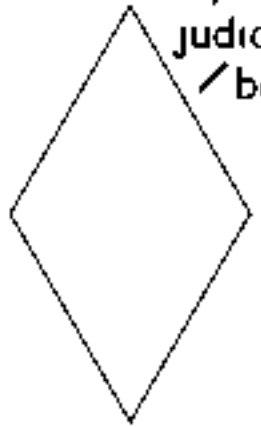


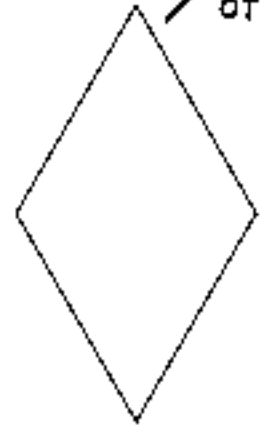




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Inside the Void...

It's Earth... but polygons? How did they get in charge? How long have I been gone?

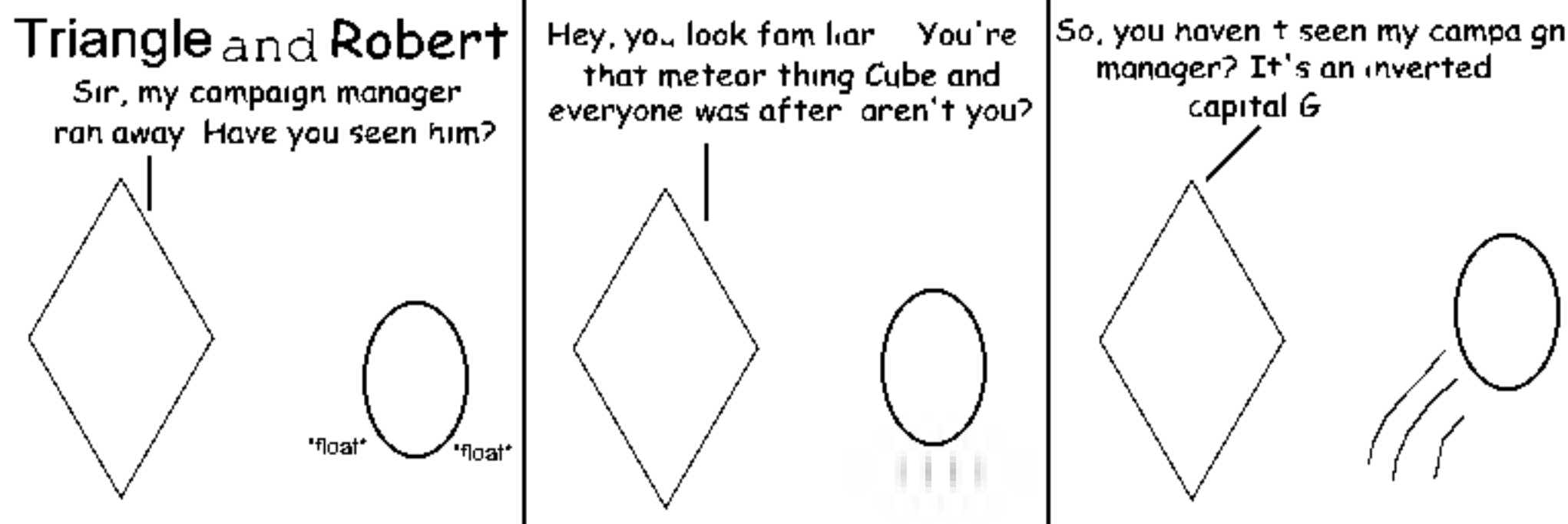
They call mankind the "Fourth Race"... why? What happened to the world? And who's this "Cartoonist"?

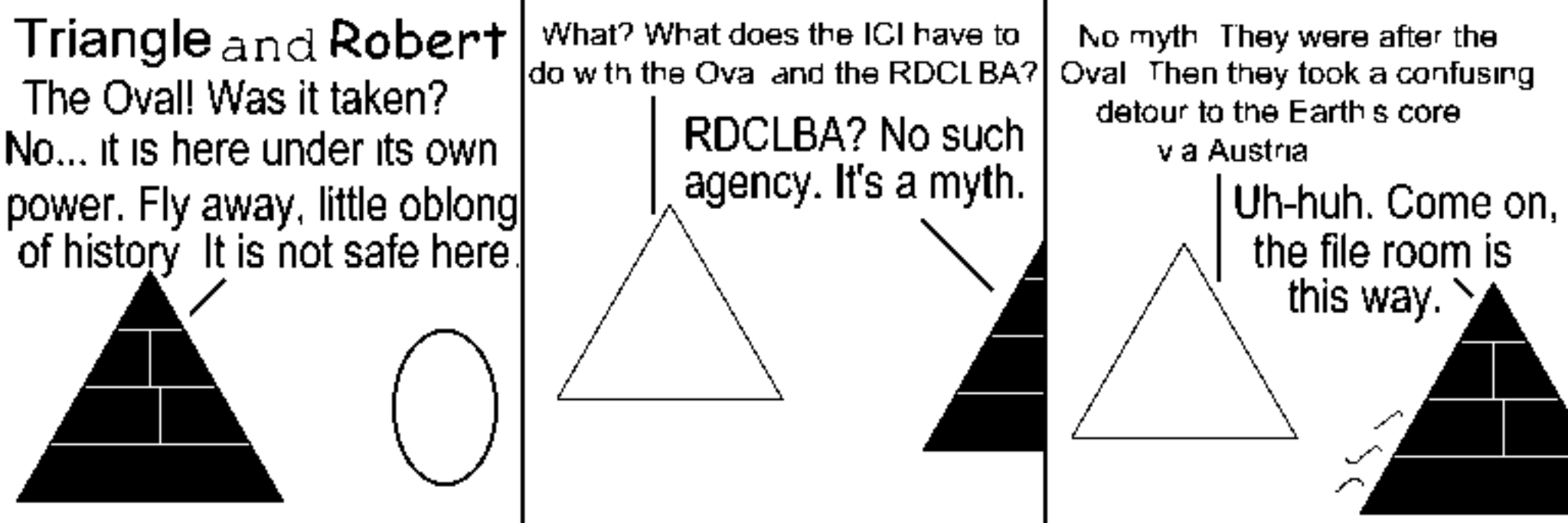
[illegible]

What? What does that mean?

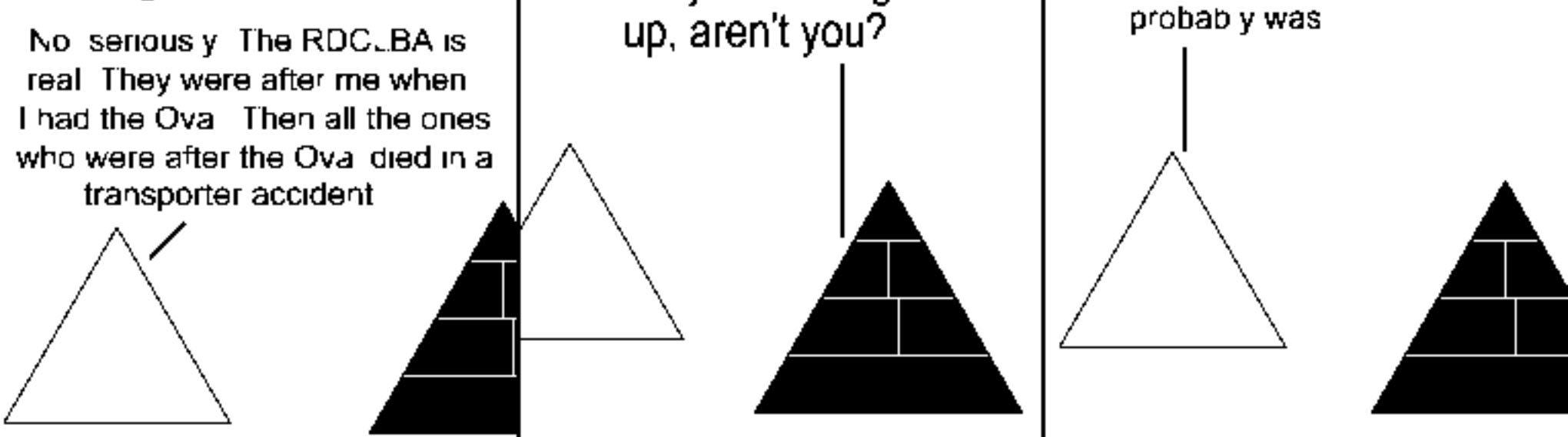
WHO ARE YOU?

Triangle and Robert

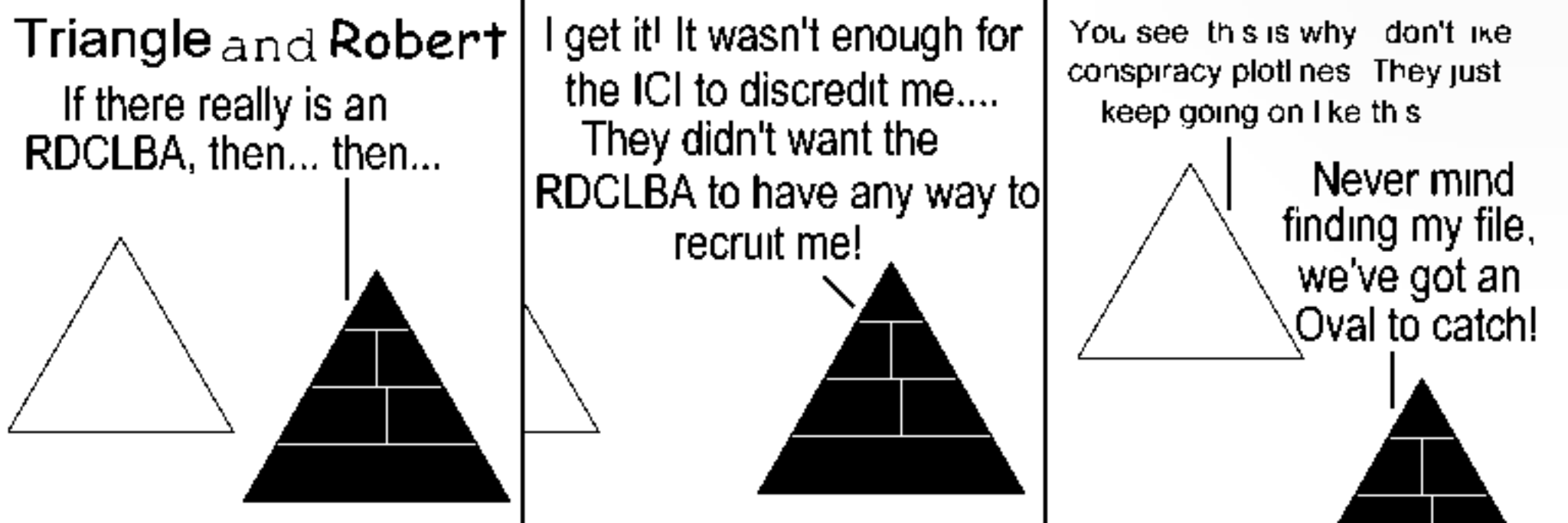



Triangle and Robert
The Oval! Was it taken?
No... it is here under its own power. Fly away, little oblong of history. It is not safe here.
What? What does the ICI have to do with the Oval and the RDCLBA?
RDCLBA? No such agency. It's a myth.
No myth. They were after the Oval. Then they took a confusing detour to the Earth's core via Austria.
Uh-huh. Come on, the file room is this way.

Triangle and Robert

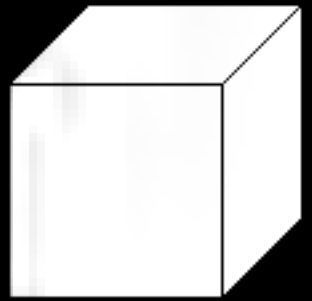


Triangle and Robert



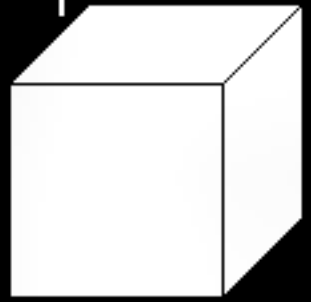
Triangle and Robert

I'm still dead... so why am I in the strip again? Nothing's happened to me since last time.

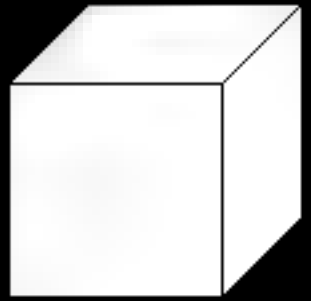


I thought you might want a chance to look down and see what's happening.

Stuck for a strip idea again?



Uh... yeah... but that's none of your business!



Triangle and Robert

RICLBA headquarters. The remaining agents have just become aware of the Oval's emergence from the depths.

That's my stapler!

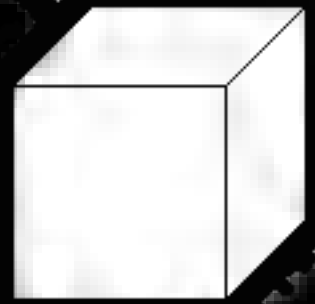
I don't see your name on it.

It was on my desk!

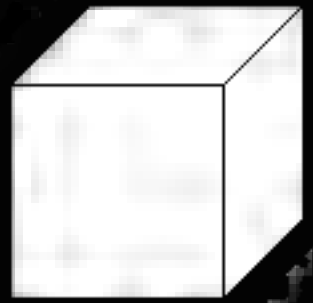
They don't particularly care

The Fourth Race knew they weren't the first to inhabit the planet, but they thought they would be the last. Thinking their time as the dominant species would be forever, they made no efforts to leave a legacy.

All the prophecies we find were meant for their own kind, not for polygons. Our frame of reference is so different from theirs that we can't really know what they meant.



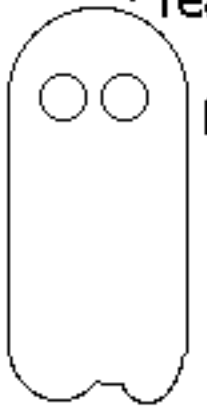
The Oval signifies something very big about to happen, something for which we should as a race prepare. Past that it's guesswork.



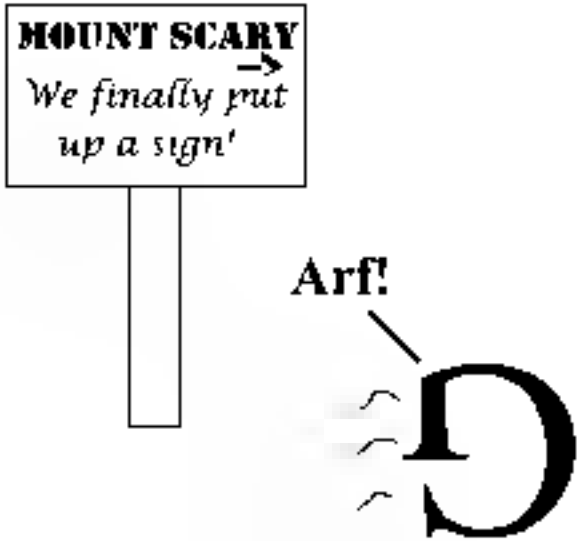
In other words, you don't know what's going on either.

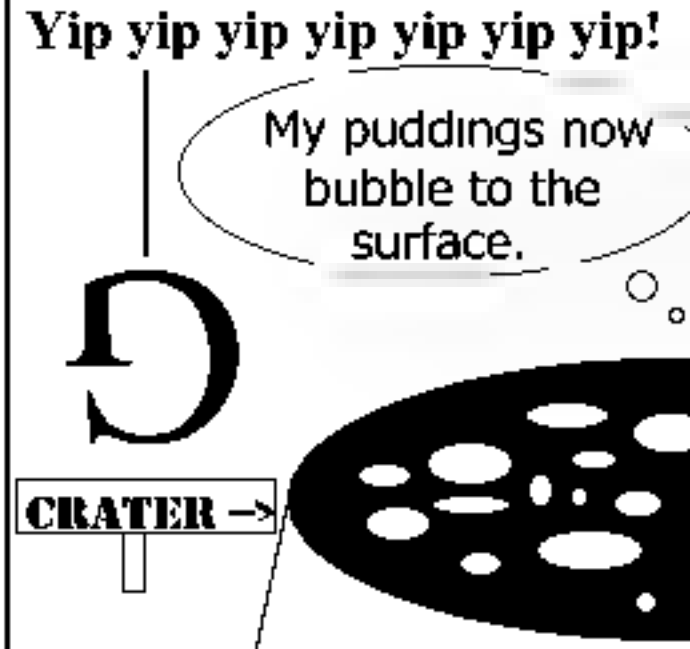
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

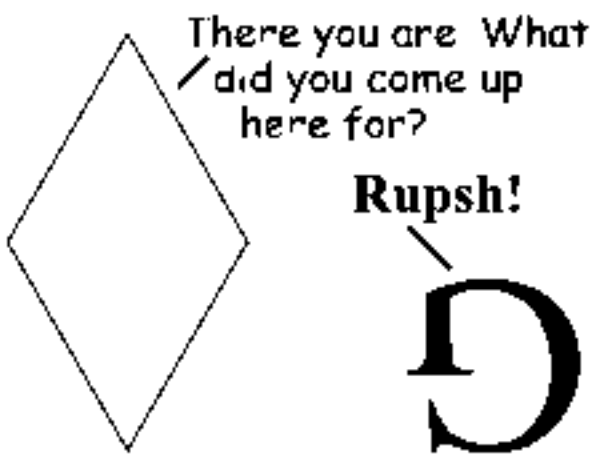


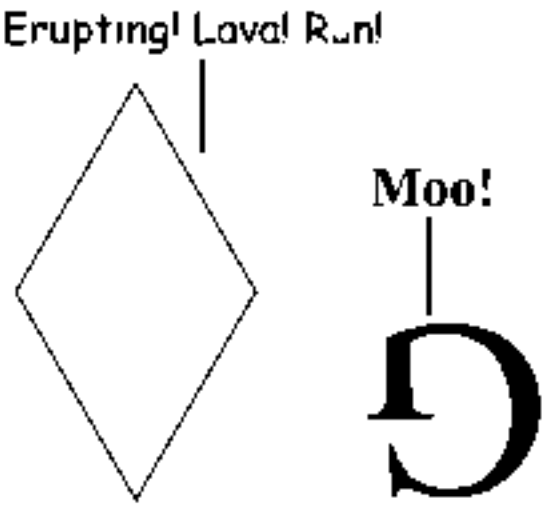
The recent tapioca shift took the Oval out of my reach, but no matter. I have grown. The puddings below are mine to command.

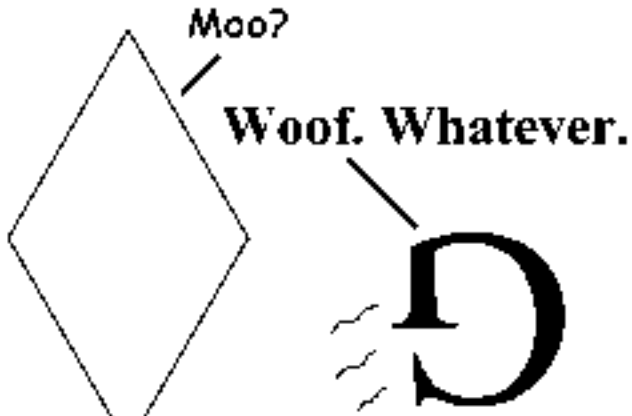




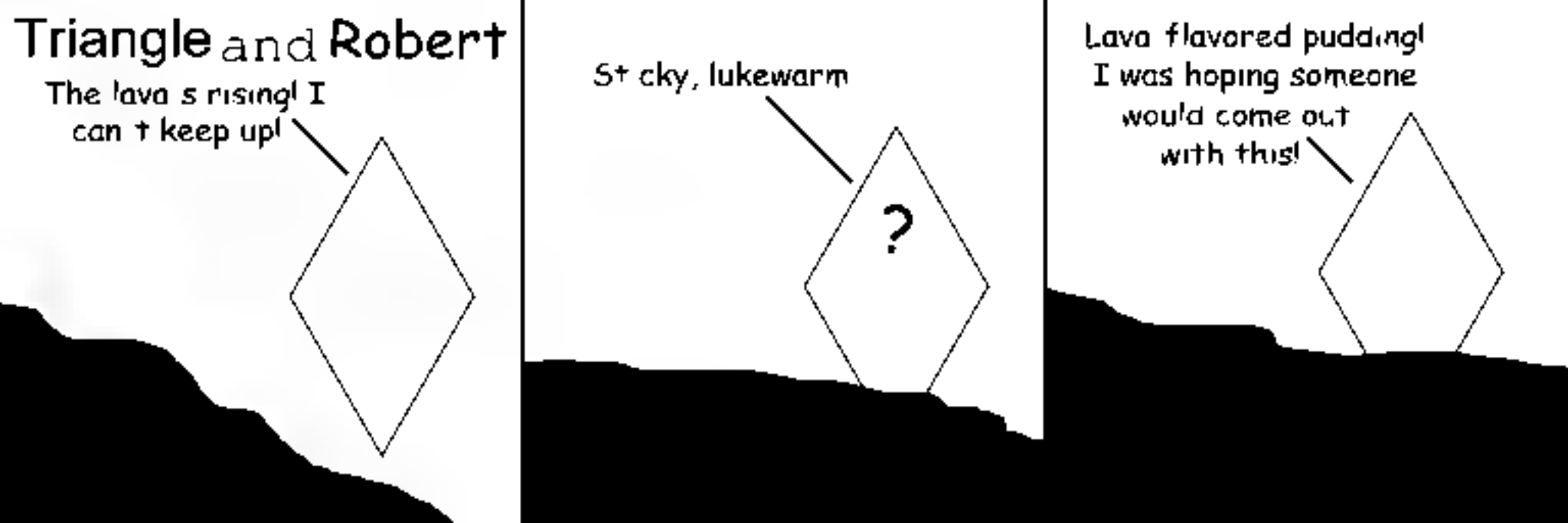
Triangle and Robert



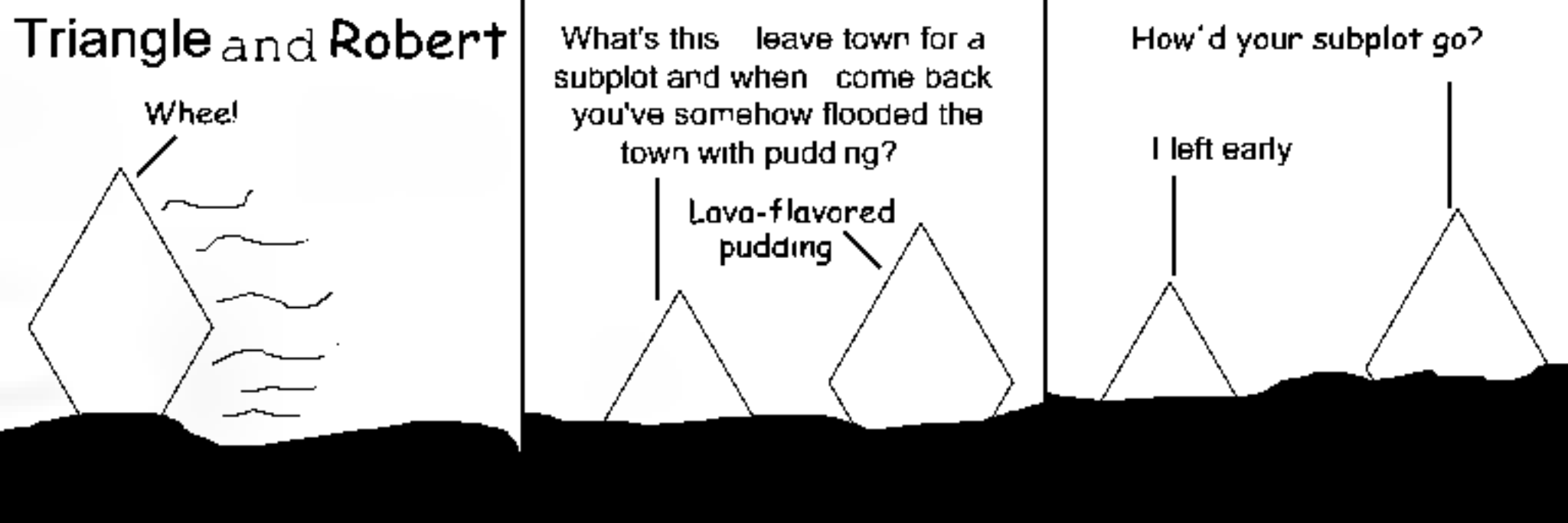




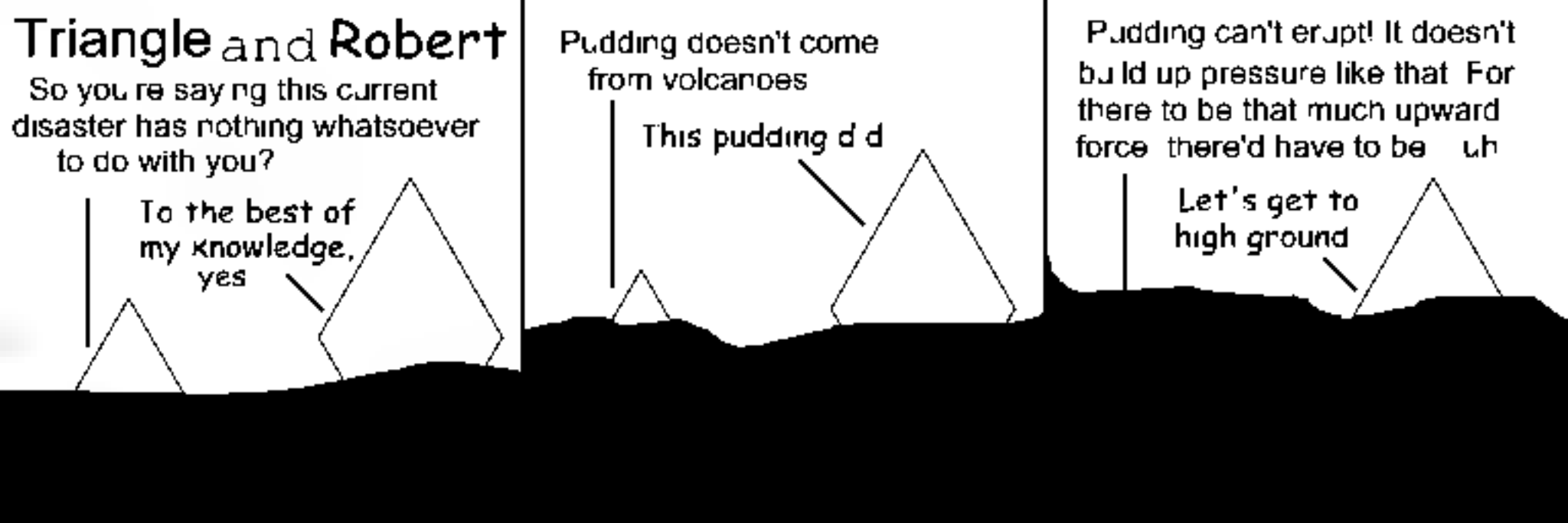
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Rabbit

Help! I can't breathe

[illegible]

[illegible]

Perhaps? Are you deformed?

[illegible]

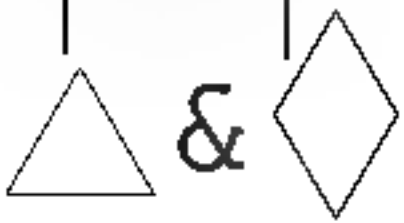
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

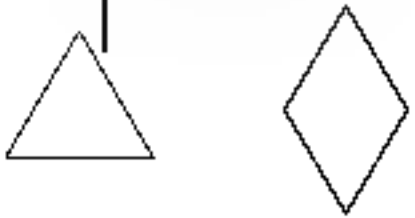
That bought us a little time, but what do we do? What's going on?

What's the ampersand doing there?



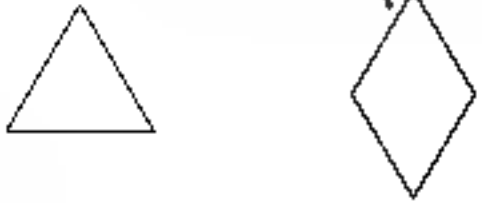
I decided to represent the title iconographically.

Do you even know what "iconographically" means?

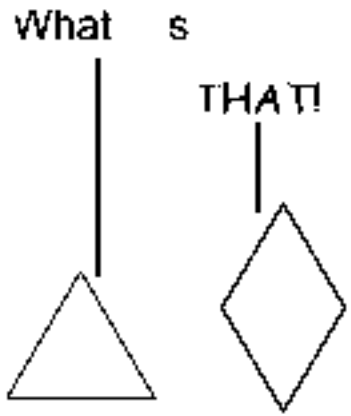


Yeah It's like

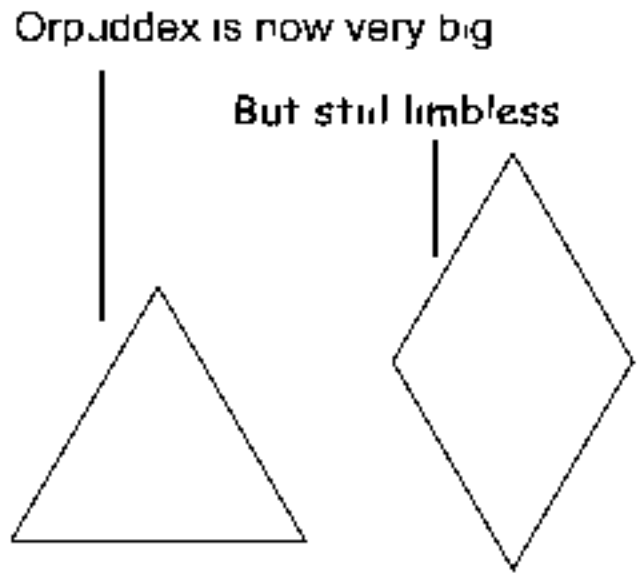
I hope that dot behind the squirrel is a period.

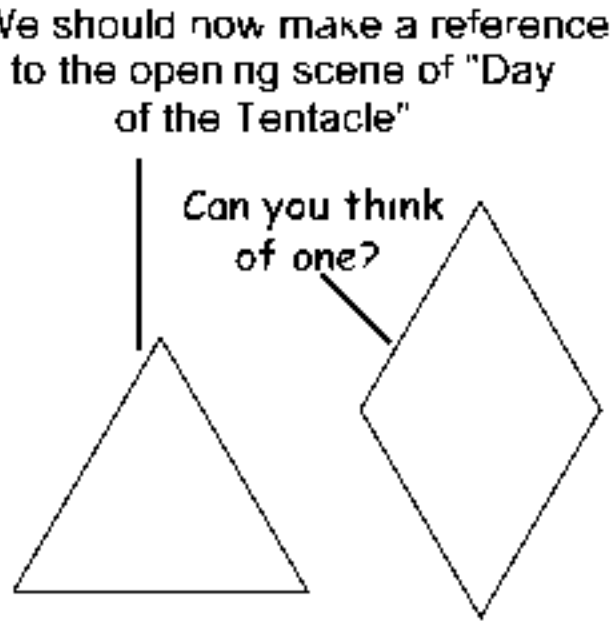


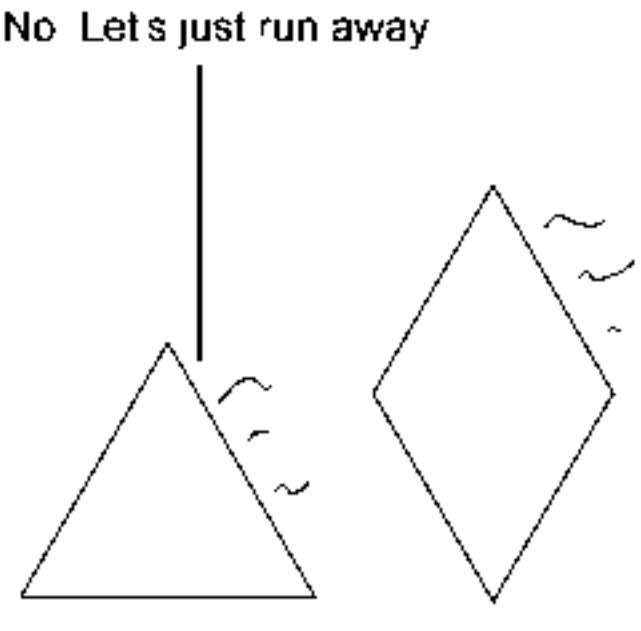
Triangle and Ro

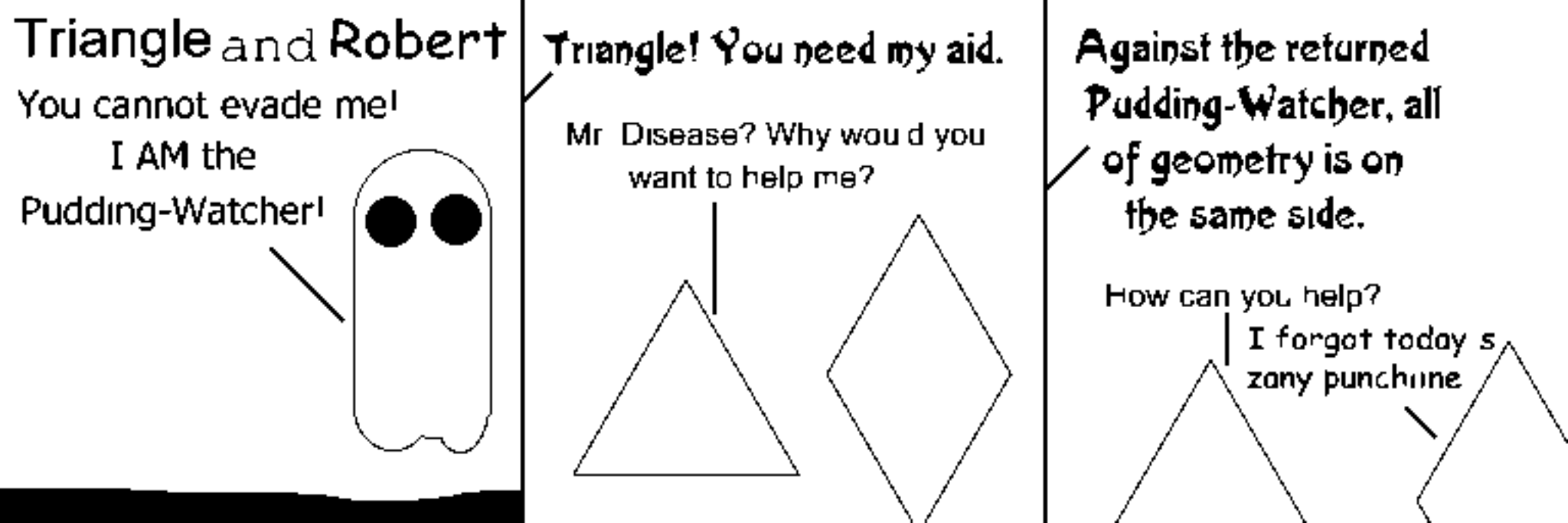


Triangle and Robert



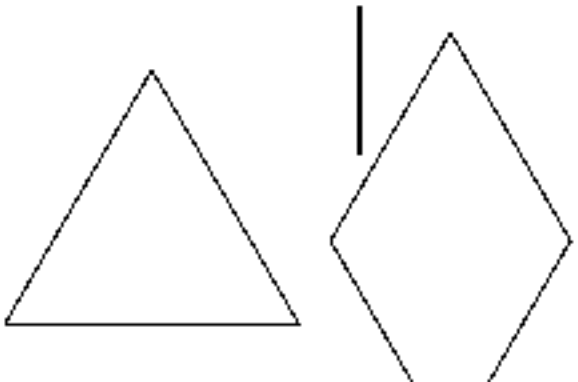




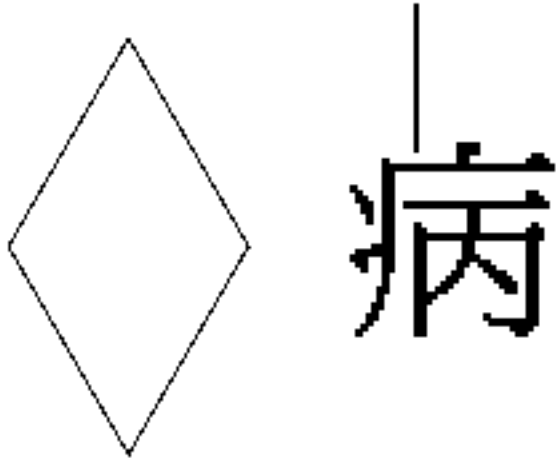

Triangle and Robert
You cannot evade me!
I AM the Pudding-Watcher!
Triangle! You need my aid.
Mr Disease? Why wou d you want to help me?
Against the returned Pudding-Watcher, all of geometry is on the same side.
How can you help?
I forgot today s zany punchline

Triangle and Robert

It smells all potatoey and carbonated here. Isn't there some other easily defensible structure we could hide in?

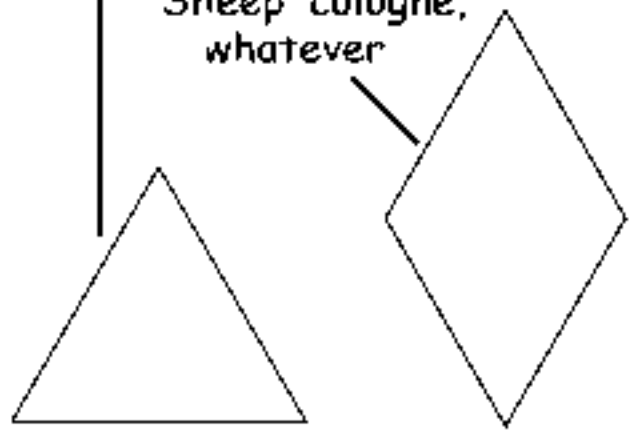


Triangle made an excellent decision. The Tater Fizz fortress will protect us well while we plan

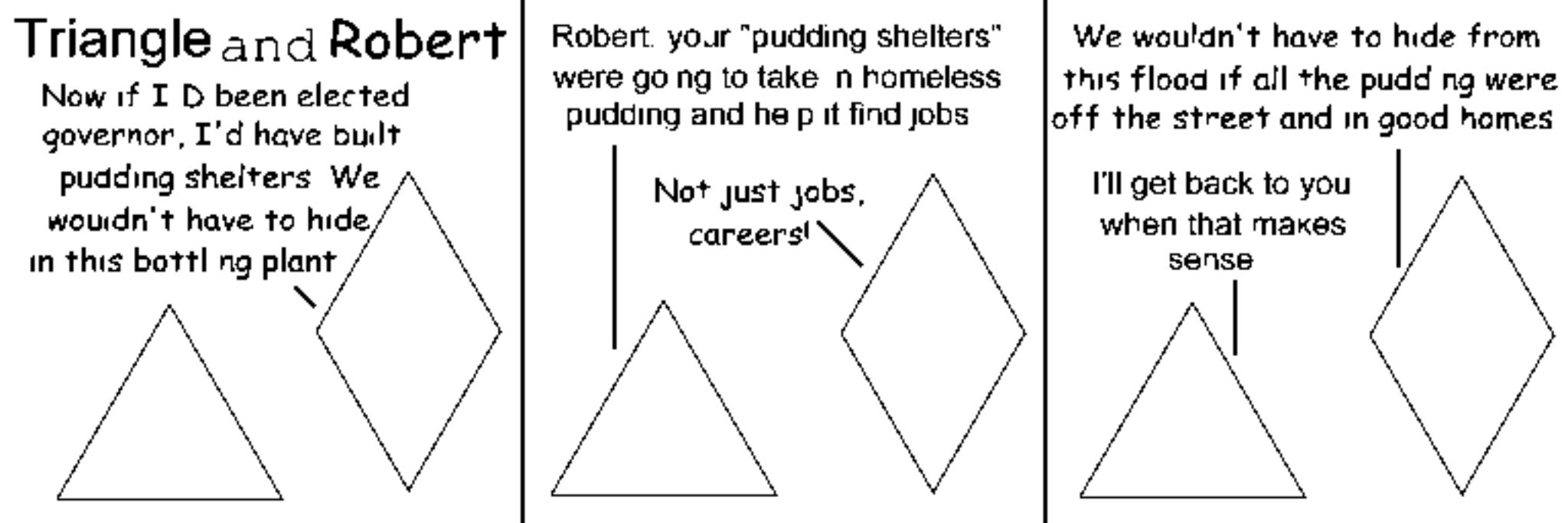


And the smell isn't THAT bad remember Scotland?

Sheep cologne, whatever



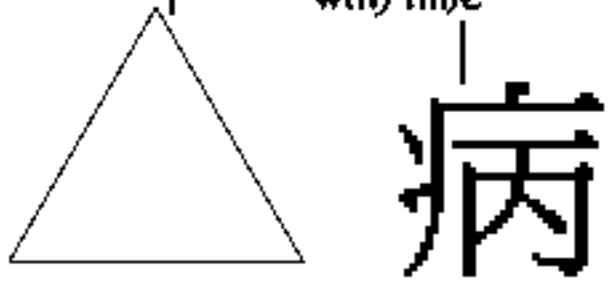
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

We can't stay here forever How can we stop the flood and drive off Orpuddex?

The flood will drain with time

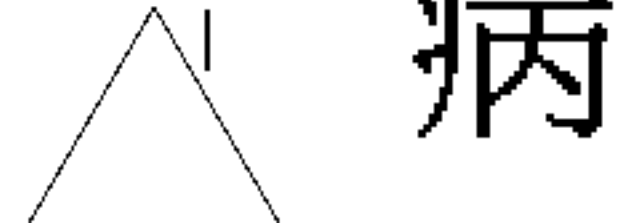


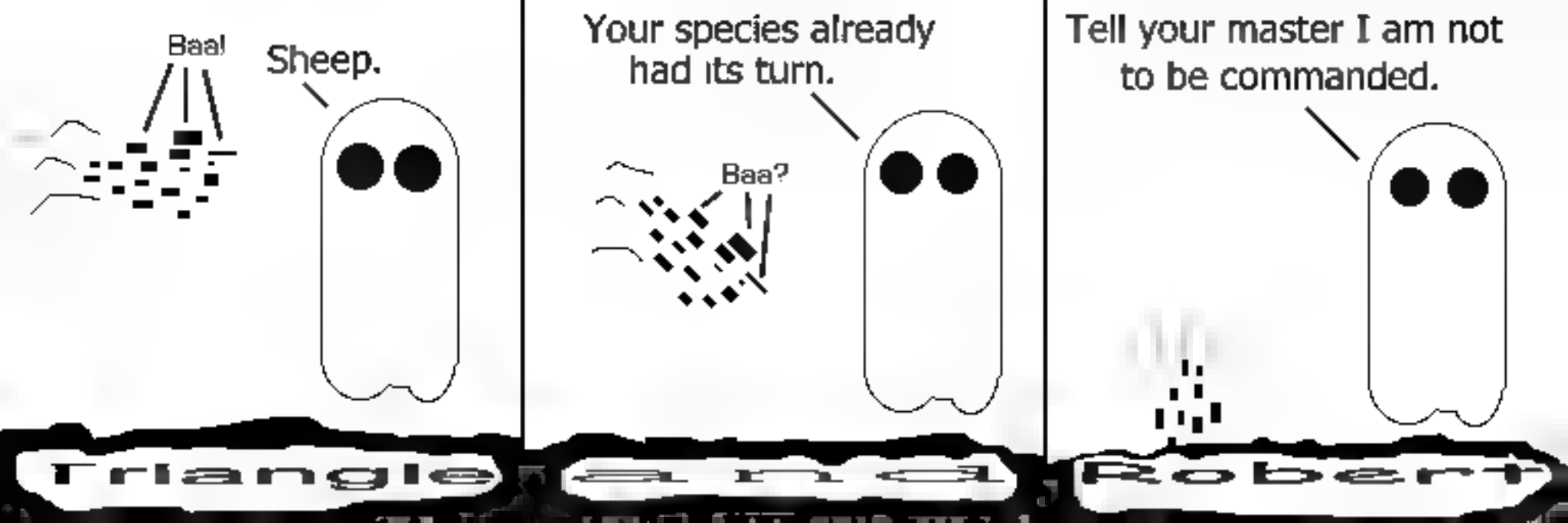
As for the Pudding-Watcher, ancient records tell of events such as this having happened before. The Pudding-Watcher must be driven off by a party of warrior-chefs, each a master of one food group

There are on y three of us here

Not us The training would take far too long, even if we have the potential I do not believe myself or the rhombus could ever attain true mastery

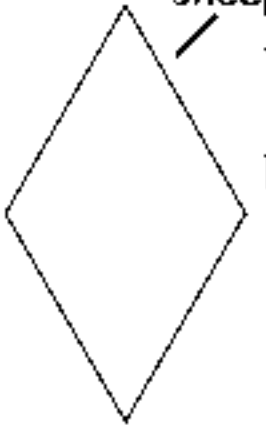
So we have to do something annoying y convoluted




Baa!
Sheep.
Your species already had its turn.
Baa?
Tell your master I am not to be commanded.
Triangle
and
Robert

Triangle and Robert

Orpuddex just telekinetically forced a squadron of jetpack ng sheep to crash land



The Cornersheep believes he can harness the element of pudding for his own purposes

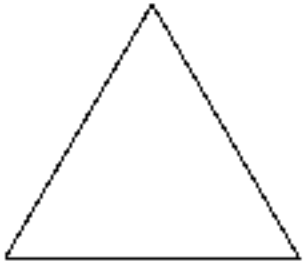
He is wrong, of course, but his efforts may distract the Watcher

In the meantime, we must locate the sentries of the four food groups and free them from whatever magic prevents their arrival

Cube can help us begin

Cube s dead

Since when has that stopped anyone in this strip?

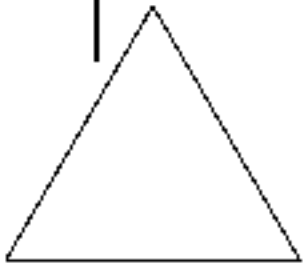


Triangle and Robert

To revive Cube, we must

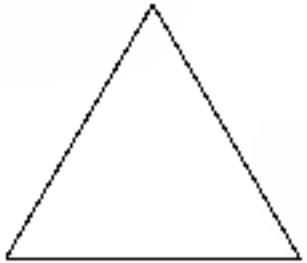
ask the cartoonist nicely?

That seems easier than my way



N I m not copping out of this one If you want Cube alive, you ll have to d it yourselves

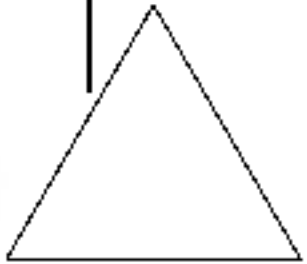
Then wishing on the Dragon Circles it is

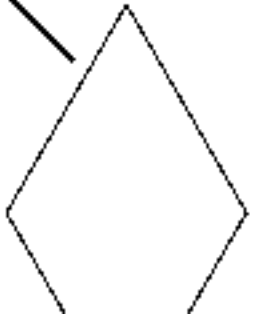


Sounds typically moron c

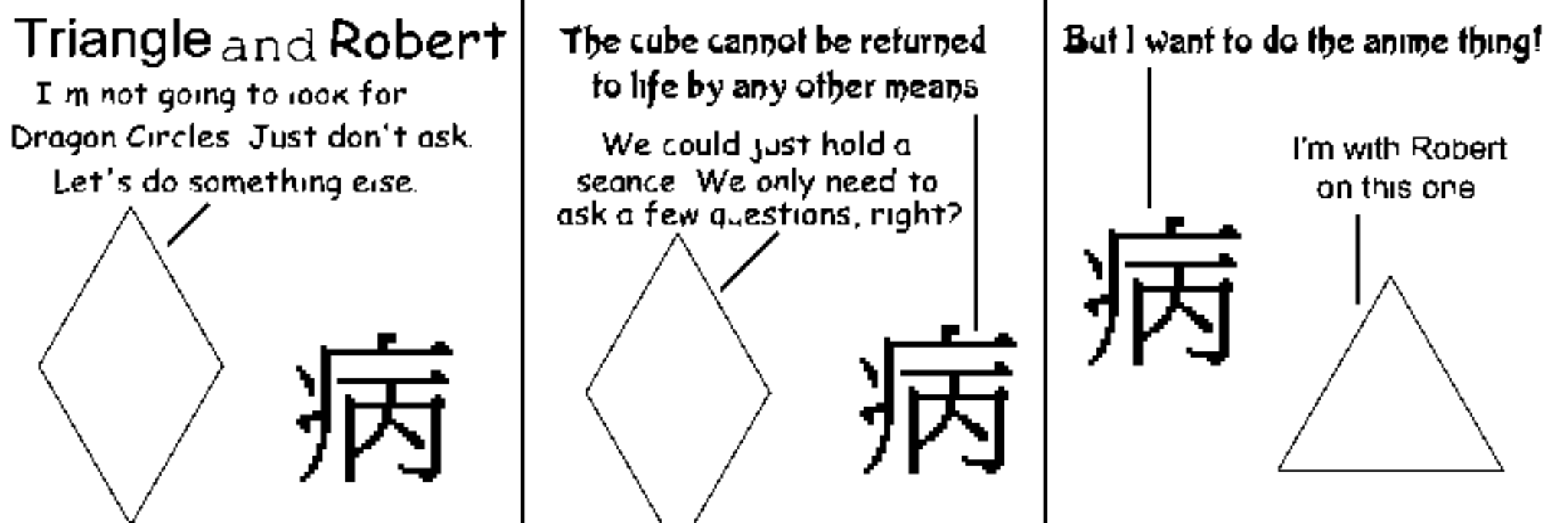
Let's do it

No I'm w ling to parody anime in general, but an explicit Dragon Ball parody is just too pathet c



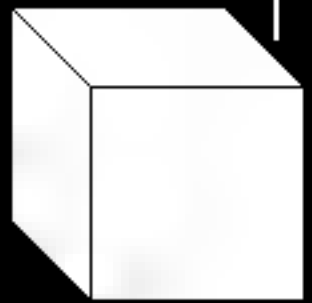


Triangle and Robert

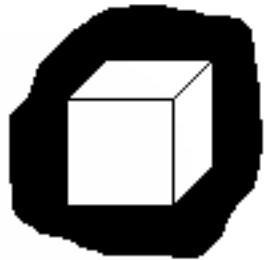


Triangle and Robert

I hear a call....
HIM! Why would he expect my help?

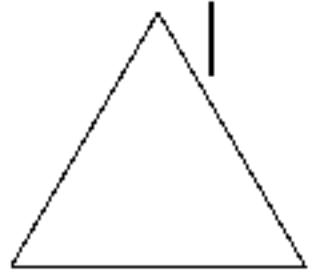


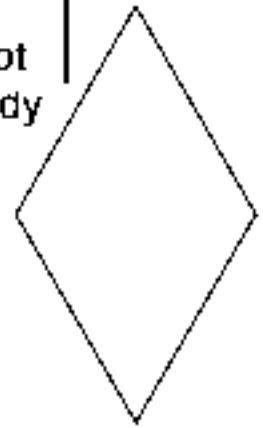
Cube, if you can hear me, know that it is the Time of the Oval, just as you forewarned. We must put our differences aside. The four sentries must be awakened!



Do I throw the rice now?

Seance. Robert. not wedd ng. We already went over th s





Triangle and Robert

You are correct. This is not the battle which Triangle shall fight. Awaken the four sentries from their magics so that the Watcher's power may be broken.

Four! Hear that, equilateral? Four sentries, four food groups The Pyramid is a liar

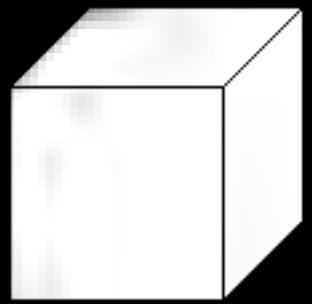
Shut up.

But it is true! The teachings of the Pyramid stand in conflict with the most ancient forces!

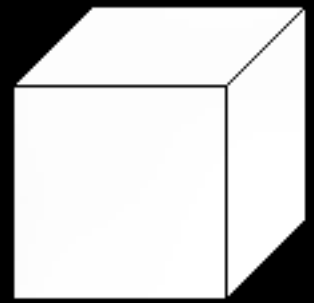
They are nonetheless sensible dietary guidelines for ages 6 and up.

Triangle and Robert

Travel first to Denmark, and there search Mount Probablyeruptsbefore-thisplotlineisover.



The Vegetable Sentry meditates in a cave, heedless of the world. Find him and apprise him of the situation. You must gain his aid.



Shouldn't that be the "Fruits and Vegetables Sentry"?

Did you call me to argue ancient dietary philosophy or do you wish my guidance?

Triangle and Robert

How, then, does one get to Denmark when one is trapped in a bottling plant surrounded by pudding at least 180 pixels deep?

I will teach you a spell.

病

With this magic you will glide swanlike over pudding

Have you ever seen a swan try to swim through pudding?

No, but I'm sure it's very graceful

病

No. it's messy, slow, and ultimately fruitless

Such are the ways of the cusine-magic.

I just fashioned a crude sleigh by harnessing tapeworms to an inflatable armchair Let s go!

病

Triangle and Robert
Ha! The Chosen One flees!
...in the direction of... the airport...
Wow. Strong tapeworms.

Triangle and Robert

And this it was that Triangle and Robert reached Denmark, and began the ascent of Mount Probably erupts before this plotline is over

And it came to be that with much searching they came to a cave in which a strange polygon silently meditated

He doesn't notice us

Is he awake?

And I don't feel like drawing anything today

Naturally

Triangle and Robert

He doesn t seem to be as eep It's ıke he's somewhere else entire y

Can he hear us?

I don't see any reason why he wouldn't be able to It seems ıke he just doesn't care We need to get his attention

I ll give him a wedgie.

But uh he

Good po nt I'ıl give him pants, THEN give him a wedgie

Triangle and Robert

No this doesn't ca l for a wedg e
We obviously need some
metaphysical psychological
thingamajig to snap him out of it

You mean like a toilet
made of meatloaf?

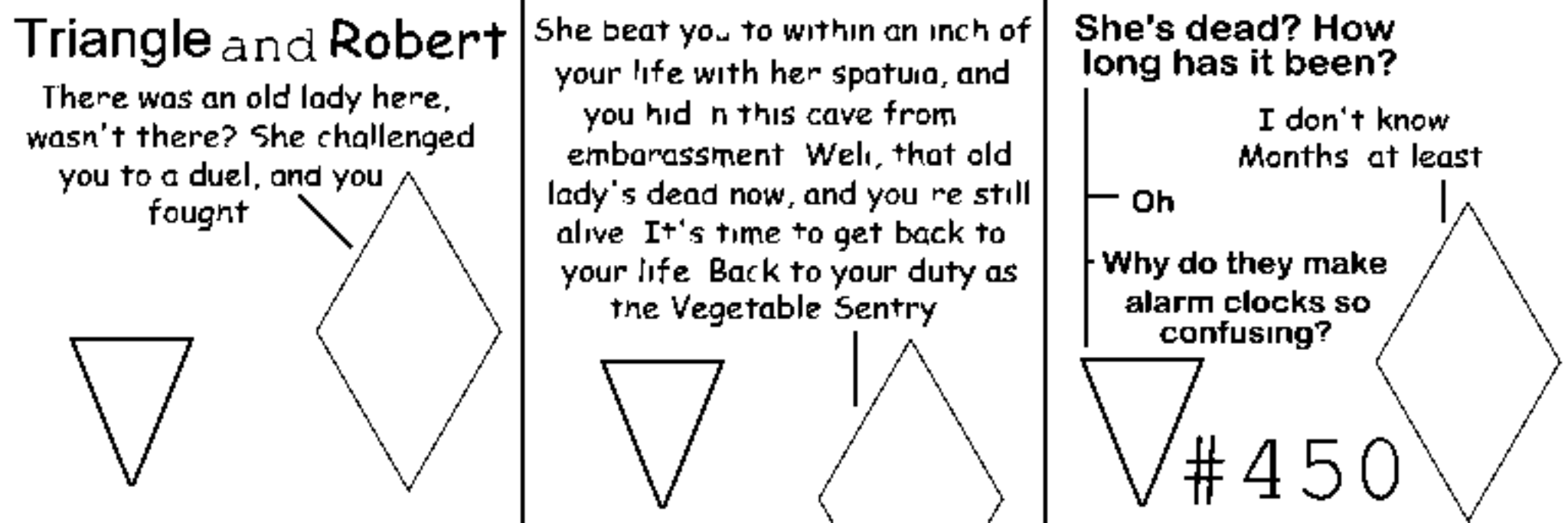
Exactly Only not a to let
and not made of meatloaf

I know just the thing

You know how the cartoonist
l kes to complicate story arcs
by referring back to really minor
details that no one remembers?
I bet the Vegetable Sentry's all
sulky and detached because he
was defeated by Mr Disease s
grandmother and her spatula!

And you get all th s from a
passing reference to Denmark
in strip 346 Sounds about right

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert Character Profile

Name:
Mr. Disease

Dimensions:
77 x 73 pixels

Font:
Artistik 16-point

Occupation:
Restauranteur

Favorite Book (Fiction):
Mirror Friend, Mirror Foe by Robert Asprin & George Takei

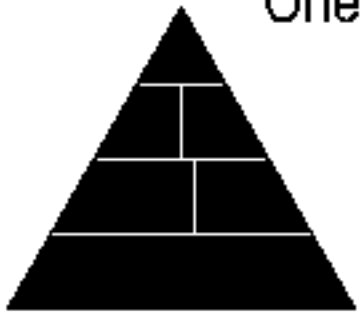
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
Oriental Food Synthesis A Quality Engineering Perspective, from ICI Press

Favorite Movie:
Ghost Dog

Personal Quote:
"No. We shall make it two out of three."

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Don t order the chicken

Triangle and Robert Character Profile



[redacted]

Oriental Food Synthesis

Dimensions:

131 x 114 pixels

Font:

Arial Narrow 18-point

Occupation:

Unemployed (ast job Food Pyramid)

Favorite Book (Fiction):

A Quality Engineering Perspective, from ICI Press

~~Favorite Book (Nonfiction):~~

Favorite Movie:

The X Files: Fight the Future

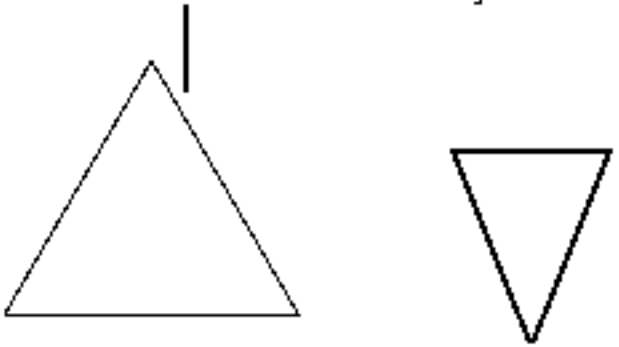
~~Personal Quote:~~

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be

Eat a well-rounded balance of healthy food choices

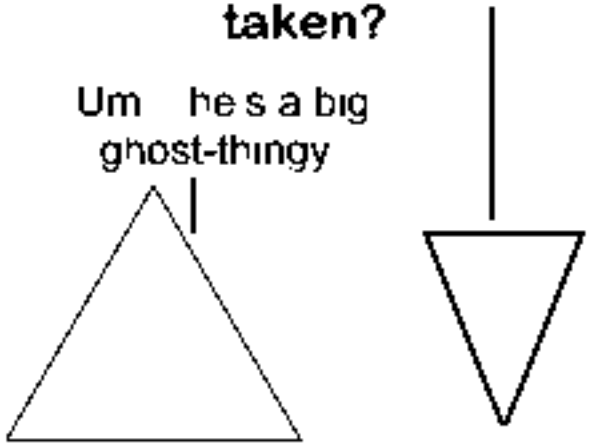
Triangle and Robert

It's the Time of the Oval or near it The Pudding-Watcher erupted from a volcano and flooded our home city



Then finally my training will be put to use! What form has the Watcher taken?

Um he s a big ghost-thingy

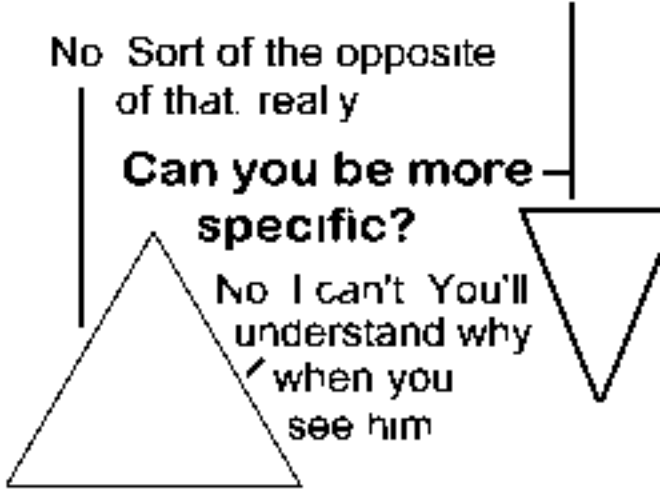


A colossal eagle dripping green fire from its talons?

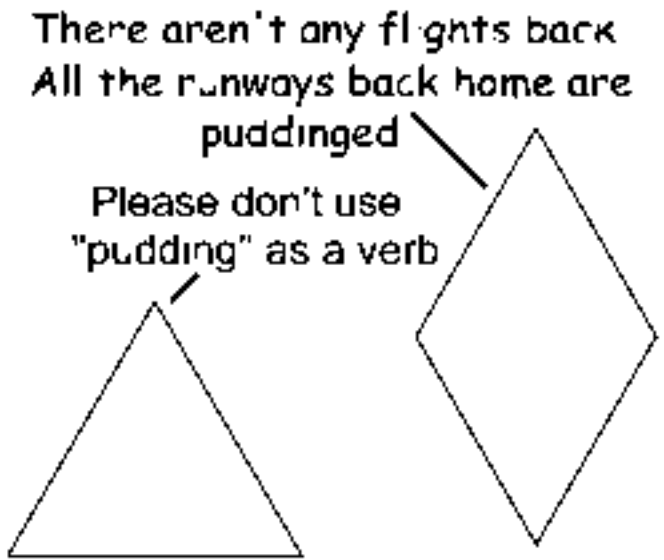
No Sort of the opposite of that. real y

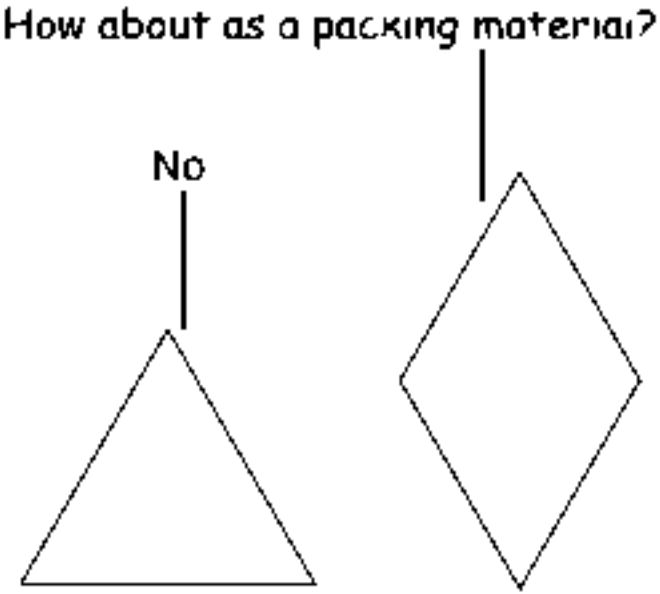
Can you be more specific?

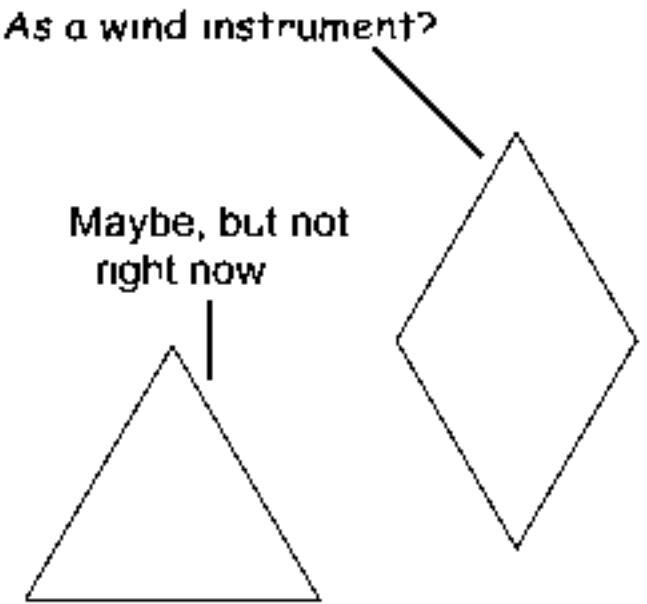
No I can't You'll understand why when you see him



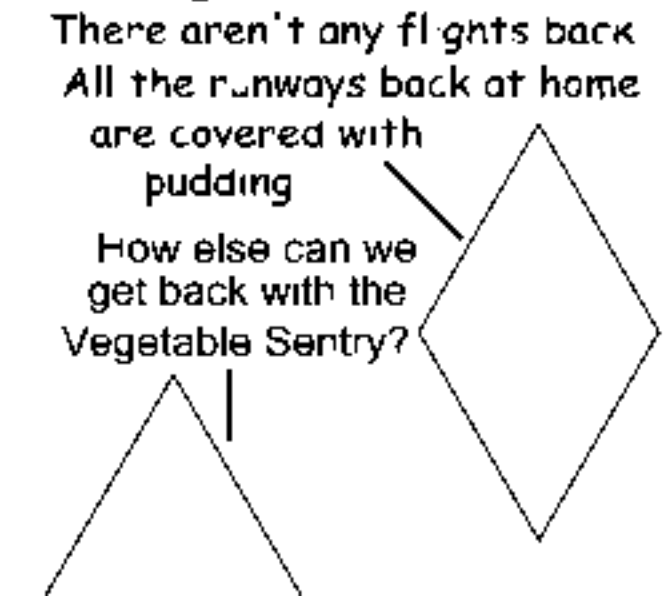
Triangle and Robert

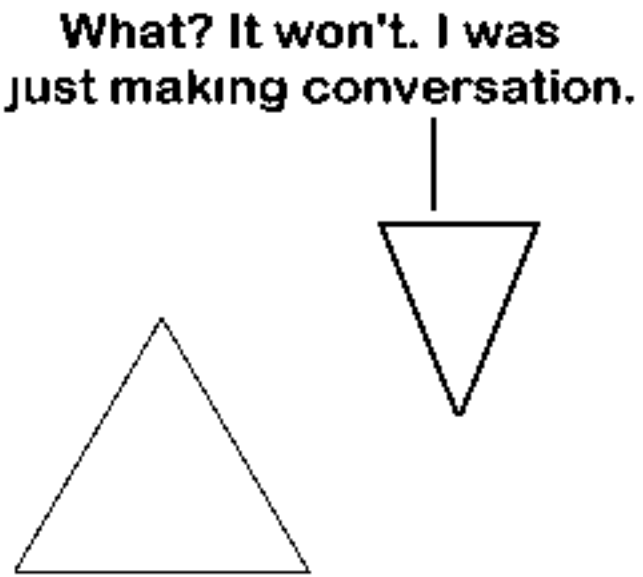




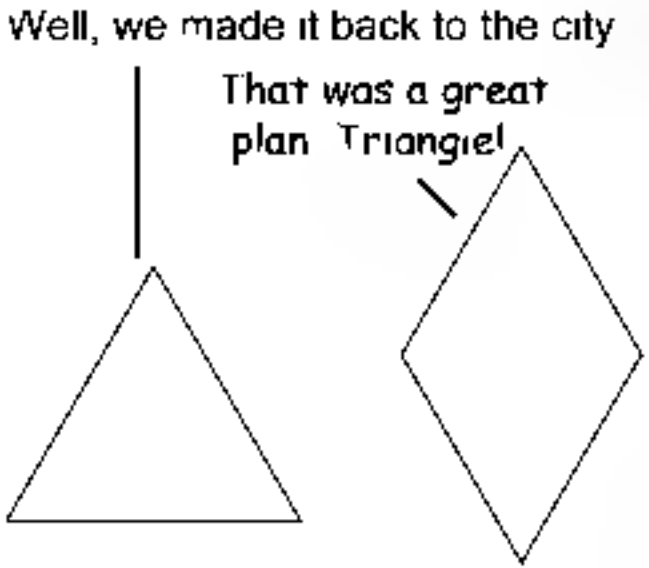


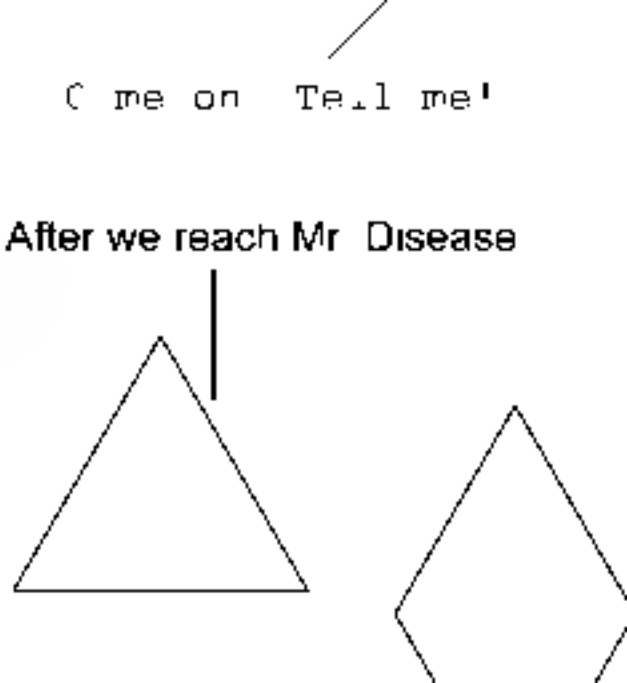
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

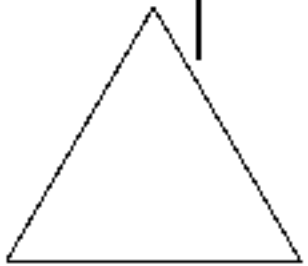




Triangle and Robert

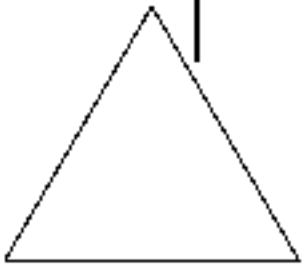
You have returned! Is that the Vegetable Sentry with you?

Yes



How did you accomplish your task so quickly?

We sort of took a shortcut back



C me on Tell .s what it was already!

Yes! Tell us!

I pretended we were a ready here and the cartoonist fe l for it

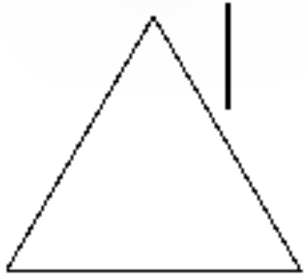
Triangle and Robert

You tricked me into having you be back home by pretending that already be there so I'll draw you with Mad Disease Clever

Now you're gonna get even right?

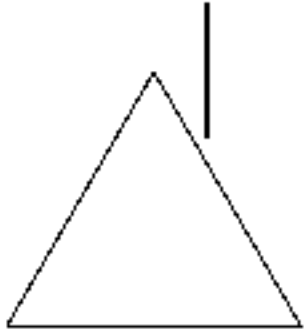
No, it was funny, it was a fair move. This time Try it again and it won't work

The way you reuse jokes. I'm sure you'll still think it's funny next time I do it



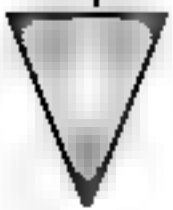
Funny, yes, but... what was my point

Like I ever know



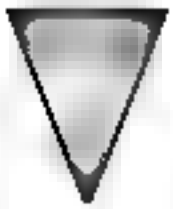
Triangle and Robert

I have many questions about those two and about what happened while I was in meditation. First, though, I will fight the Pudding-Watcher.



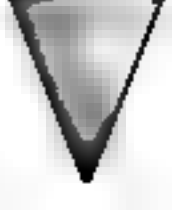
Alone? Are not all four sentries required to defeat the Watcher?

Not until it enters its battle form. From what those two told me, it has not yet done so.



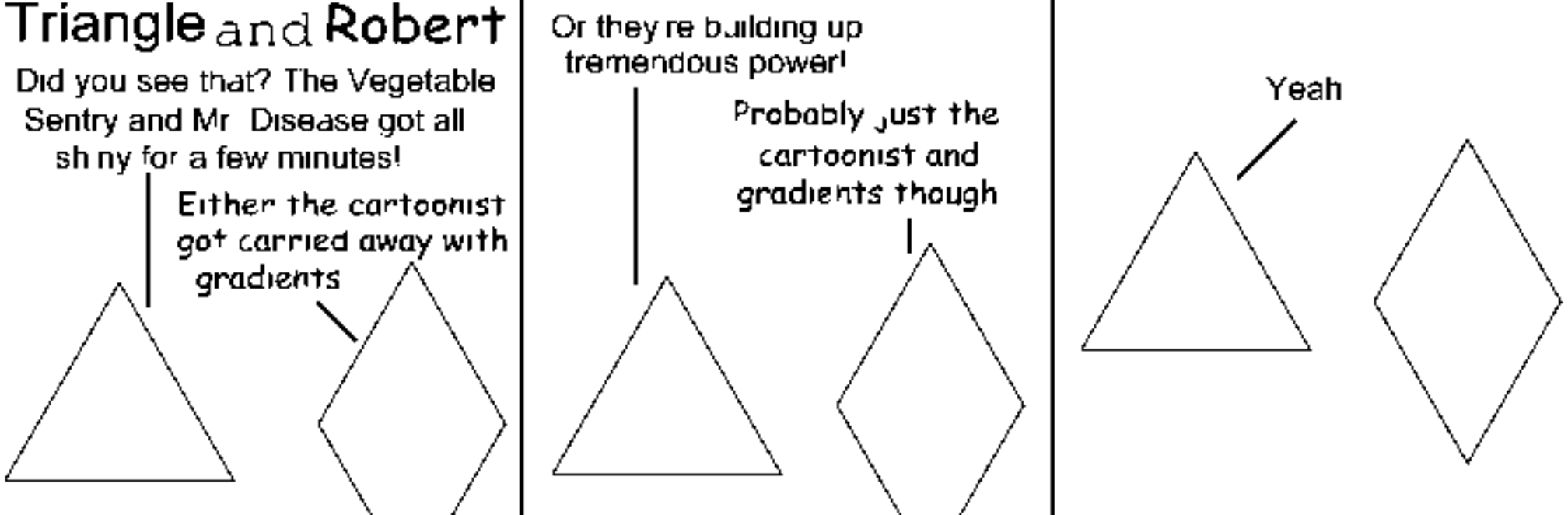
Battle form?

You are a warrior-chef, yet you do not know of puddic transformation?

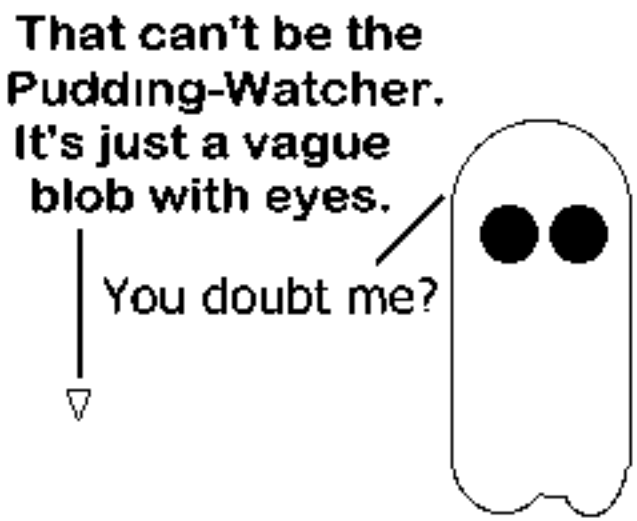


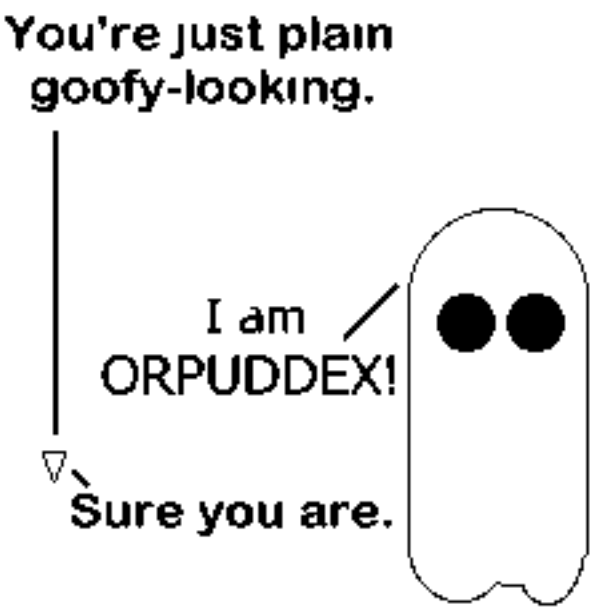
I'm not a very GOOD warrior-chef.

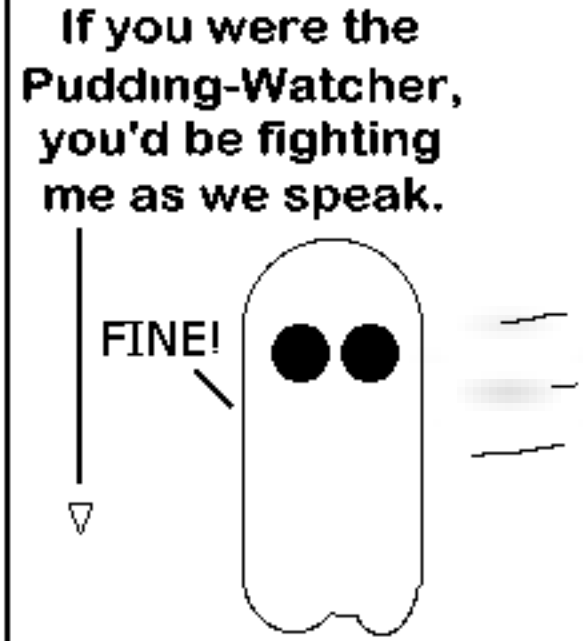
Triangle and Robert



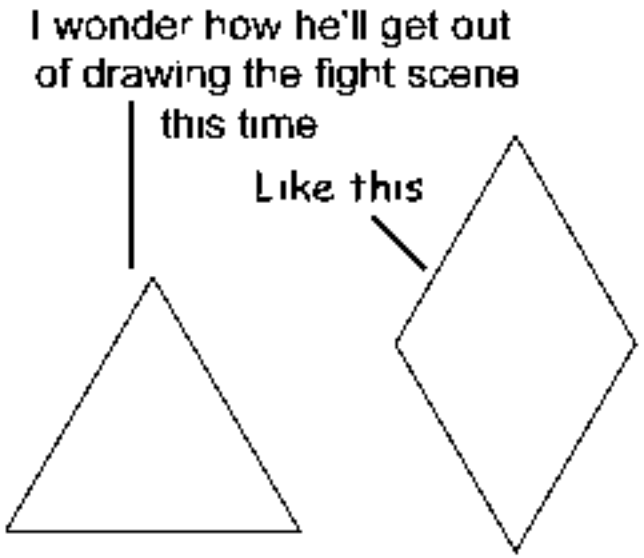
Triangle and Robert

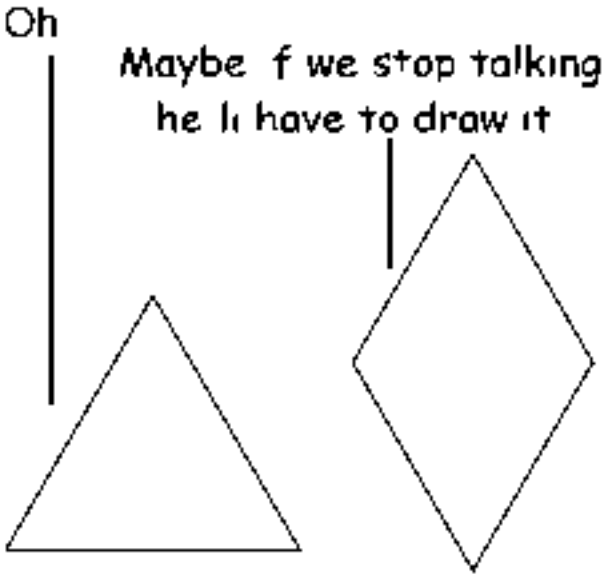


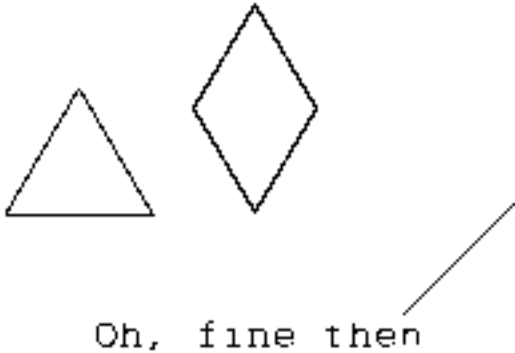




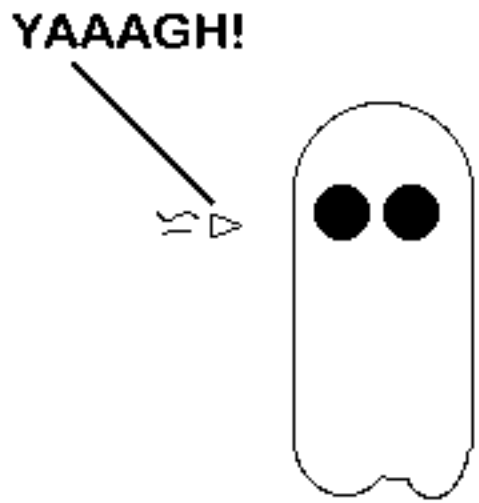
Triangle and Robert

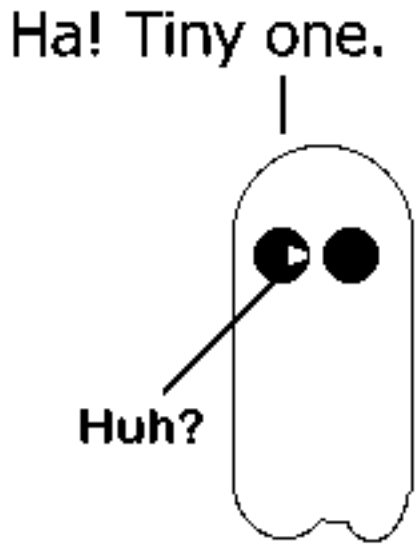




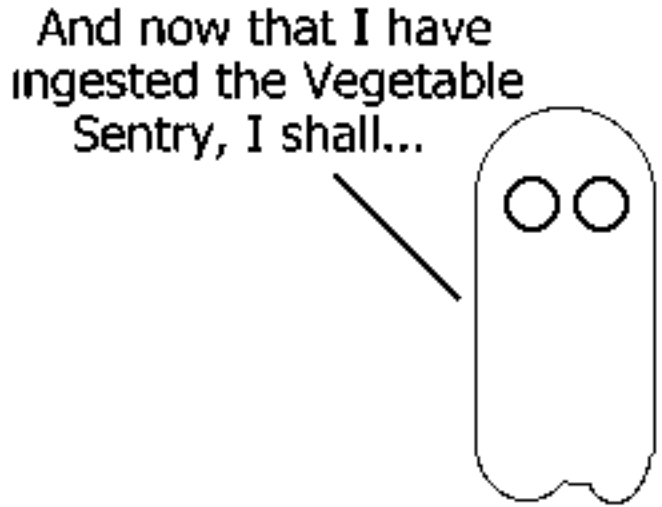


Triangle and Robert





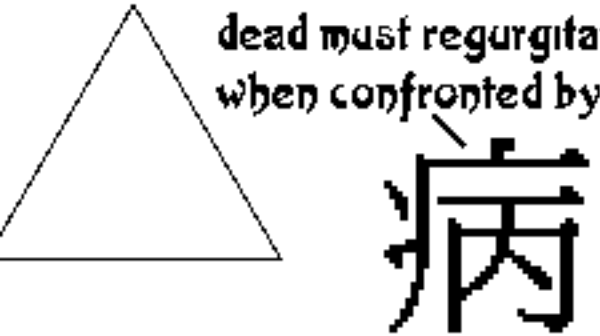
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

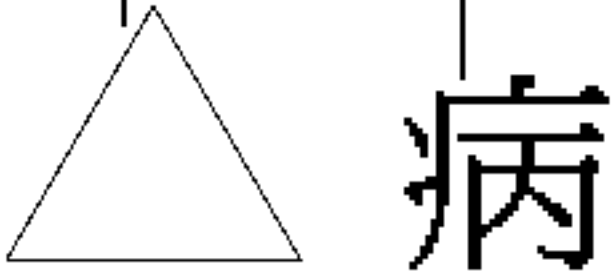
So that's it?

Not quite. It was truly ancient margarine that I used. Even the dead must regurgitate when confronted by it

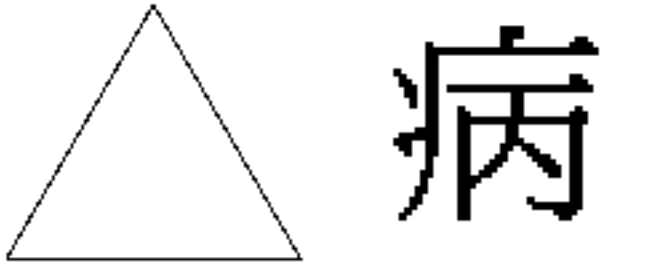


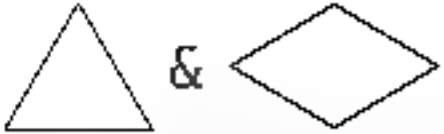
Ah, here he comes now

Floating on a wave of expelled pudding, the isosceles warrior returns from battle

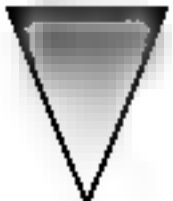


Towel.





I apologize for having spoken against your skills. I have never met one as powerful with margarine as yourself.



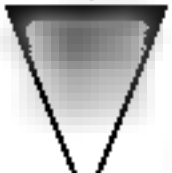
Is the Watcher defeated so easily?

Only for the moment. When Orpuddex next strikes, he must be met with more force.

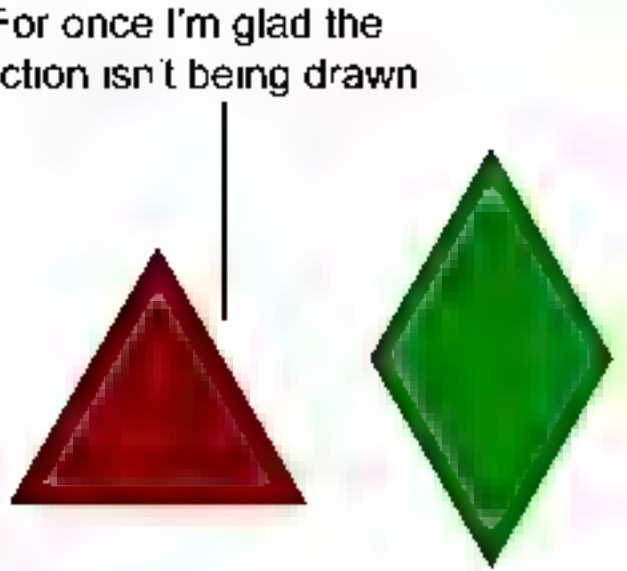
Why was he in such a pathetic form this time?

The cartoonist could draw no better

Ah yes. I was going to ask about this "cartoonist".

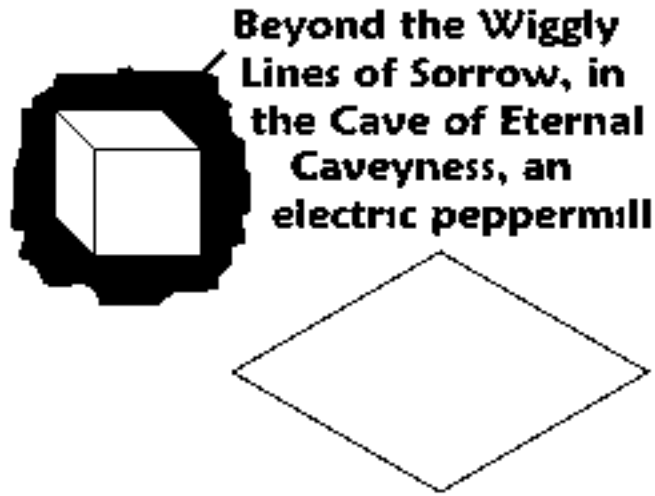


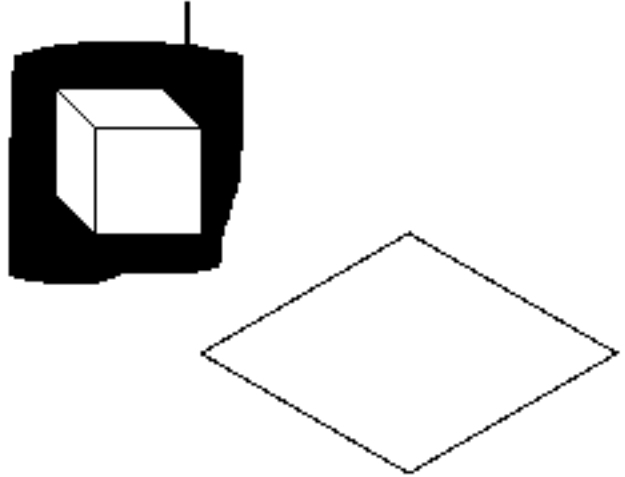
Triangle and Robert

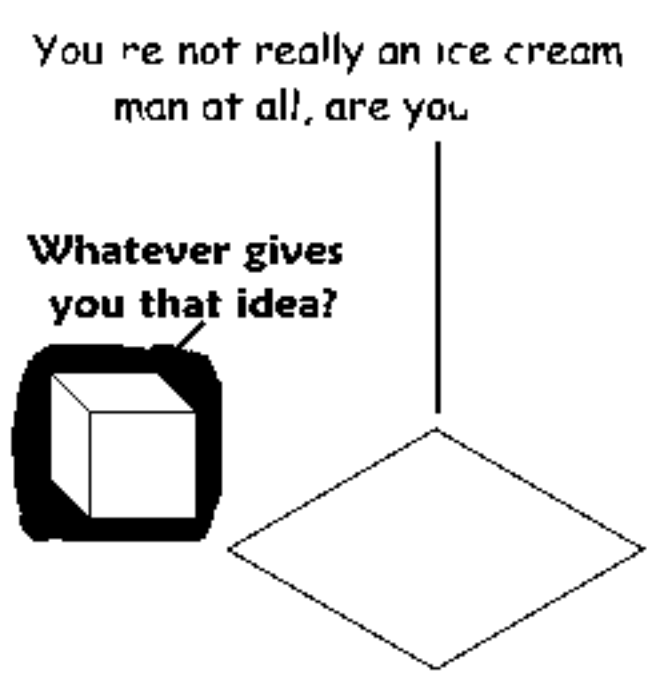


Triangle and Robert

— Robert dreams .





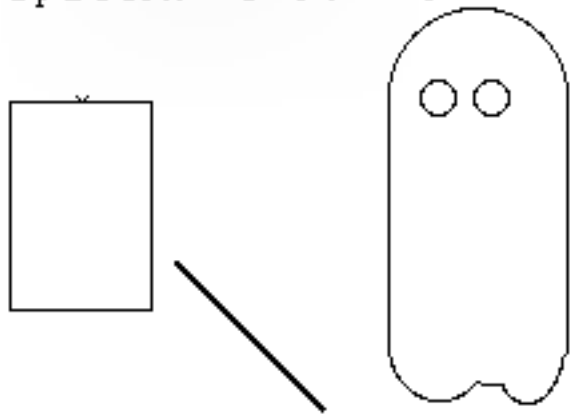


Triangle and Robert

— Triangle trains

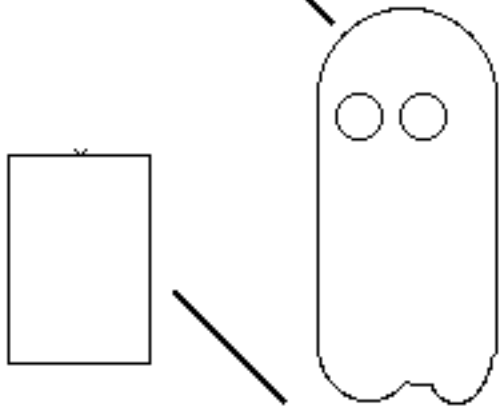
Triangle and Robert

— Crpullex ests



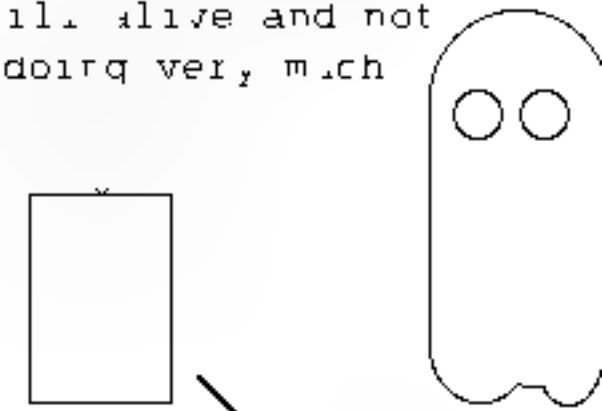
. .with Barbara Billingsley as June Cleaver!

Shh! Show's on.



Matthew Waterhouse as Adric!

Sorry. I just had to establish that you're still alive and not doing very much



. .and Tom Baker as the Beaver

Triangle and Robert
Shh. TV.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
EX TER MIN ATE!
Newly recovered episode!
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Now do you understand why you shouldn't tease the Daleks, Beaver?
I'll plot when it's over.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Gee, I'm sorry Mom

Triangle and Robert

The C ners eep pl ts .

No. Still TV

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

EX-TER-MIN-ATE THE BEA-VER!

Didn't it just end

Multi-part story. Showing it all at once.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Mom! Dad! Get to the house and get out of here! It's only me they're after!

C mplete serte es .

Out of the question.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Be careful, Beaver! They're pure evil!

So it's a 1950's suburban American home that travels through time and space?

Right.

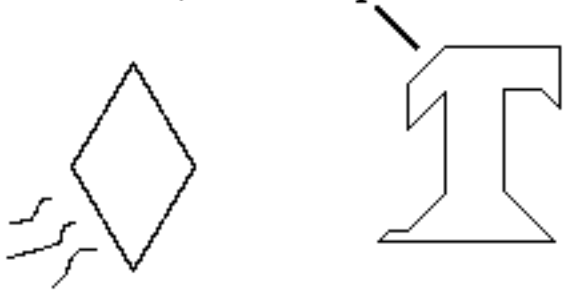
And the Beaver's an enigmatic man from another world who is, for some reason, older than his parents?

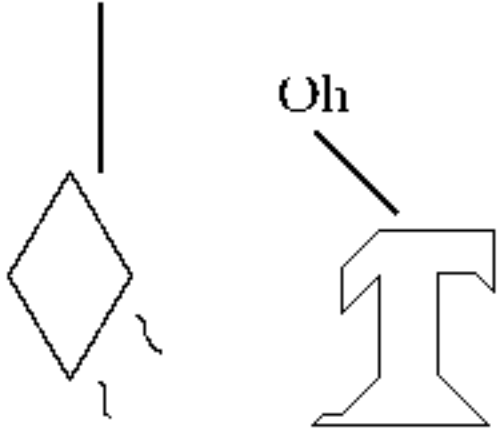
Right.

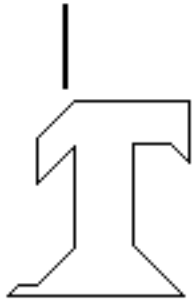
Have you ever heard of a Jerry Mathers?

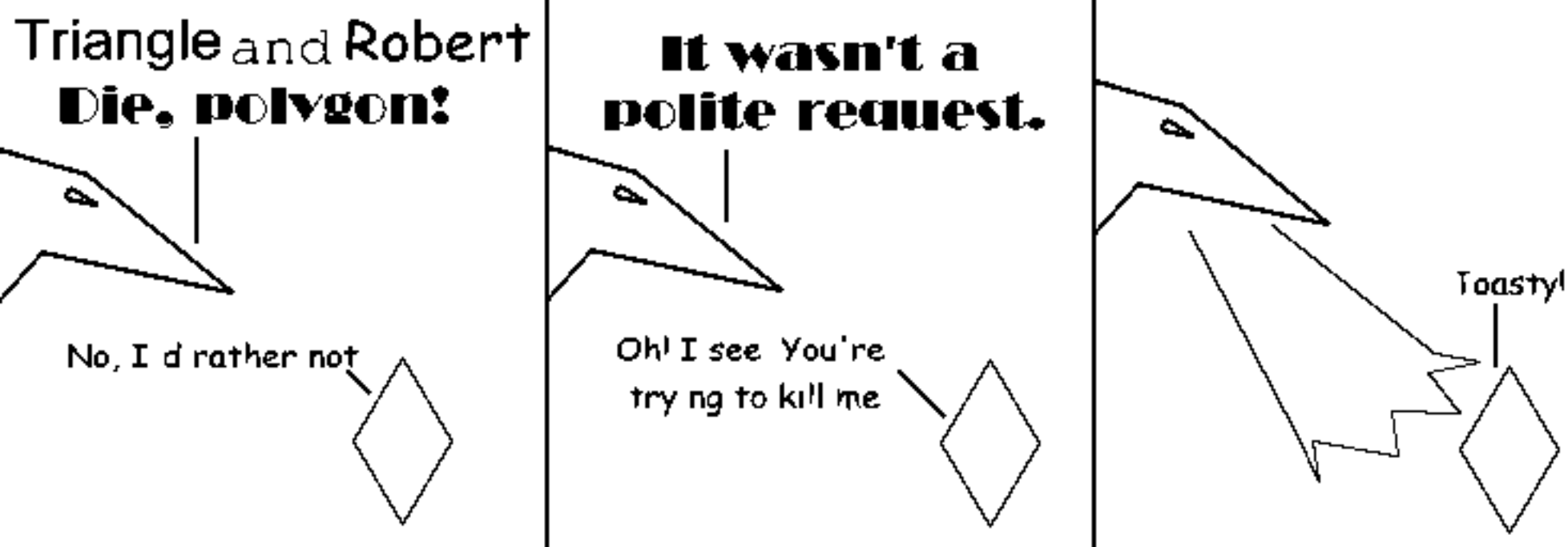
Yeah. He played the second Robin.

Triangle and Robert



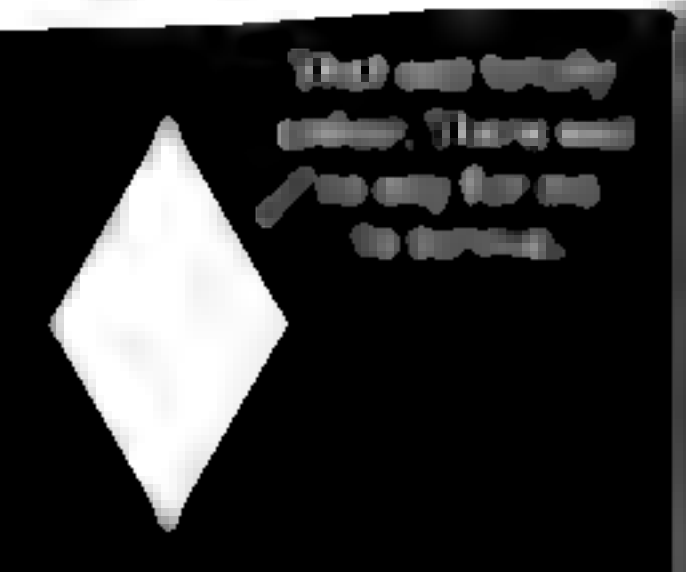


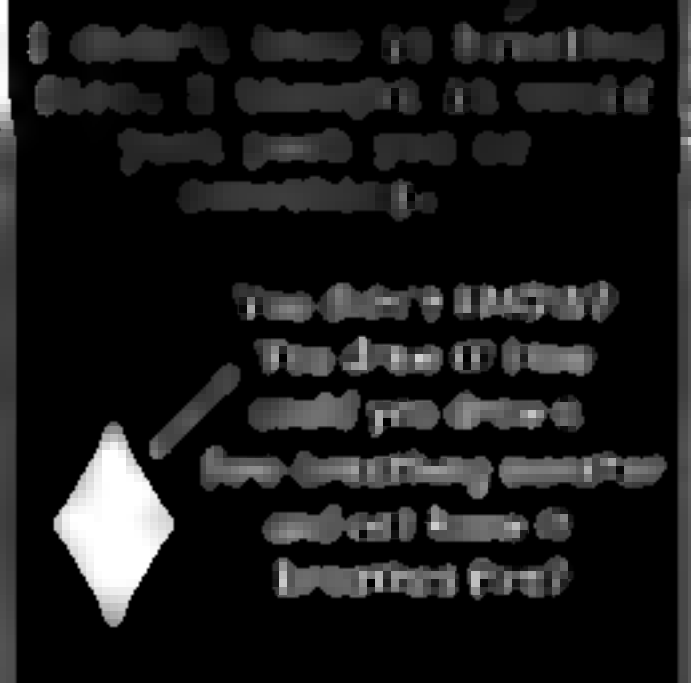



Triangle and Robert
Die, polygon!
No, I d rather not
It wasn't a polite request.
Oh! I see You're try ng to kill me
Toasty!

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

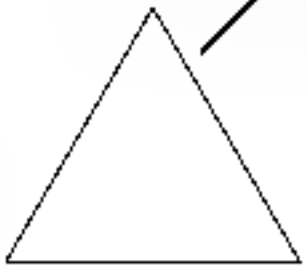




Triangle and Robert

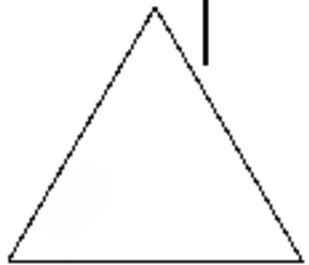
Triangle, you'll have to interrupt your training I am Robert's dead

Why don't you bring him back yourself?

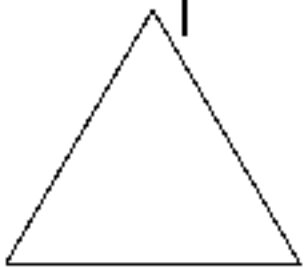


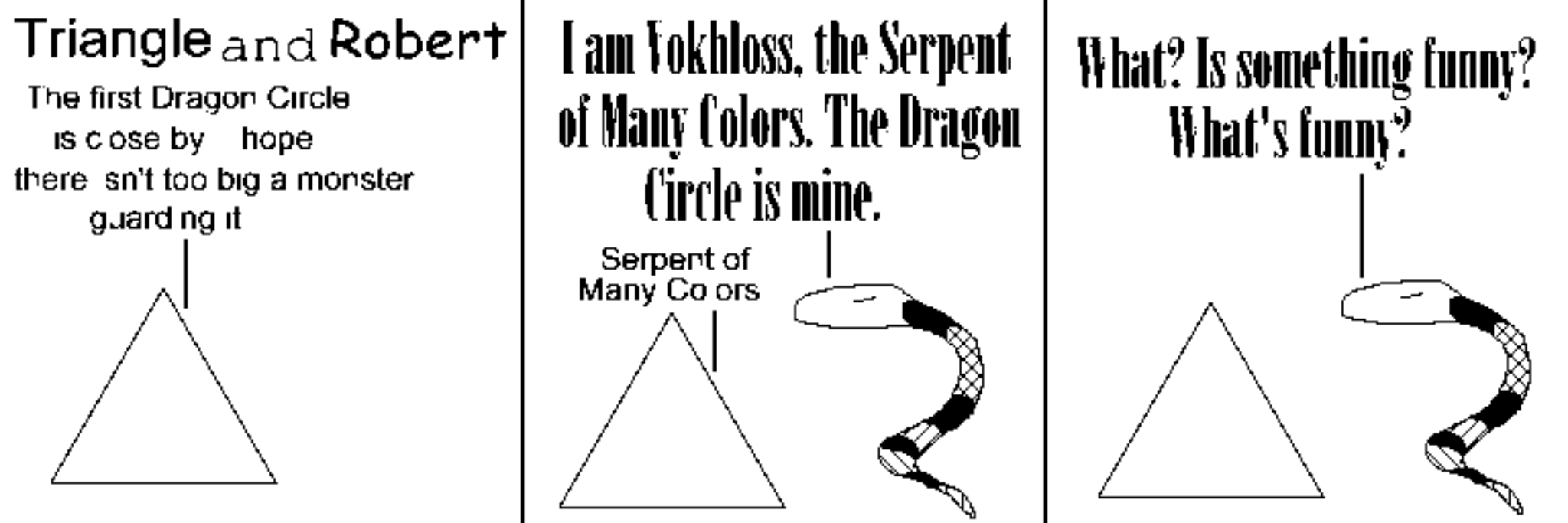
I'm not sure if that would be artistically right

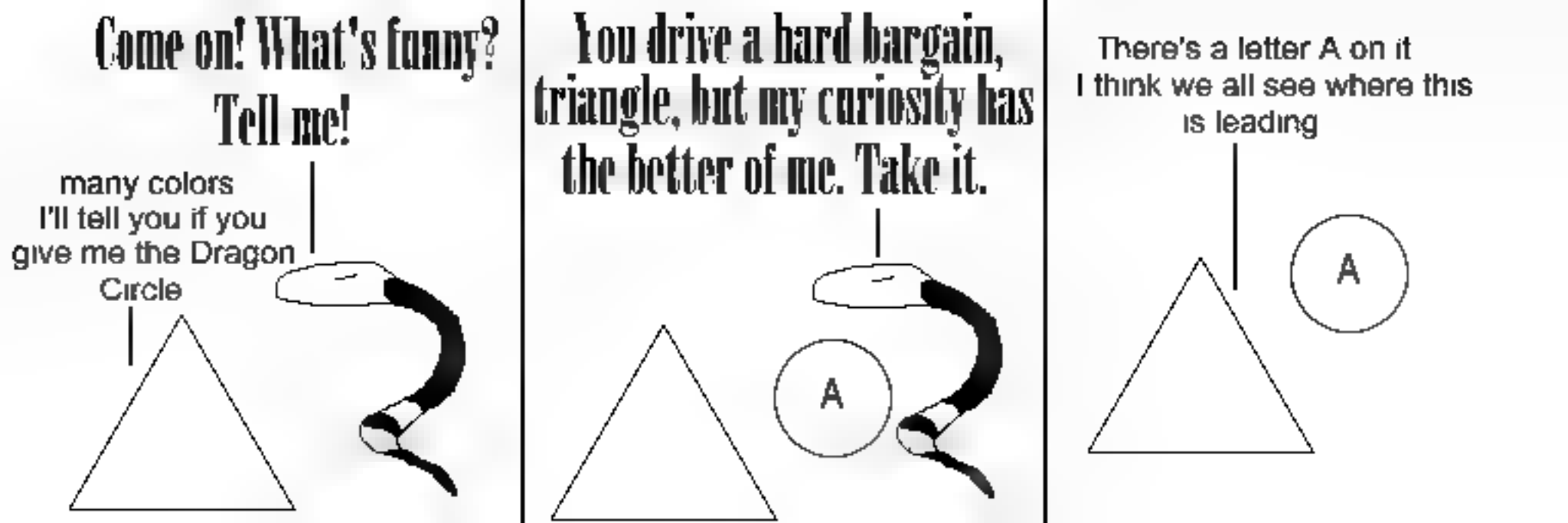
Artistically right? When do you ever worry about that?

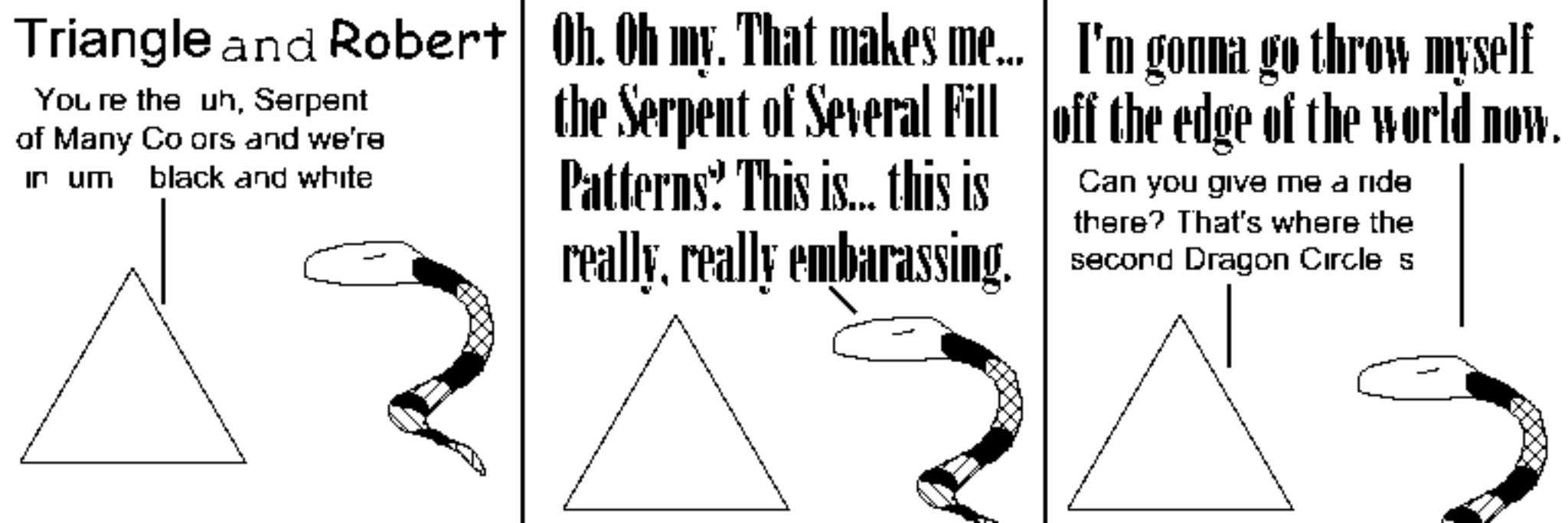


Look just point me to the Dragon Circles Make it quick. I have a vorpal casserole in the oven




Triangle and Robert
The first Dragon Circle is c ose by hope there sn't too big a monster guard ng it
I am Vokhloss, the Serpent of Many Colors. The Dragon Circle is mine.
Serpent of Many Co ors
What? Is something funny? What's funny?


Come on! What's funny? Tell me!
many colors I'll tell you if you give me the Dragon Circle
You drive a hard bargain, triangle, but my curiosity has the better of me. Take it.
A
There's a letter A on it I think we all see where this is leading
A

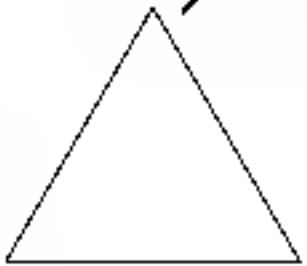

Triangle and Robert
You re the uh, Serpent of Many Co ors and we're in um black and white
Oh. Oh my. That makes me... the Serpent of Several Fill Patterns? This is... this is really, really embarassing.
I'm gonna go throw myself off the edge of the world now.
Can you give me a ride there? That's where the second Dragon Circle s

Triangle and Robert

Dragon Circle number two simple enough. Are we going to have to go through every single Dragon Circle one at a time?

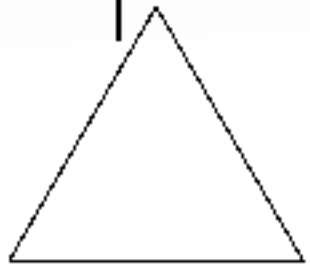
Are you suggesting that I take some sort of shortcut rather than tell the full scope of this epic tale

Yes



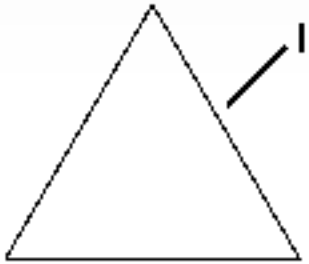
Well too bad. I've been slacking off far too much recently. I'm not going to have any more holes in my story

You can't be serious



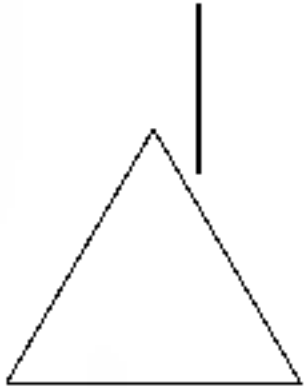
Triangle and Robert

Ar i s , twenty-three
p irtlessly brief and
repetitive subquests
later, Triangle at last
c mes to the twenty fifth
Dragon Circle



I knew it

Okay so one more to go and then we can get the udicrous y overforeshadowed pun out of the way



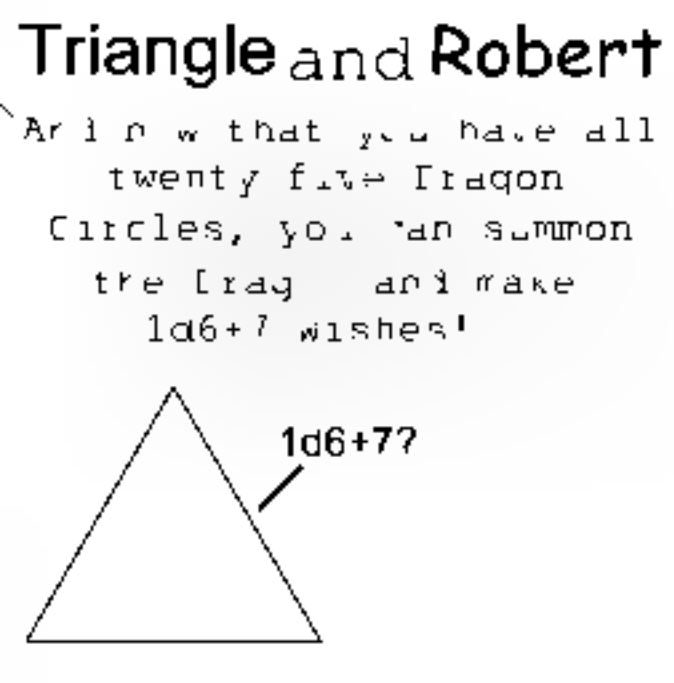
Cre m re? No, y i f and
all twenty five

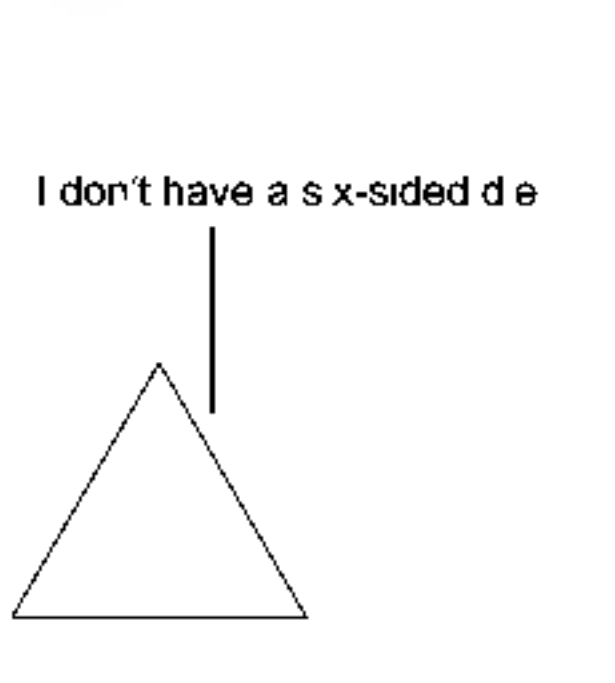
You mean you're not going to

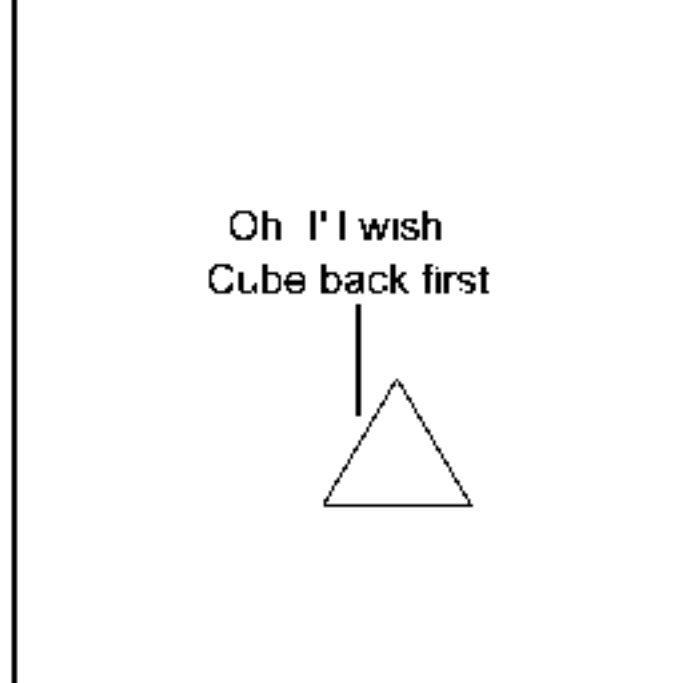
h o t th ght I was
planning to d THAT No
way I'm a bad cartoonist,
b t I'm not ADI TI

Somehow evading the pun just makes it worse

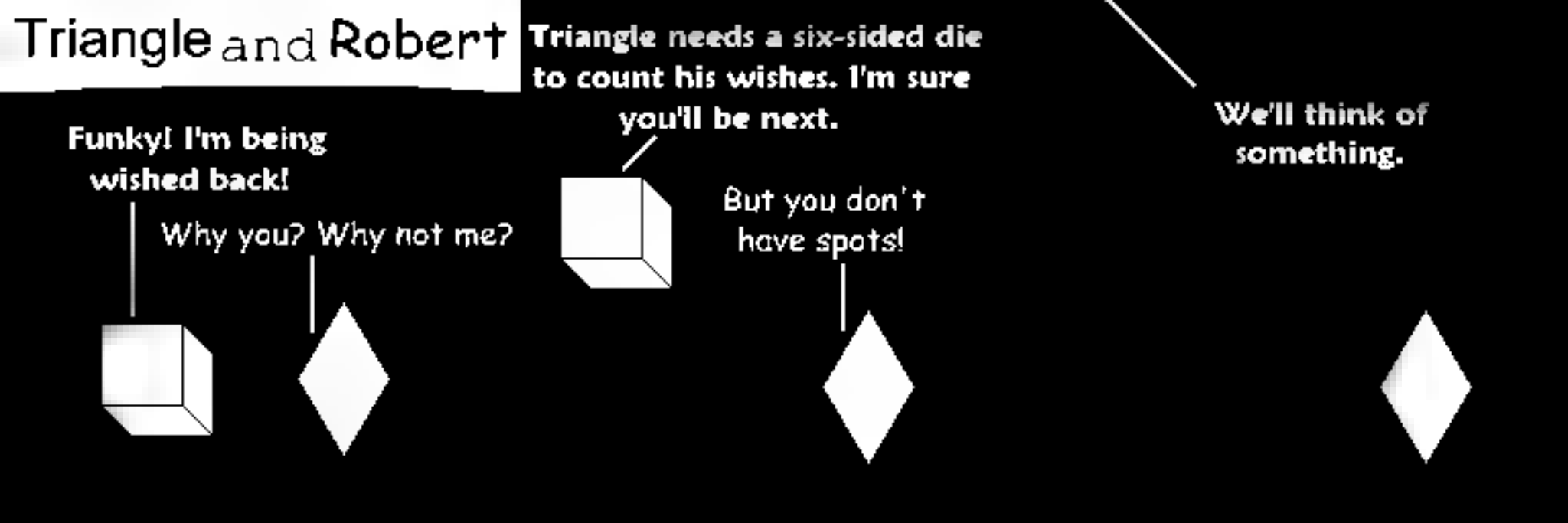
Triangle and Robert



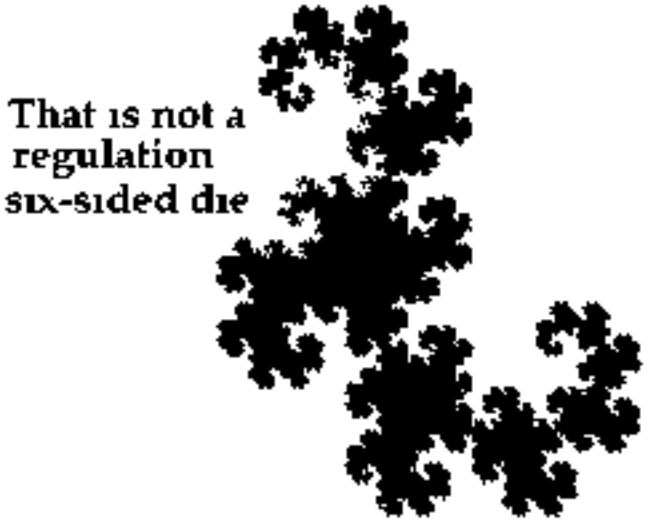


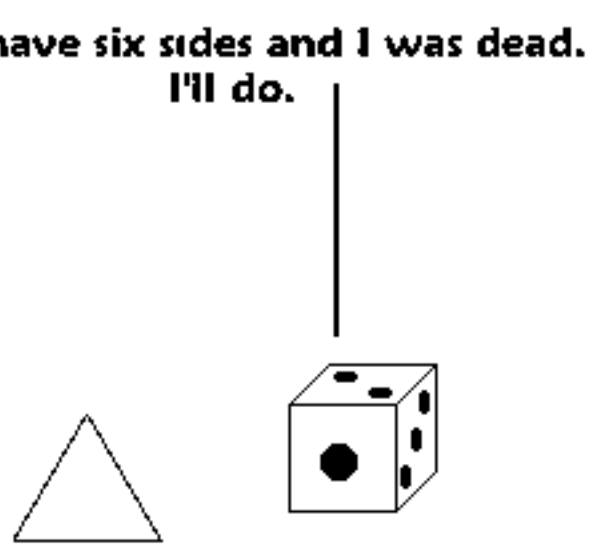


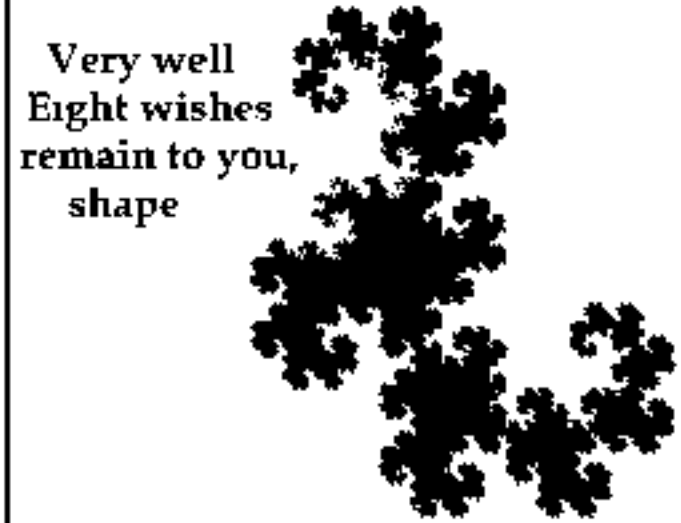
Triangle and Robert

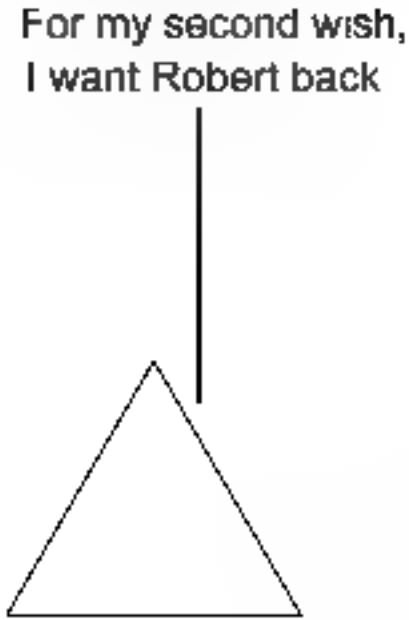


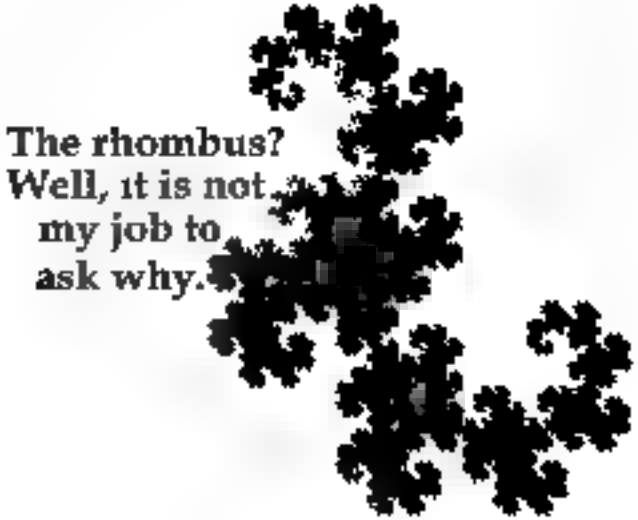
Triangle and Robert

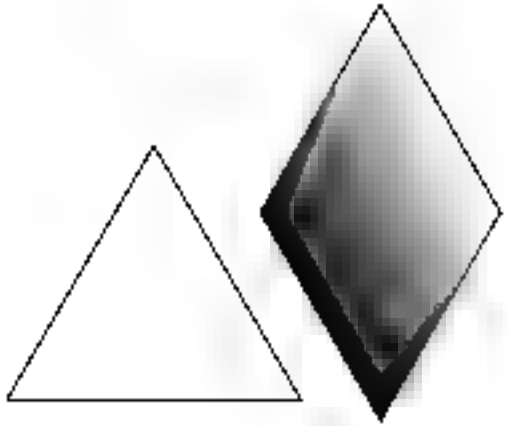







For my second wish,
I want Robert back


The rhombus?
Well, it is not
my job to
ask why.


It is done.

Triangle and Robert

Okay Next wish I want every episode of Leave it to Beaver, including lost ones, to be restored recovered and released on DVD at affordable prices

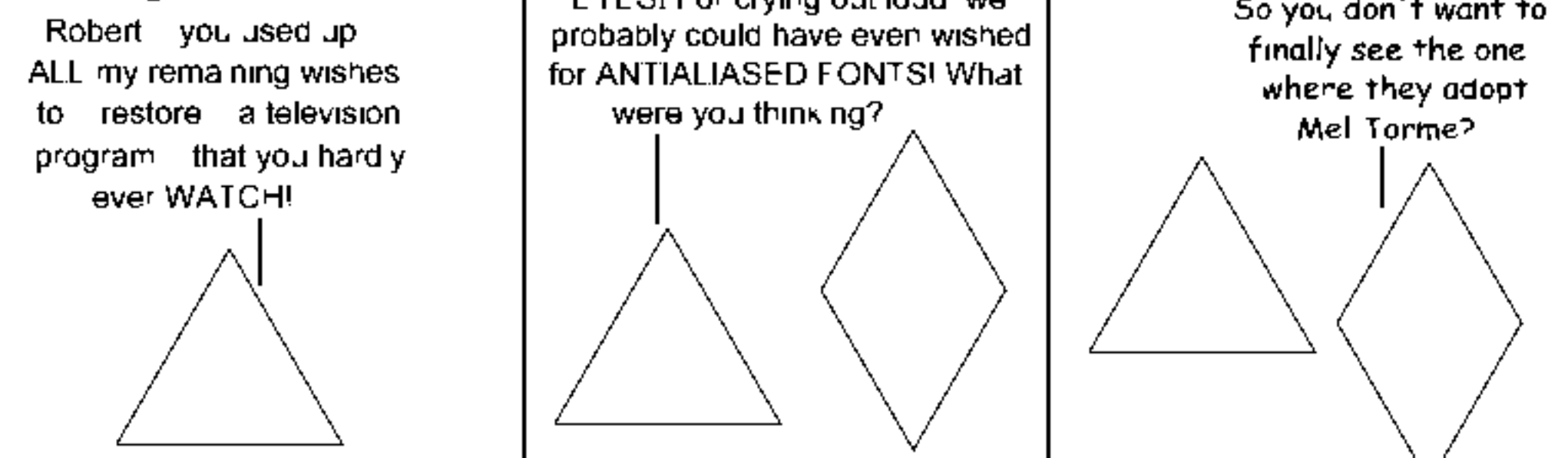
That is within my power, but it will count as seven wishes.

Of course I thought it might

It is done

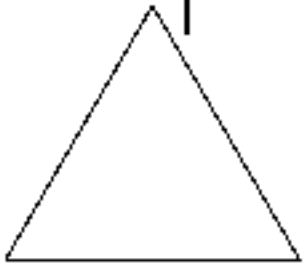
Robert

Triangle and Robert



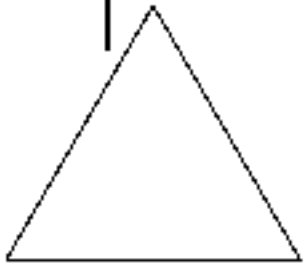
Triangle and Robert

For that matter for that matter we don't have a DVD player



Berate the rhombus later The Starham has vanished

I just got BACK from an artifact run!

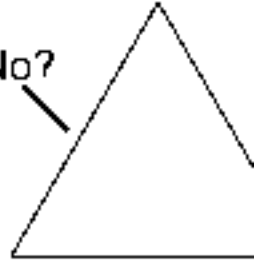


The Starham must be kept safe, equilateral one

It's a ham, and it's from space Isn't that enough reason?

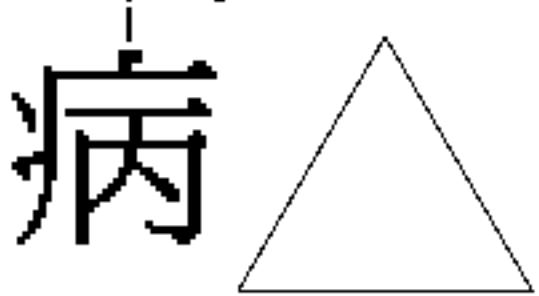
Why?

No?



Triangle and Robert

You have to understand, I really believe in the ICI. The traditions they preserve are vital to polygonal existence



But not Meat Enforcement The things that get said about the ICI as a whole they're true of that one department. If the Meat Enforcers get hold of the Starham, who knows what could happen?

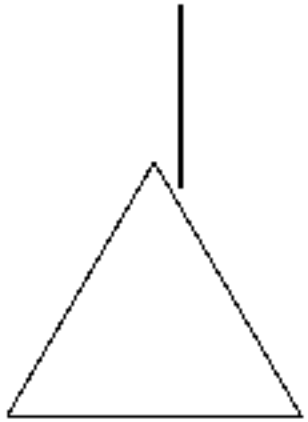
I don't know who?

Rhetorical question

Sorry

Triangle and Robert

Since you re not going to shut up tel me What is the Starham?



A fully-cooked glazed ham which fell from space, intact, roughly forty years ago

So? Meat fal s from space a l the time

Meat, yes. But not CURED meat

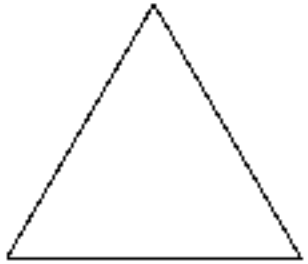
And that matters?

Triangle and Robert

The ICI never had possession of the Starham, and never sought it The Starham has been studied in many independent laboratories

Is that re evant?

Yes! You must understand, the International Culinary Institute is not your enemy It is only the corrupt Meat Enforcers who pursue the ham for their own ends



What ends?

L ke what?

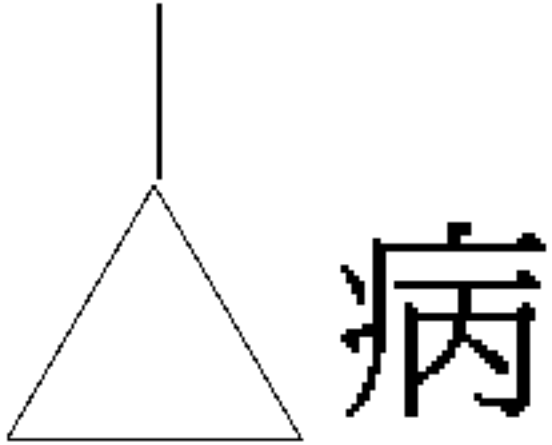
There is much power in the Starham

Just power Not any kind in particular

Oh real y

Triangle and Robert

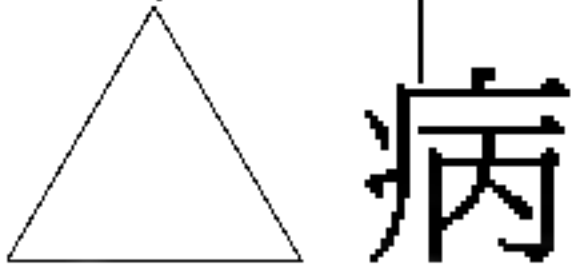
I suppose I should ask about the Meat Enforcers



The department began as quality advisors, aiding meat producers in meeting standards They then gained enforcement powers Now, they ensure consistently high-grade meats worldwide through a campaign of brutal intimidation

That's terrifying but mainly sly

If they are not behind the Starham's disappearance, they will certainly seek it

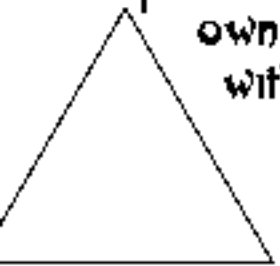


Oh this was supposed to be in greyscale

Triangle and Robert

Why me? This Starham business seems more in Cube's line

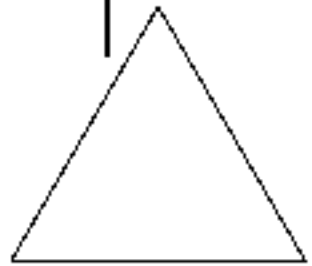
You need the experience, and the cube already intends a quest of his own. Something to do with aged pepper, I gather



I don't like quests! Can't Cube do both?

Linda Concarne! Meat Enforcement!

Huh?

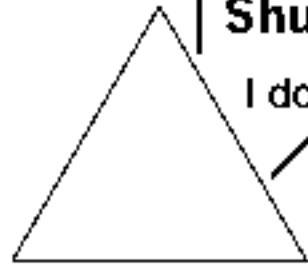


Come with me! I'm declaring you unfit for consumption!

Can you do that? I'm not meat

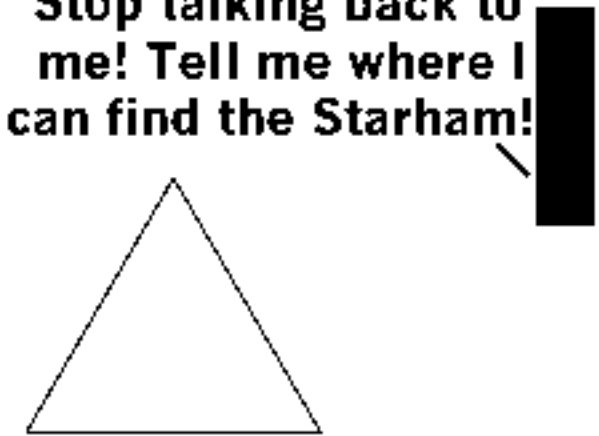
Shut your mouth!

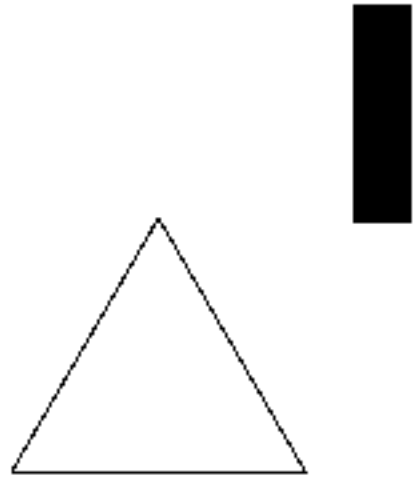
I don't have a mouth

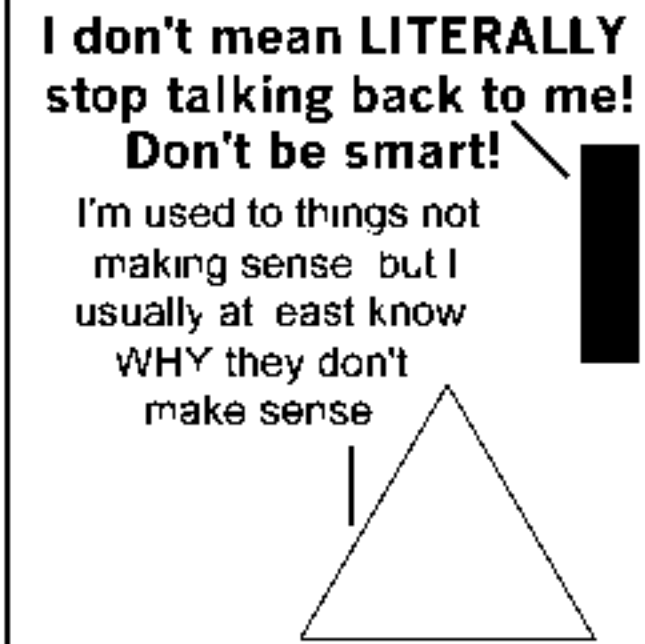


Triangle and Robert

In a frozen locker.



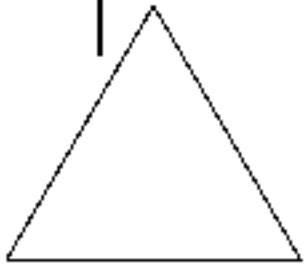




Triangle and Robert

I don't have the Starham!
What made you think do?

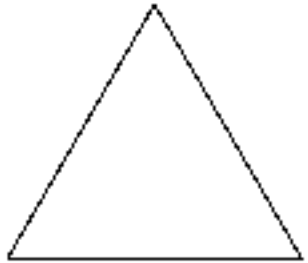
Don't twist my words! I never said you had it!



They call you the Chosen One! I don't believe in any of that, but you obviously have a power! You can see in the colors of magic, Triangle! Now tell me! Where is the Starham?

Wow You are SO wrong on SO many counts

Then I'll just have to turn this locker down a couple notches and let you freeze for a while!



Triangle and Robert

I'm trapped Except this locker is full of meat I must know some meat spell I can use that would get me out of here

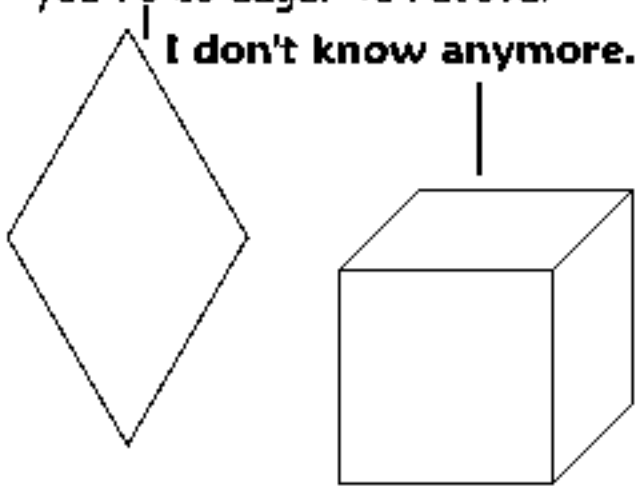
And so Triangle hastily forms a pentagram of sausage and begins to chant

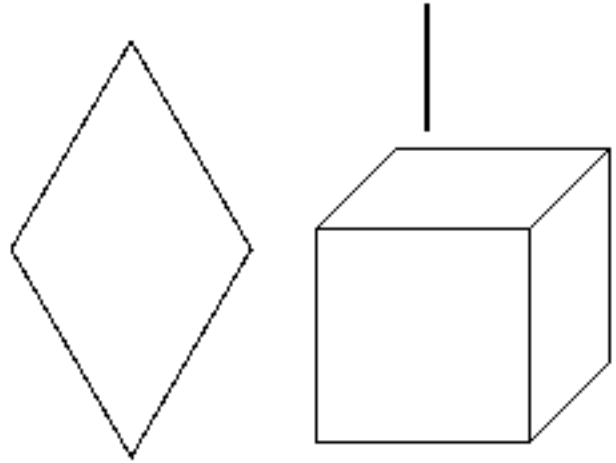
Wait! I haven't even thought of a spell yet!

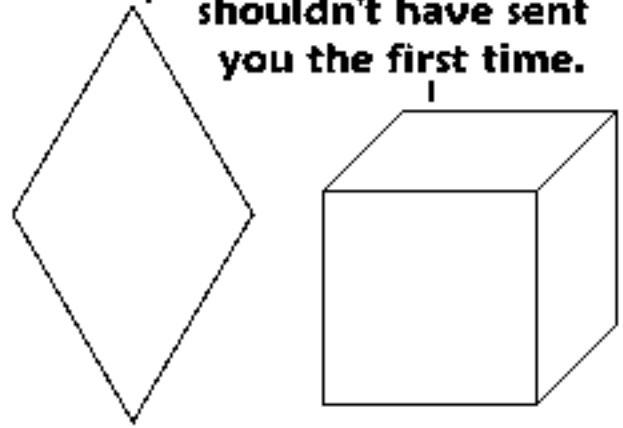
Right

Now, how much fluid pressure would I get if I converted all the organ meats to gravy?

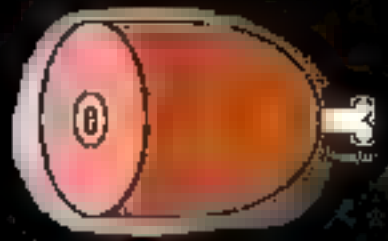
Triangle and Robert



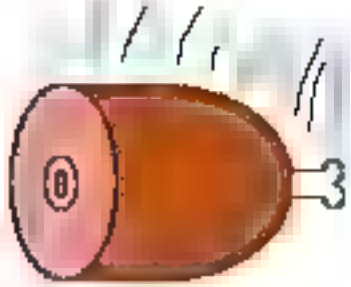




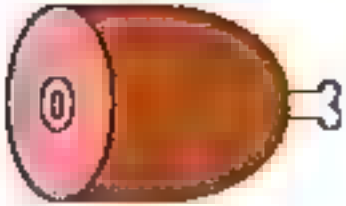
Meats form in space. It's a decent-sized universe, and the remaining particles of pudding give all kinds of food formation a head start.



Space is no place for curing, though. Salts just don't form in the right concentrations. The Starham is an enigma, a properly cured ham... from the stars.



Triangle and Robert



#500: Starham

[T&R 501]

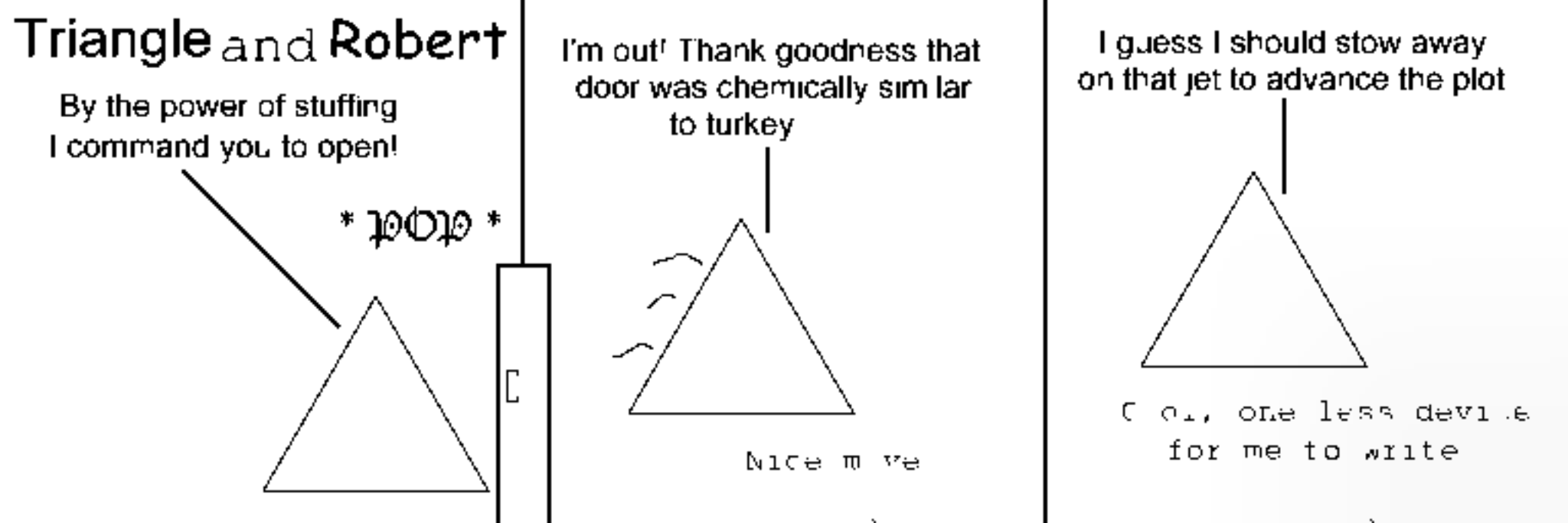
Of course, Triangle has no more to do with the actual disappearance of the Starham than the ICI does The RDCLBA also has no connection to this event.

I was planning to acquire the ham, but was beaten to it by forces unknown.

And somewhere in the skies, in a certain mysterious oval, a sandwich is made.

Triangle and Robert
Miss Concarne! We have an observatory report. A bone has anded near Denver.
A bone?
Yes. It appears that the Starham... has been eaten. The bone was discarded from an unidentified small aircraft.
Get the jet ready! We're going after it!
And the triangle?
He'll freeze or he'll escape! We don't need him anymore!

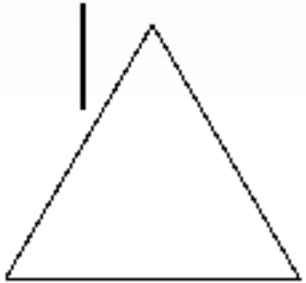
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

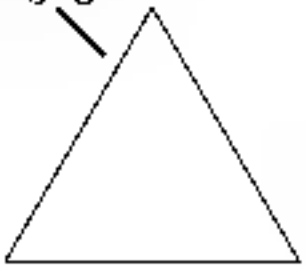
It's the year 2001 and I've got a [illegible] and a black [illegible] triangle [illegible] now what

Are you serious? You're stuck?



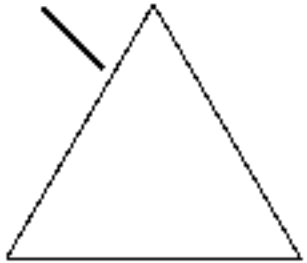
Uh, yeah [illegible] you'd think a gratuitous one strip parody would write itself

One-strip. So this whole Starham thing wasn't just setup for an idiotic sight gag



N[illegible] I **am** going somewhere with the ham thing

Then skip the unnecessary pop-culture reference and get on with it



Triangle and Robert

There's the bone! Land here!

We've already anded

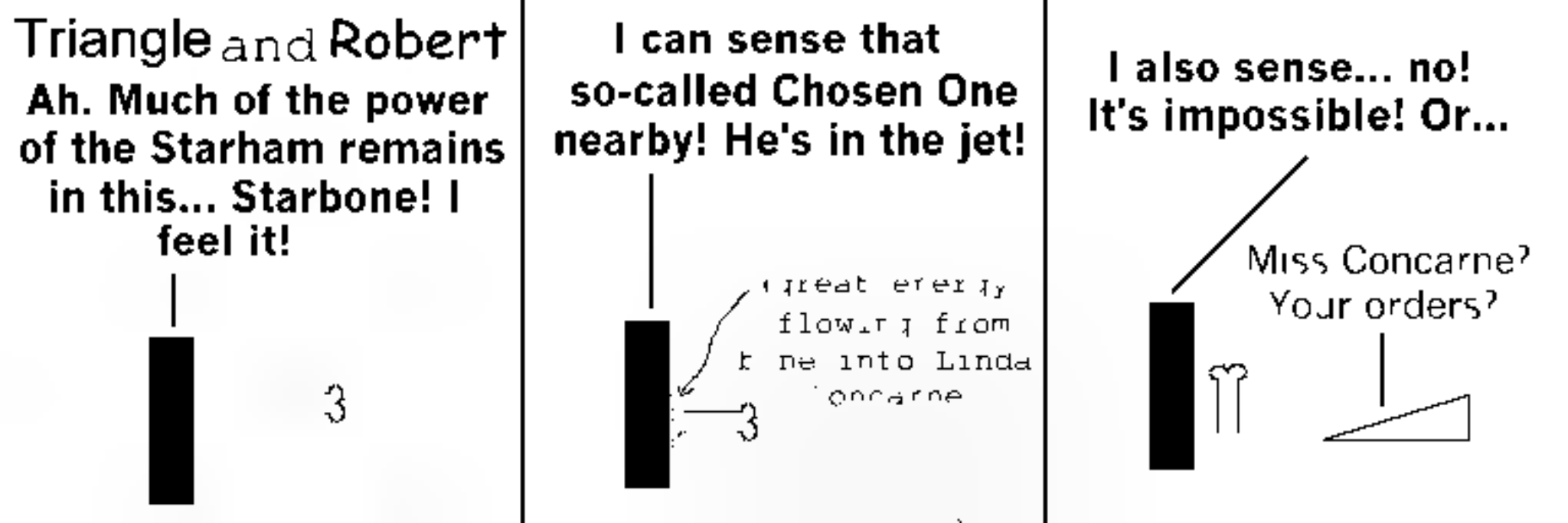
We've a ready left the ,et, too. t s over there.

I see! Thank you for that lesson in the perils of stealth technology!

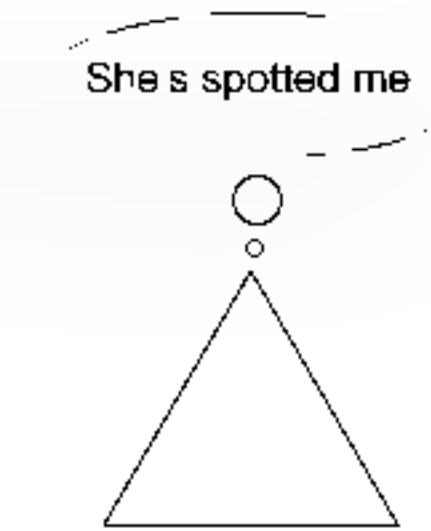
Does Wonder Woman have these problems?

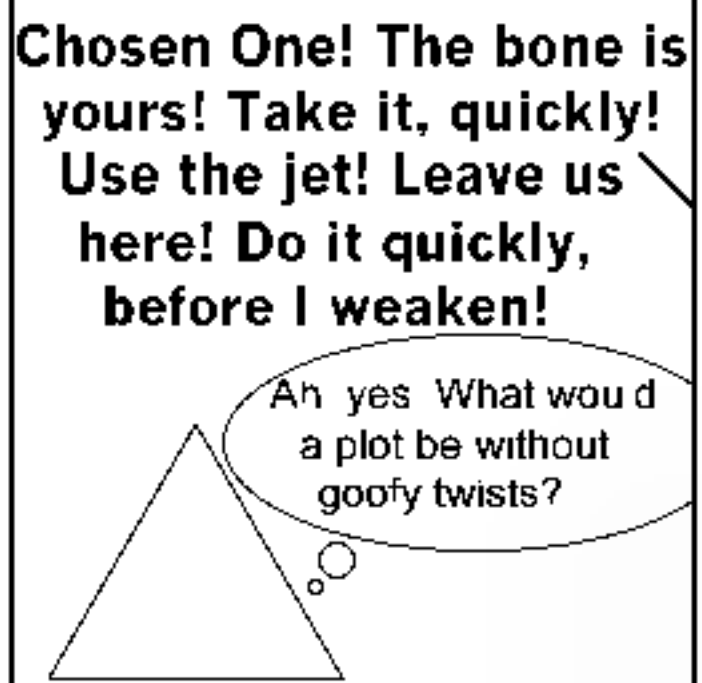
I wou dn't know, Miss Concarne

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



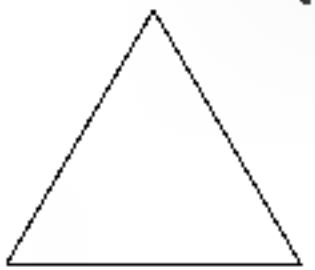


Triangle and Rubert

And then I took her advice and left before she finished her interior monologue

She must have a very interesting story to tell.

In this strip?



Right. Well.... Anyway, do you have the remains of the Starham with you?

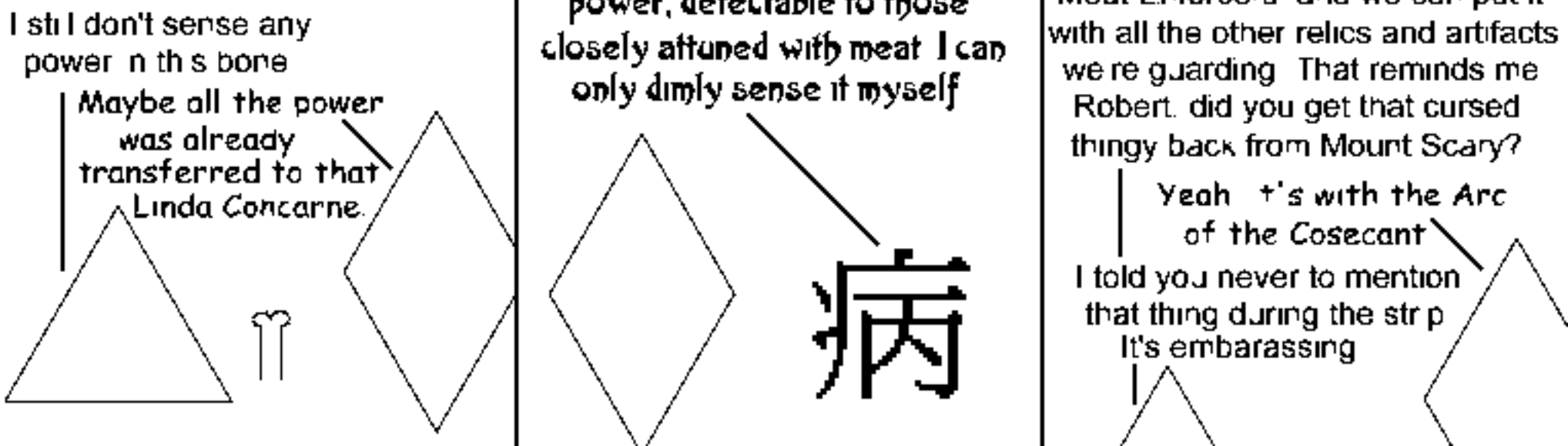
Yes I have the bone

I wonder what could have eaten the ham

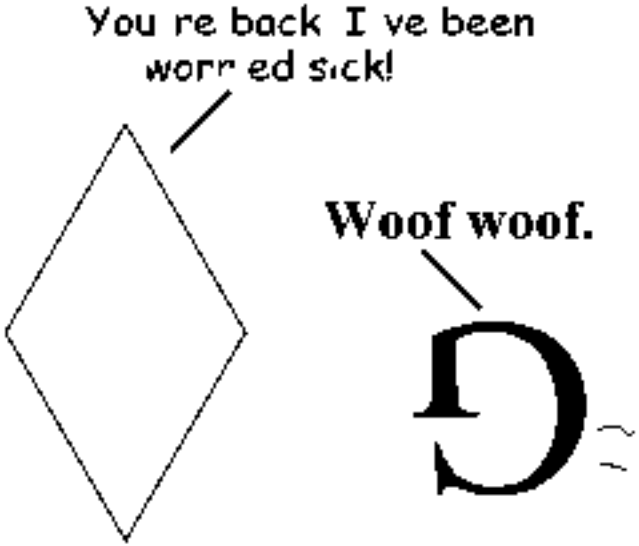
According to last Sunday's strip, an inhabitant of the Oval.

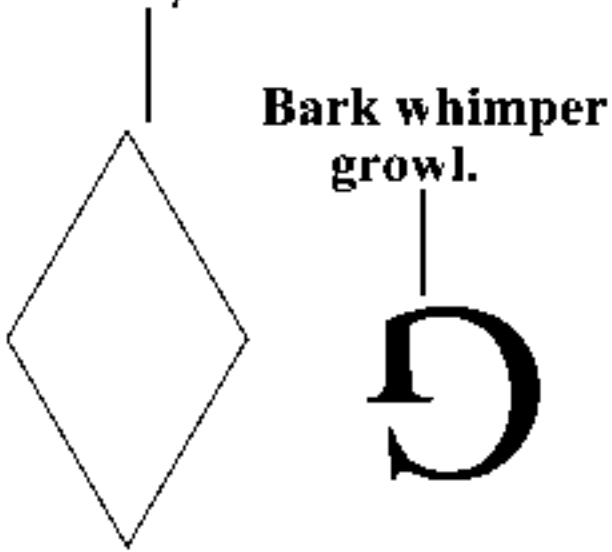
Hey! That's cheating!

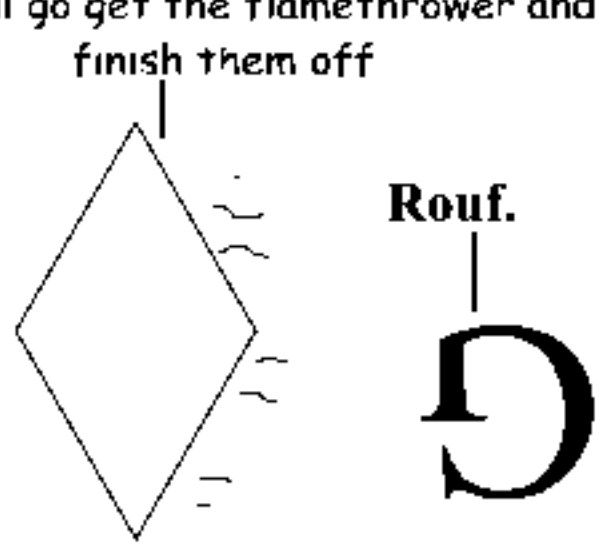
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

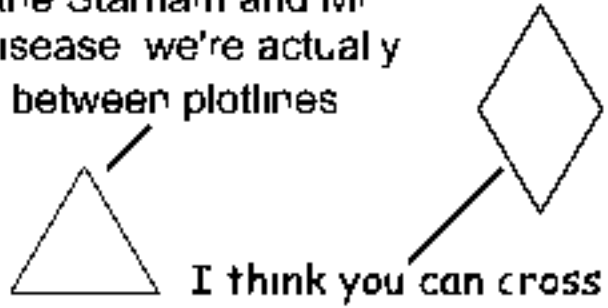






Triangle and Robert

Peace and quiet. Except for Cube's quest, the smoldering wreckage of those robots, and lingering questions about the Starham and Mr. Disease, we're actually between plotlines.

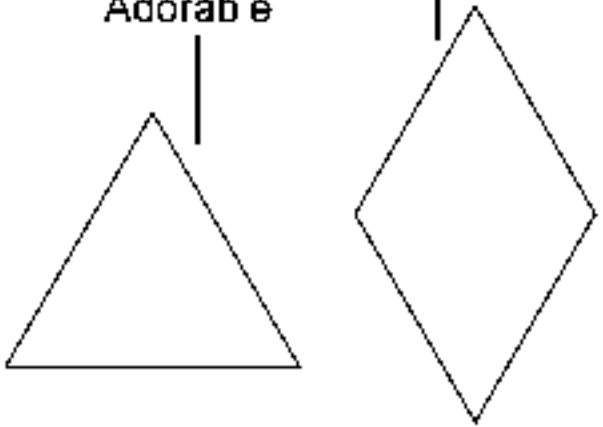


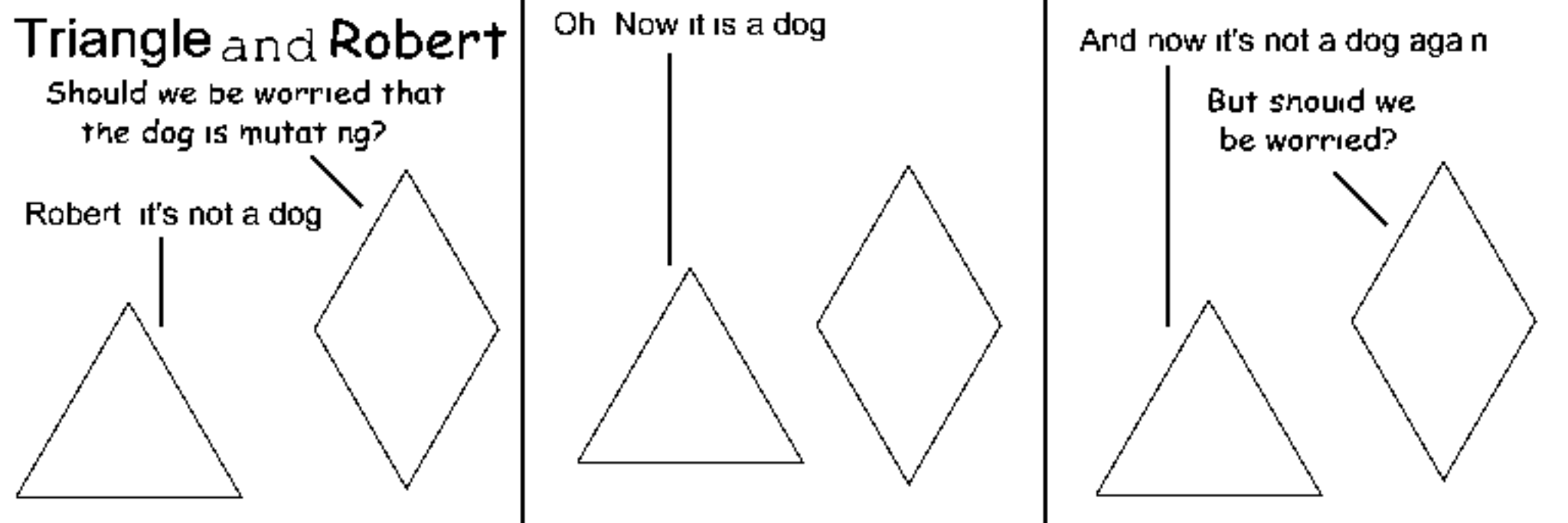
I think you can cross the Starham off the list.

Awww, that's cute.

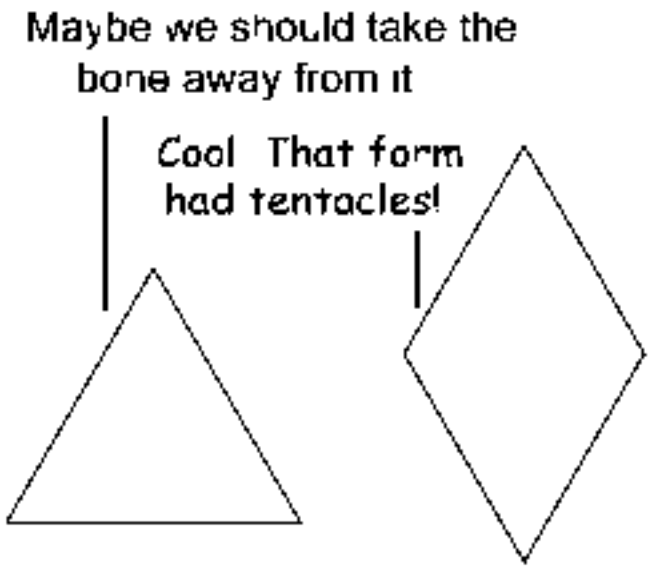
Look! Now he's glowing and turning into a convex heptagon!

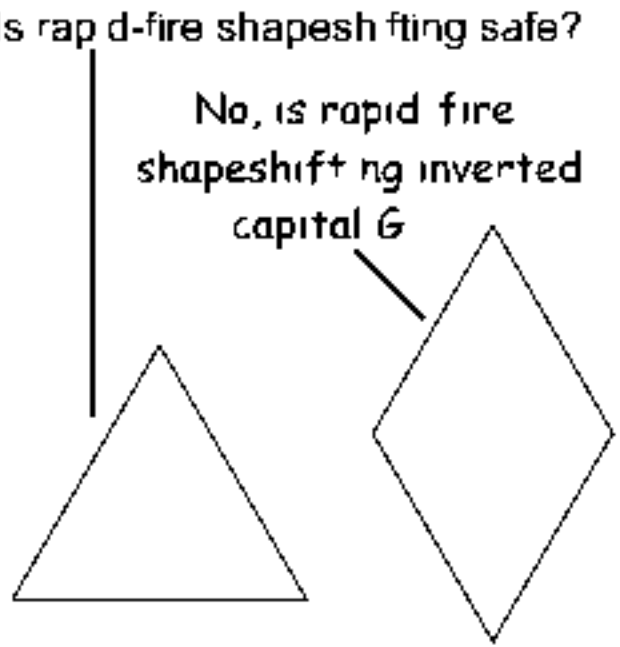
Adorable.

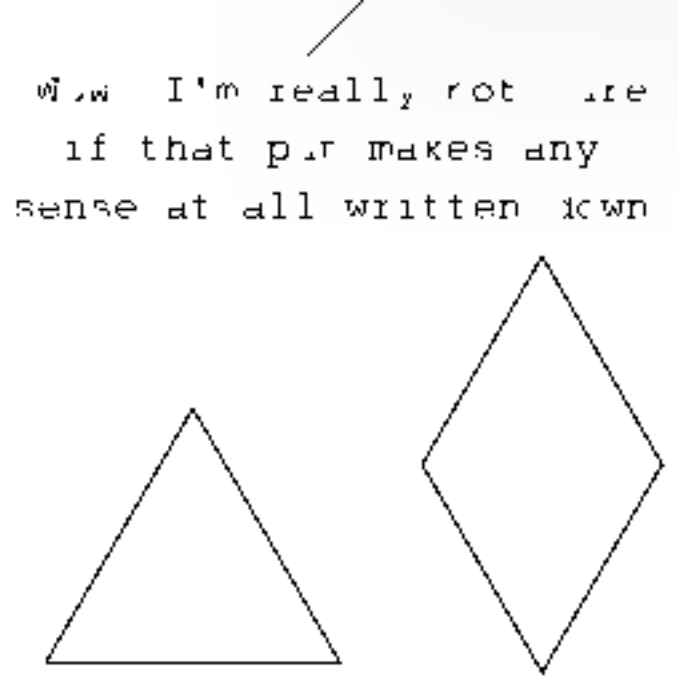


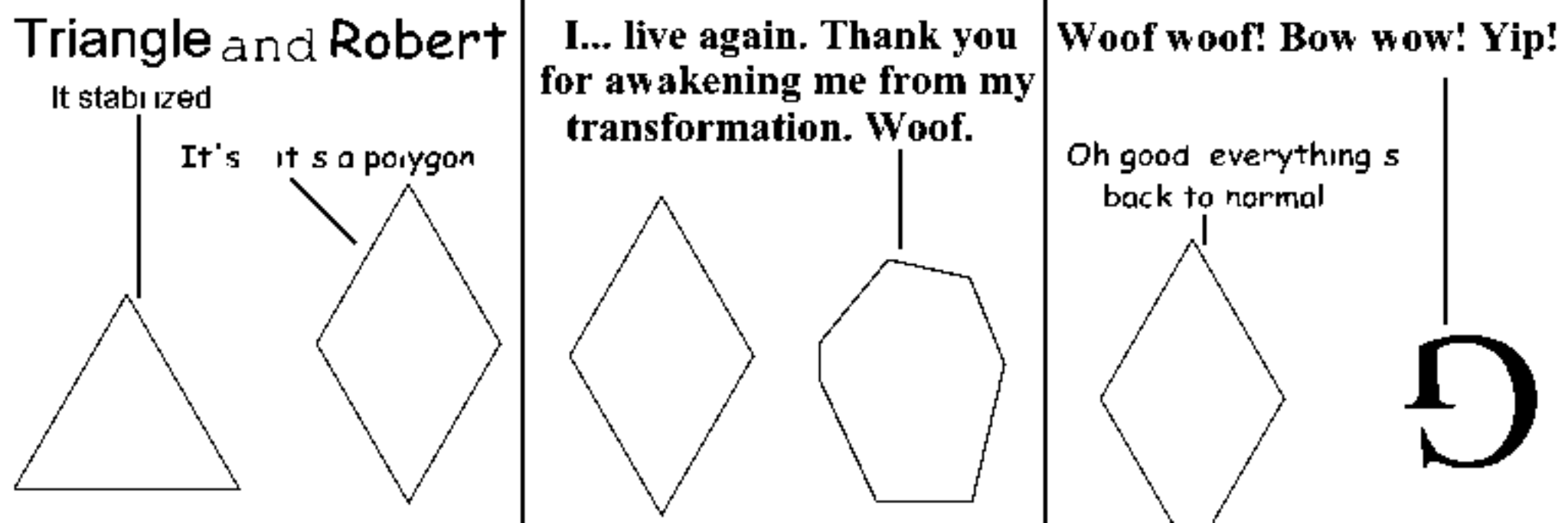

Triangle and Robert
Should we be worried that the dog is mutat ng?
Robert it's not a dog
Oh Now it is a dog
And now it's not a dog aga n
But should we be worried?

Triangle and Robert



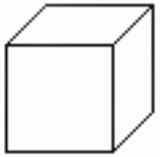





Triangle and Robert
It stabilized
It's it's a polygon
I... live again. Thank you for awakening me from my transformation. Woof.
Woof woof! Bow wow! Yip!
Oh good everything's back to normal

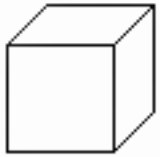
The Backstory of Cube

My name is Cube. I am about to embark on a dangerous journey, and I am recording this so that, if I do not return, the world will be able to hear my story.



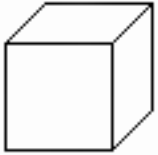
Do not return? Why wouldn't you return?

It sounds better than "I'm recording this as an excuse for a recap and some exposition."



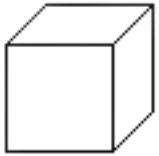
Isn't honesty more important?

Let me monologue.

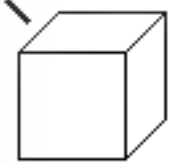


The Backstory of Cube

The fact that the text is still antialiased attests to the importance of this log. If I fail in my quest, my story must be made known to all, for we are living in the Time of the Oval.



To begin with: I am in truth a polygon, despite my shape. There was an accident during by birth. The details are unimportant, but know that I am indeed a polygon, as are you. Well, unless you're reading this in the comic strip, in which case you might be a human. Ah, humans... but I get ahead of myself there.



I am an archaeologist by training. I came to work for the RDCLBA early in life. The RDCLBA is, basically, the government agency responsible for covering things up. My job was to destroy certain forms of evidence of ancient cultures, so that society would not be destabilized by too-rapid advance of knowledge. I believed in my job for quite some time.

The Backstory of Cube

This was before the comic strip. Years passed. I went where I was told, to newly-discovered ruins, to ancient caverns, to wherever ancient knowledge waited to be found. And I destroyed it. But, still, I learned.

Gradually, I came to realize the importance of the ancients to our own time. I began to look more closely before destroying artifacts, and I kept some for my own study. The Fourth Race had a set of prophesies... the Fourth Race. I should explain what I know of them before going on to the prophesies.

At first, it was believed by the RDCLBA, and so by myself, that the Fourth Race were a widespread, but technologically primitive, race of polygons. I realized, however, as I learned more about them, that they were not polygons at all. They were another form of life entirely.

The Backstory of Cube

Any open-minded student of architecture can come to the same conclusion: the constructions of the Fourth Race were not designed for use by polygons.

In many of their structures, in particular, ones which archaeology has dubbed "temples", there are writings that predict the future. As I learned to decipher the Fourth Race's languages, I realized that these prophesies speak of our own time, and many have come to pass.

I remained nominally an employee of the RDCLBA, but my aims were no longer theirs. Where they sought to protect the world by concealing ancient knowledge, I gathered that same knowledge, for it is my firm belief that polygons will need it to survive the Time of the Oval.

The Backstory of Cube

The Pudding-Watcher has arisen on our world, and the Oval itself has come and flies about for purposes unknown. The Time of the Oval, named in the prophesies, is upon us. I have yet to learn what it means.

Whatever the Time of the Oval portends, it is a grave threat to our survival on this world. It is to battle this threat that I now search the ruins, trying to uncover what learnings I can, hoping to defend polygonkind. And thus was the situation when the comic strip started.

If you are a polygon reading this, you no doubt know the effects of the Cartoonist's arrival. If you are a human, reading this in the comic strip entitled Triangle and Robert, then listen carefully, or read carefully rather, for much of what I am to say will be new to you.

The Backstory of Cube

Our world has not always been as you see it now. Ours was a vibrant world, lush with beauty and geometric complexity. We had three working spatial dimensions and a fourth one we could work with theoretically. There were far greater than two hundred fifty-six shades of grey, and true algebraic curves were commonplace.

Then... the Cartoonist came, and all became as you see it now. At first it seemed as though it had always been this way; only gradually did we come to realize what we had lost. The comic strip has been underway for more than a year now, and while life continues, it is without the joys we once took for granted.

I believe that the coming of the Cartoonist marked the beginning of the Time of the Oval. Our world has undergone one great change; another, possibly greater, change is to follow. Buried in this world's past may be the secrets to the future of our universe.

The Backstory of Cube

When the comic strip began, the Cartoonist created two polygons,Triangle and Robert, to be the main characters. Without pasts, they have never seen the true wonders of the world, and yet its fate lies in their hands, or lack thereof.

I was the first other polygon they ever met. I did not know who they were, and I maintained my cover as an ice-cream man. Much later, they established themselves as wacky scheme consultants. I had a cursed artifact I needed thrown in a volcano, I didn't have the free time to do it myself, I hired them.

They told me of their encounter with the Pudding-Watcher. It was then that I became certain that the prophecies concerning the Time of the Oval were true, even the silly ones... no, especially the silly ones. I continued my work, now knowing the urgency of the task.

The Backstory of Cube

Humans have figured in our myths, strangely-colored beings with limbs and complex biology. They are more than myth though, and their presence in our world has not been limited to simply a few lost dimension travelers.

The Fourth Race was man. The Cartoonist insists that he has no relation to them, that the humans of our world evolved separately from those of his. I see no reason not to believe his claim. Still, it is no coincidence. Our world is in a comic strip now, and in a comic strip, there are few true coincidences.

I do not understand why the Time of the Oval is called such, but there is indeed an Oval. It came from the sky and acted confusingly. It's still around, flying from place to place on errands no one understands. It was when the RDCLBA attempted to capture the Oval that I first opposed them face-to-face. I ended up dead.

The Backstory of Cube

Some prophecies speak of a Chosen One who would be sent to carry out the will of the Beforings during the Time of the Oval. It appears that Triangle is this Chosen One. From beyond the grave I aided him in his training, and led him to... oh yes. The Sentries.

I do not know if the races preceding polygons had Sentries, but polygons have had them since the dawn of our history. There have always been four, one for each of the classical food groups. The post of Sentry is passed from generation to generation, and each Sentry's duty is simple: to defend the world and polygons from supernatural and extraterrestrial threats.

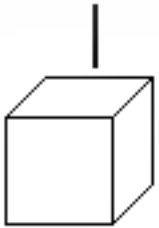
The Sentries are never public figures, but a few years ago, some time before the beginning of the comic, all four of the Sentries seemed to vanish entirely. While I was dead, I saw them, and they are alive... but I cannot remember where they are, or why they have not emerged. Anyway, I did lead Triangle and Robert to the Vegetable Sentry.

The Backstory of Cube

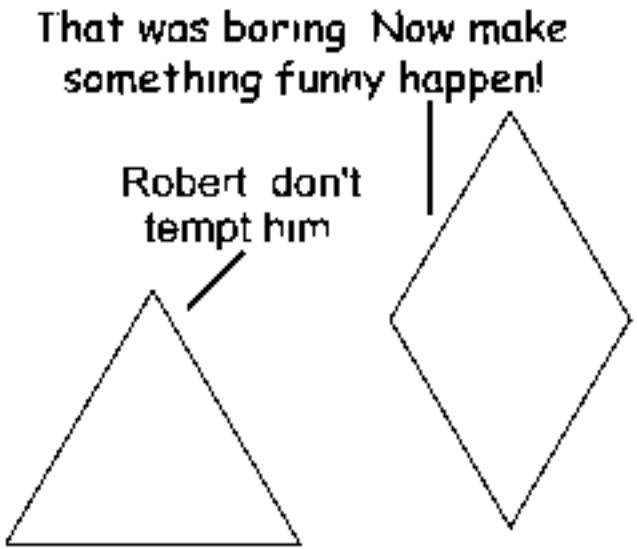
Triangle and Robert awakened the Vegetable Sentry from a seemingly self-induced trance, and together they defeated Orpuddex the Pudding-Watcher, who had grown to gigantic proportions... none of this has anything to do with me or my story. The point is, I was busy when I was dead.

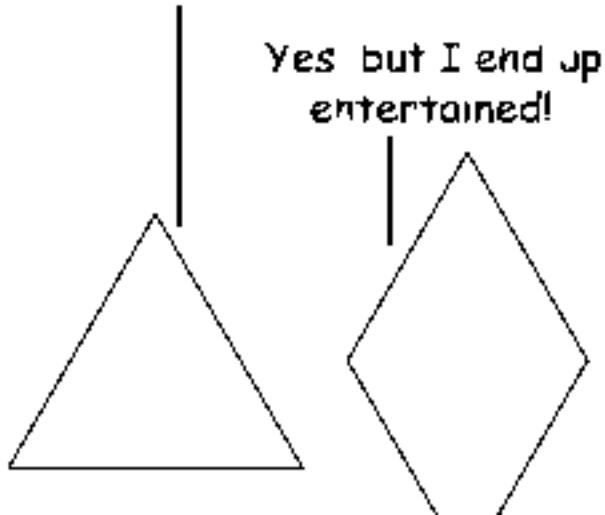
And that brings me to my current journey. While I was dead, I saw an ancient electric peppermill, and it was very important for some reason. It somehow holds the key to the future of our species.... Now that I have been revived by the Dragon Circles, I intend to claim that peppermill, and learn what secret it holds.

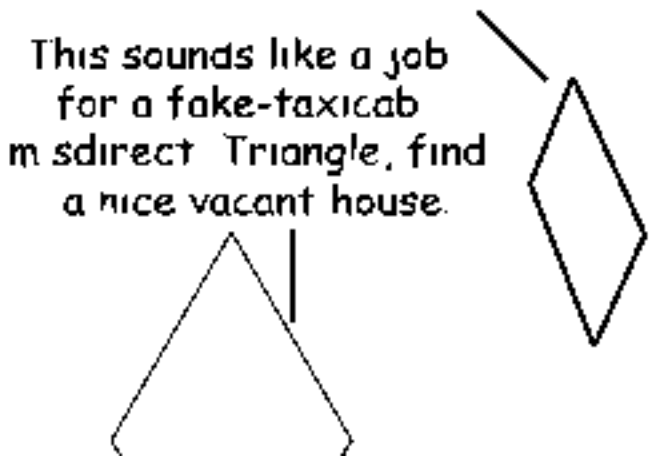
If you find this message, and I have not returned from the Cave of Eternal Caveyness, please bring this recording to the offices of Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants. They will know what to do with it.

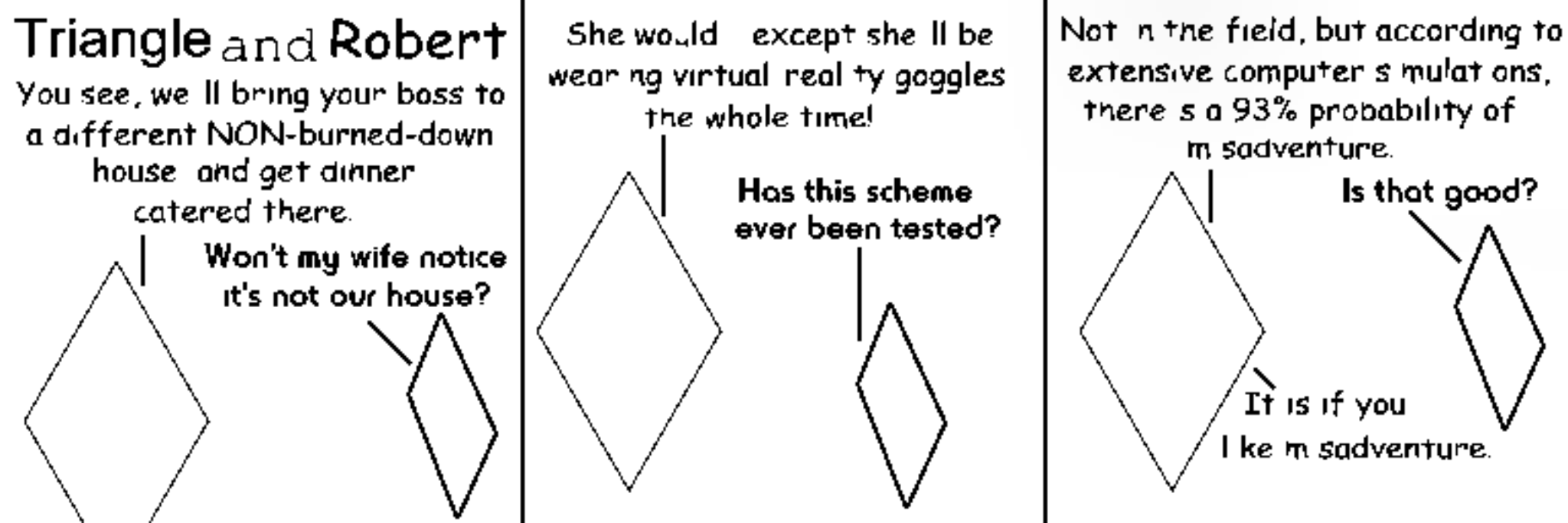


Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
You see, we ll bring your boss to a different NON-burned-down house and get dinner catered there.
Won't my wife notice it's not our house?
She would except she ll be wear ng virtual real ty goggles the whole time!
Has this scheme ever been tested?
Not n the field, but according to extensive computer s mulat ons, there s a 93% probability of m sadventure.
Is that good?
It is if you l ke m sadventure.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

So it all worked out. Your wife's boss was too busy with the mutant insects to notice the house was burned down, your wife got her promotion, and the evil supercomputer is being dealt with by local authorities.

Yes, but...

But what?

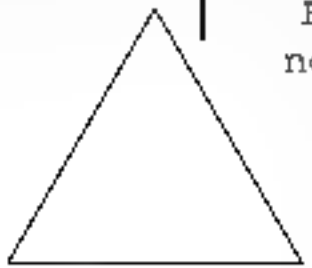
Who's going to reattach my lower vertex!?!

Hahaha. All's well that ends well!

You said it, Cartoonist. You said it.

Huh?

Why not leave? You can't draw, your presence on this world has only complicated things, and you've admitted yourself that you're a lousy cartoonist. We'd get along better without you



But I have nowhere else to go.

Triangle and Robert

You can write, sort of! Go write a book! Don't waste yourself on a comic strip!

A book? With my attention span?

Do SOMETHING! Work on a computer game! Learn how to play the accordion again! Do something you can actually be GOOD at!

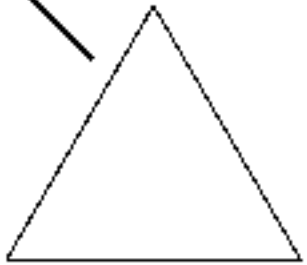
This is what I'm good at. Not drawing things is my greatest skill.

You can't be serious.

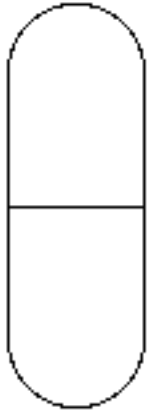
Triangle and Robert

There is a certain art
t rct drawing things

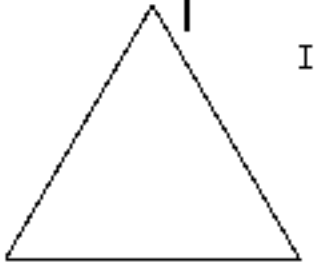
No there isn't



Hi I m Prozac the Bear!

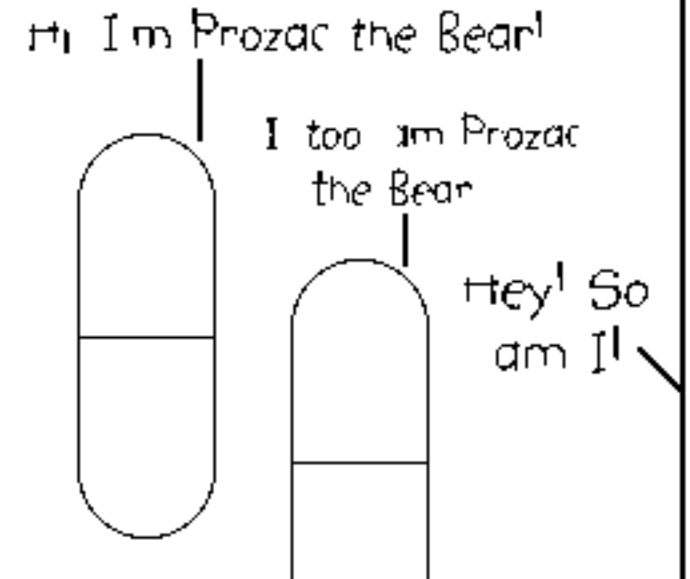


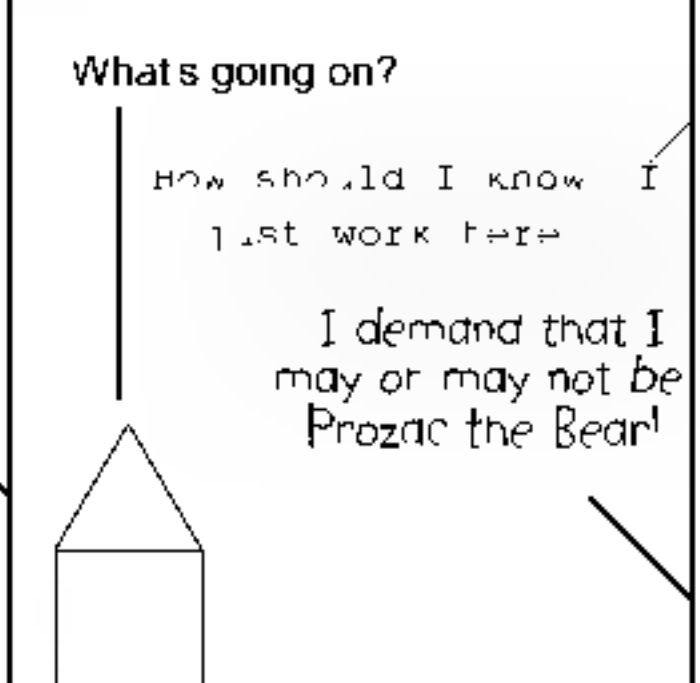
What was that for?

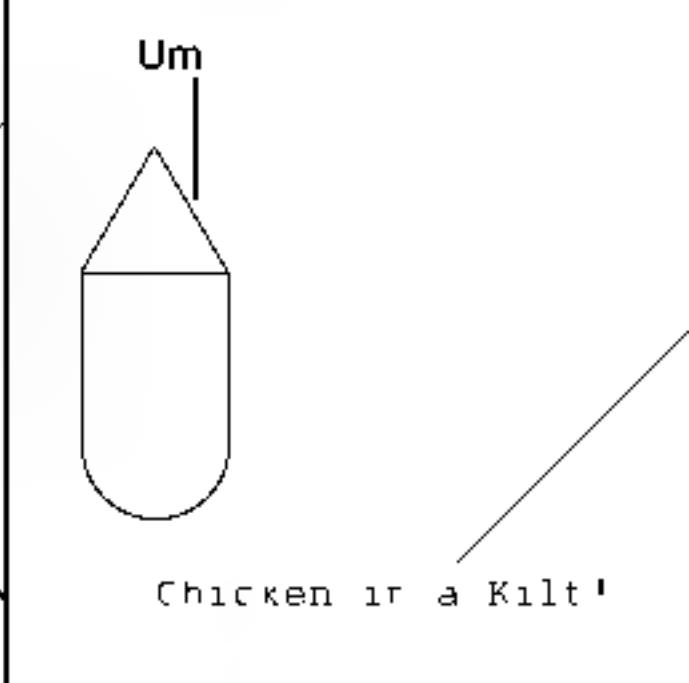


I panicked

Triangle and Robert





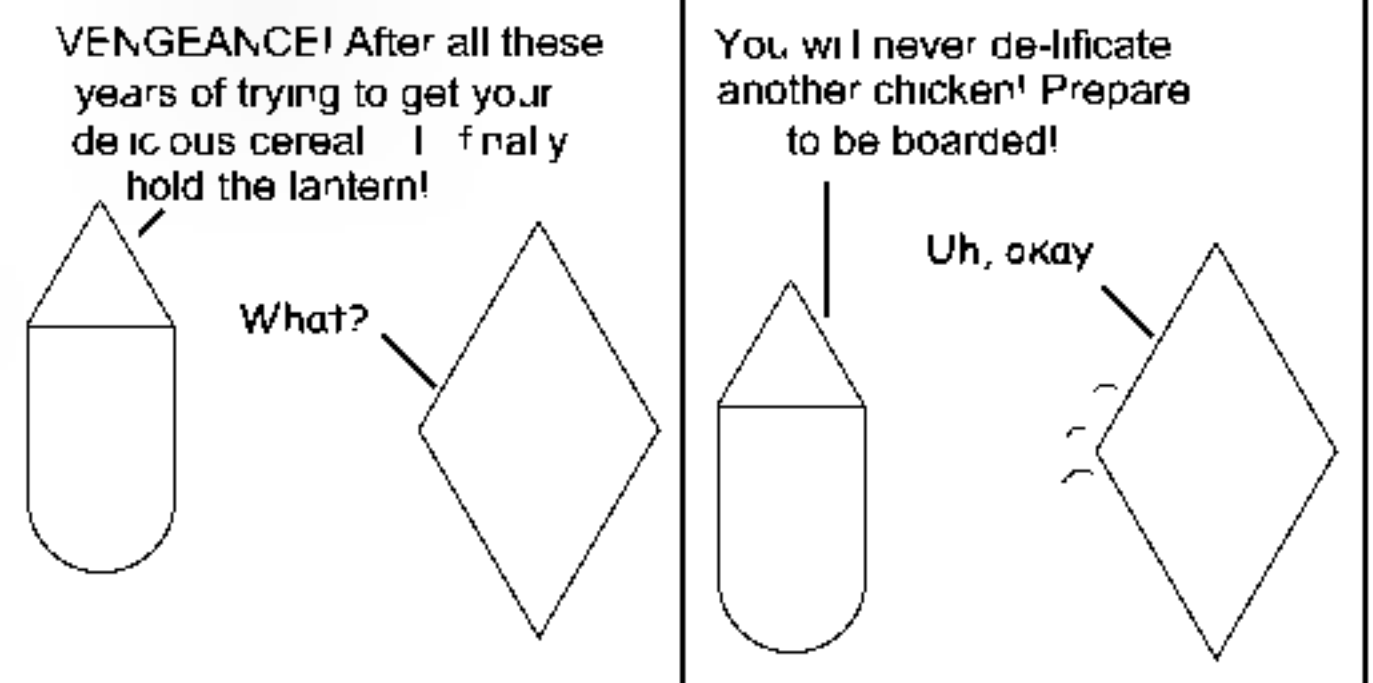


Triangle and Robert

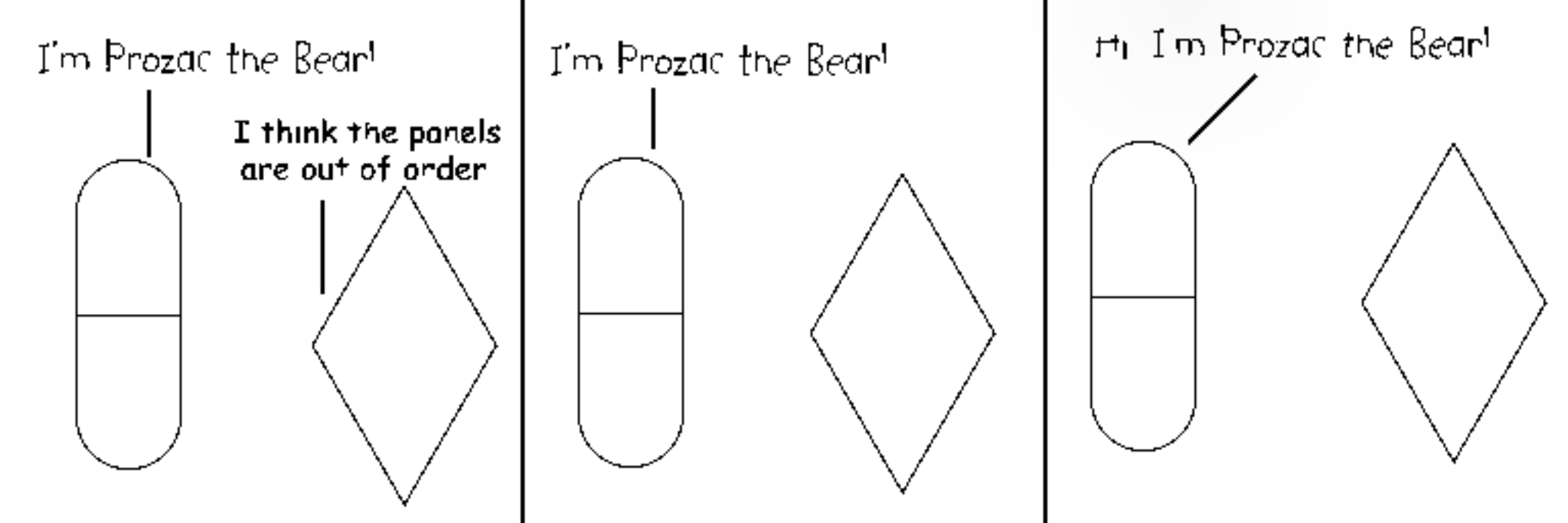
Trillions of readers have written, e-mailed, called, and dreamsent asking what would happen if the Cartoonist were to, for some reason, go insane

Well, it's **NOT GOING TO HAPPEN**, okay. But I'll tell you this much: if it did happen, which it's **NOT GOING TO**, the result could be summarized in three words

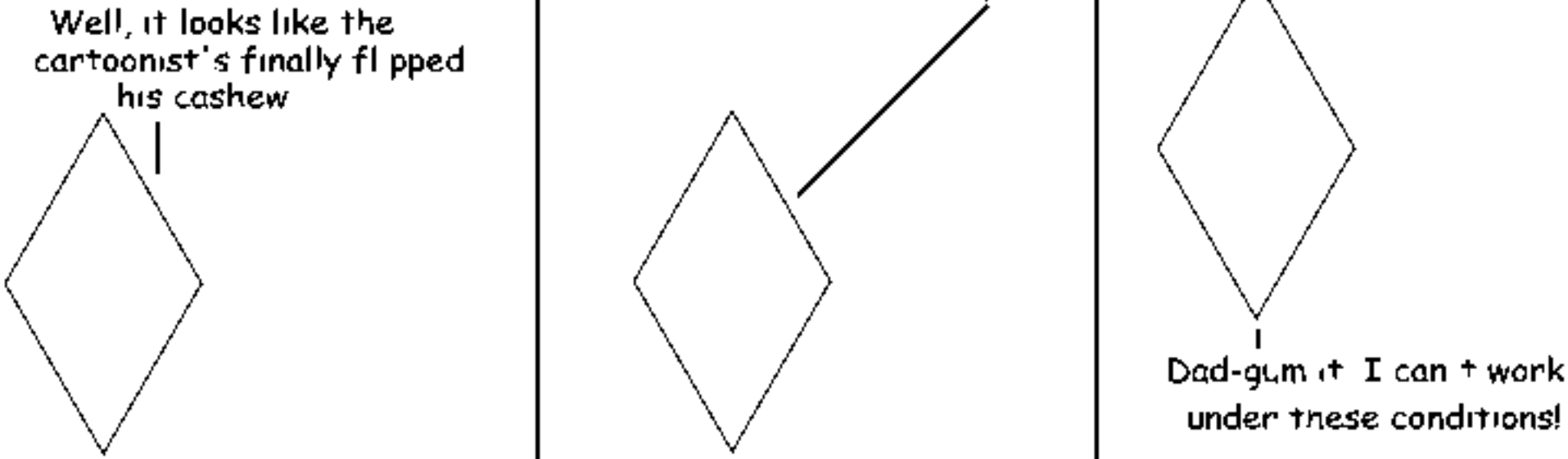
Semi permanent flapjack exhibit

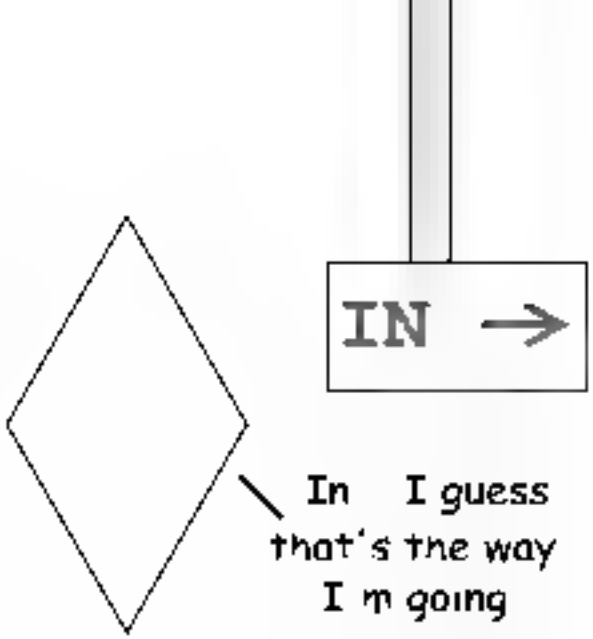

VENGEANCE! After all these years of trying to get your delicious cereal I finally hold the lantern!
What?
You will never de-lificate another chicken! Prepare to be boarded!
Uh, okay

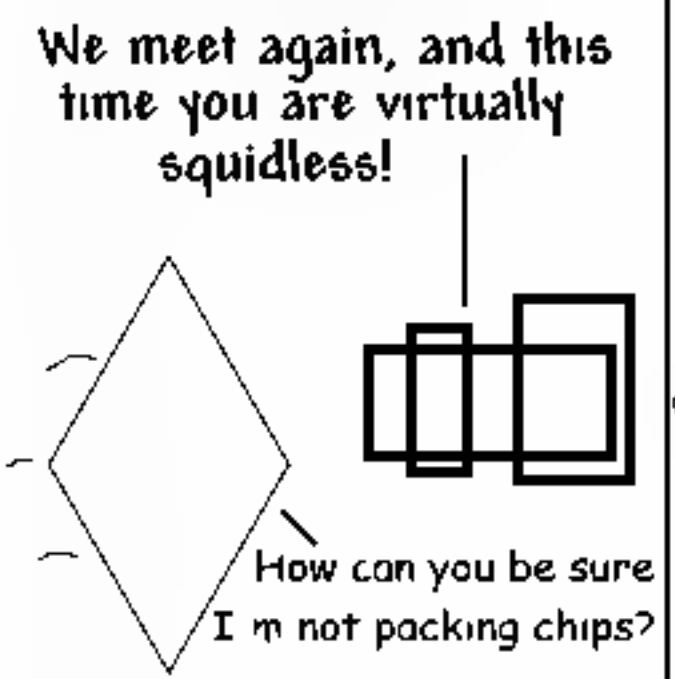
meanwhile

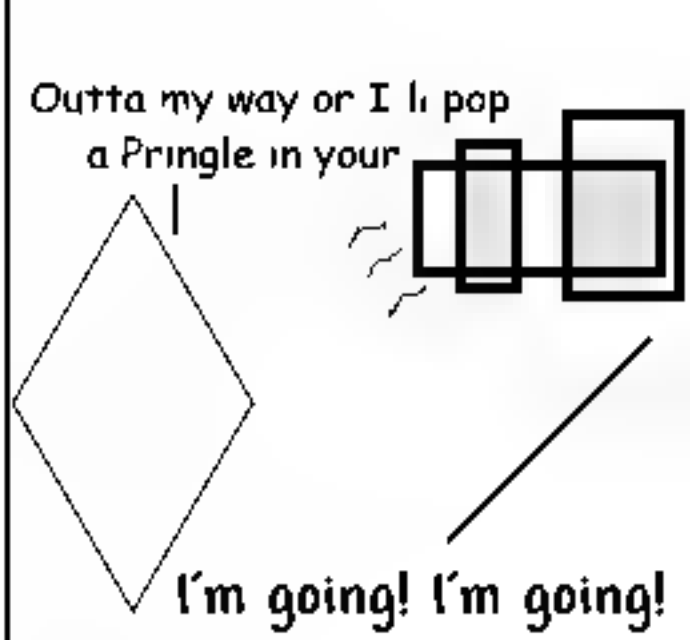

I'm Prozac the Bear!
I think the panels are out of order
I'm Prozac the Bear!
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!

Triangle and Robert



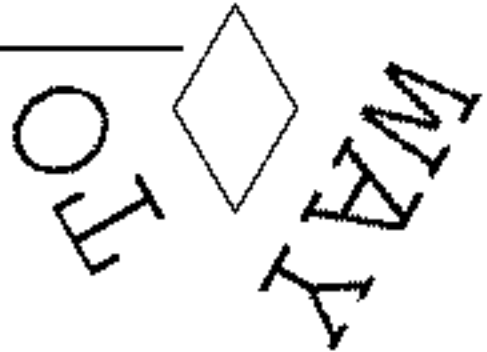

IN →
In I guess that's the way I m going


We meet again, and this time you are virtually squidless!
How can you be sure I m not packing chips?

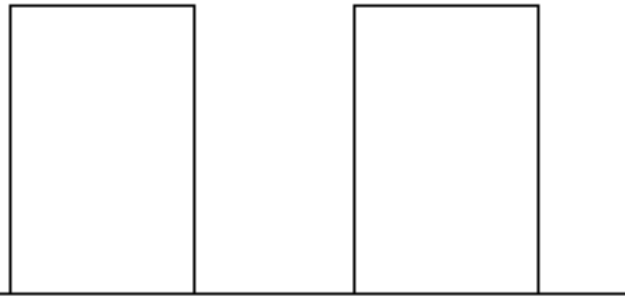

Outta my way or I l pop a Pringle in your
I'm going! I'm going!

The gratu tous attempts at surrealism are coming closer together

THIS



I must be getting close to well, something or other



Puzzle time!

Triangle and Robert

One of us always tells the truth

And one of us always lies

This is familiar

Ask us a question

Then choose a door

If one of you always lies, then it can't be the case that one of always tells the truth AND one of you always lies, since that would mean you were both telling the truth

Jm. okay

I guess that makes sense

You can't BOTH always lie, because if you did it would also be true that ONE of you always lies, and that would mean one of you told the truth

Triangle and Robert

Get on with it

Ask a question

Obviously, you can t both always tell the truth Thus, the only remaining conclusion is that at least one of you SOMETIMES l es, in which case I can derive no useful information from you

You're thinking about this too hard

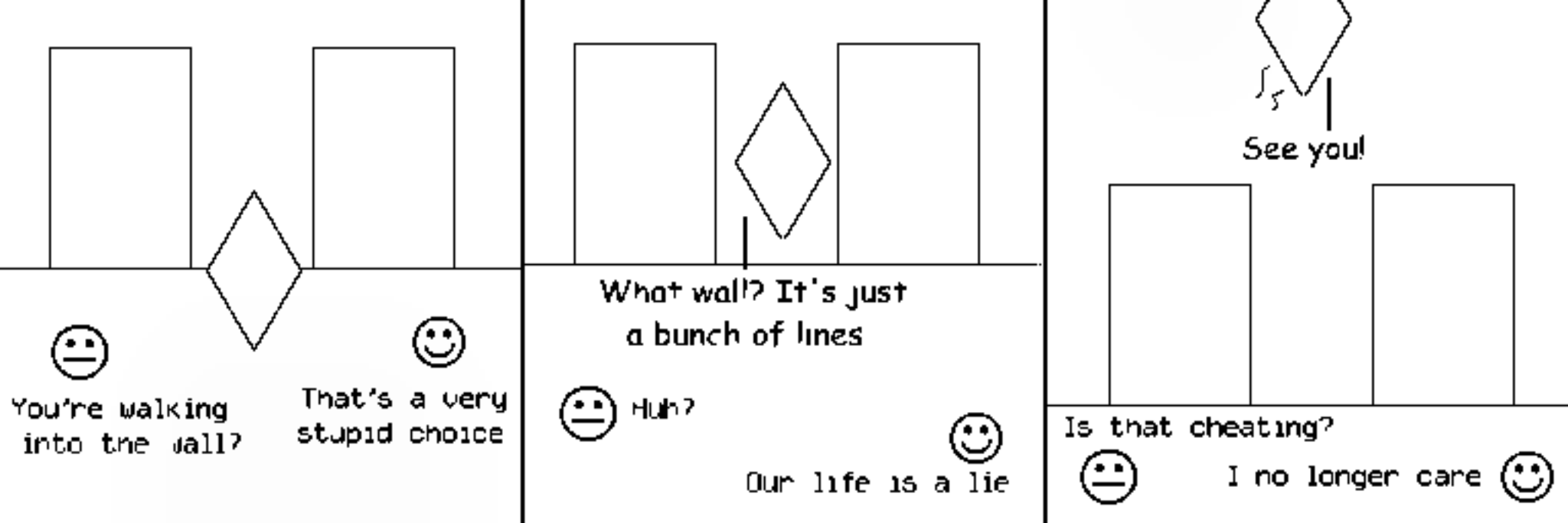
Get on with it

Furthermore, upon accepting the principle that one of you lies sometimes, but not always, I am without means to discern whether or not this is in fact the case for BOTH of you

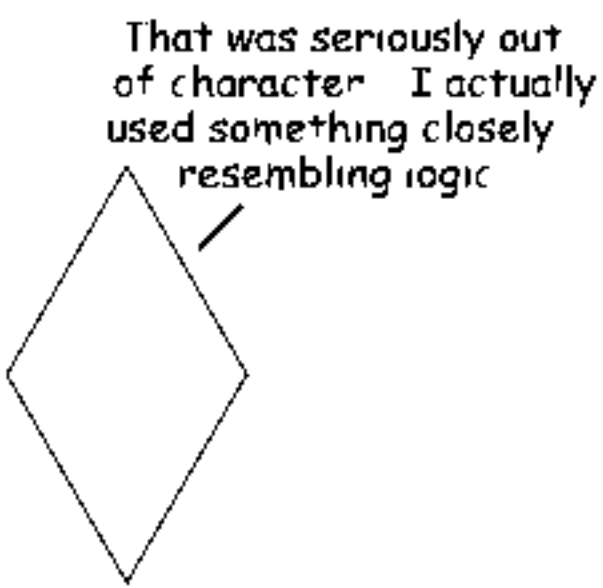
Look It's very simple

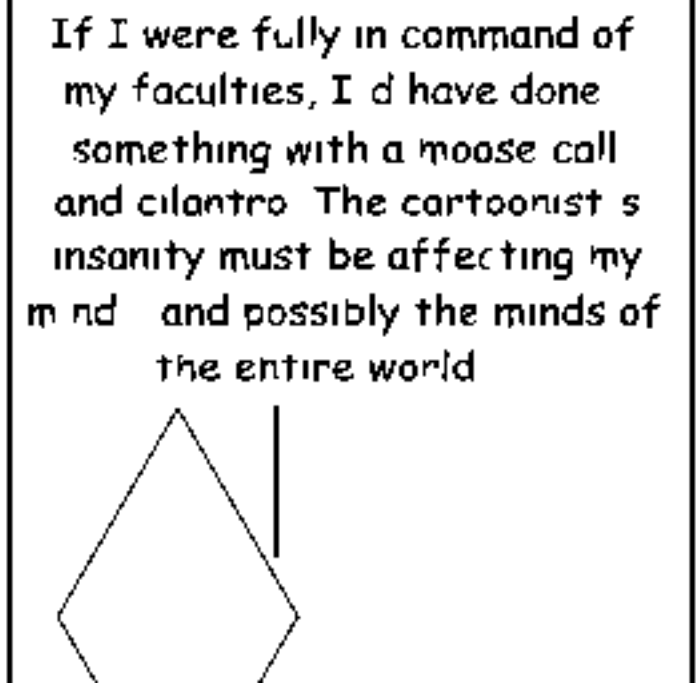
You ask a question, then you choose a door

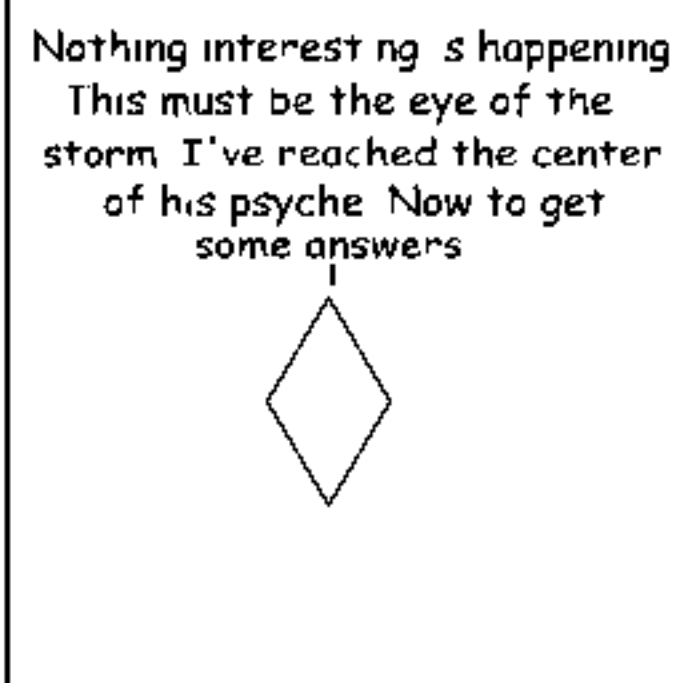
Okay, I ve made my choice


You're walking into the wall?
That's a very stupid choice
What wall? It's just a bunch of lines
Huh?
Our life is a lie
See you!
Is that cheating?
I no longer care

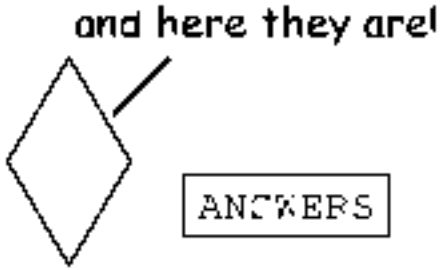
Triangle and Robert

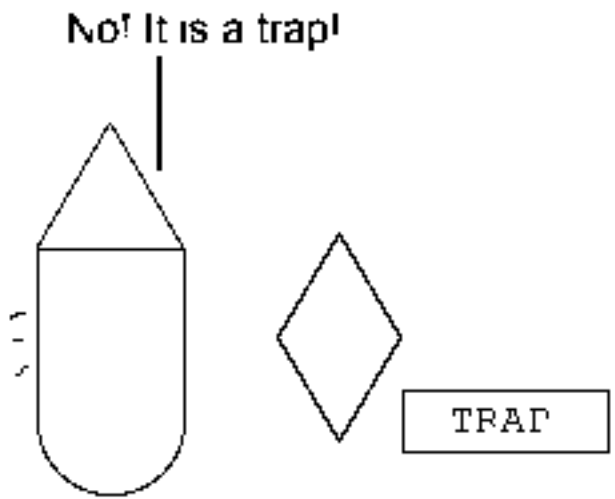


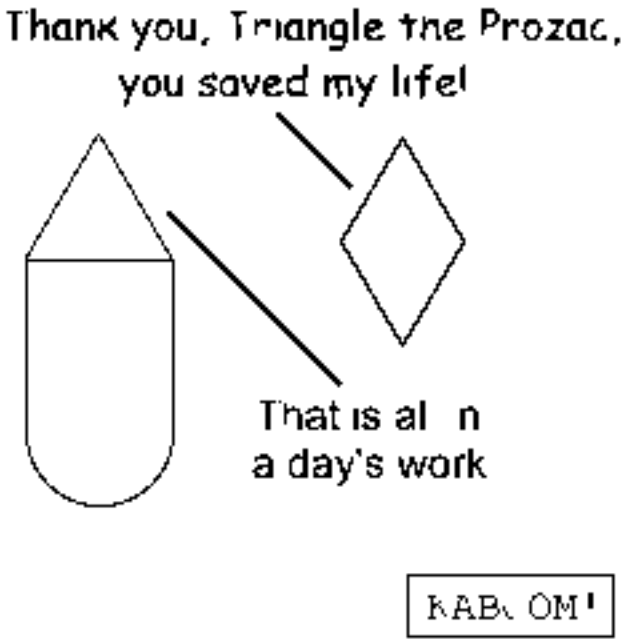




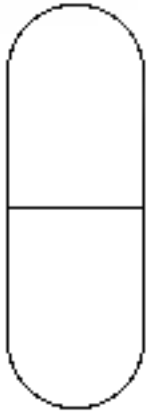
Triangle and Robert







Hi! It's Euclid's Postulates!



Collect them all!

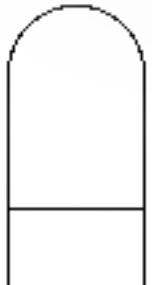
POSTULATE #1

in a series of 5:

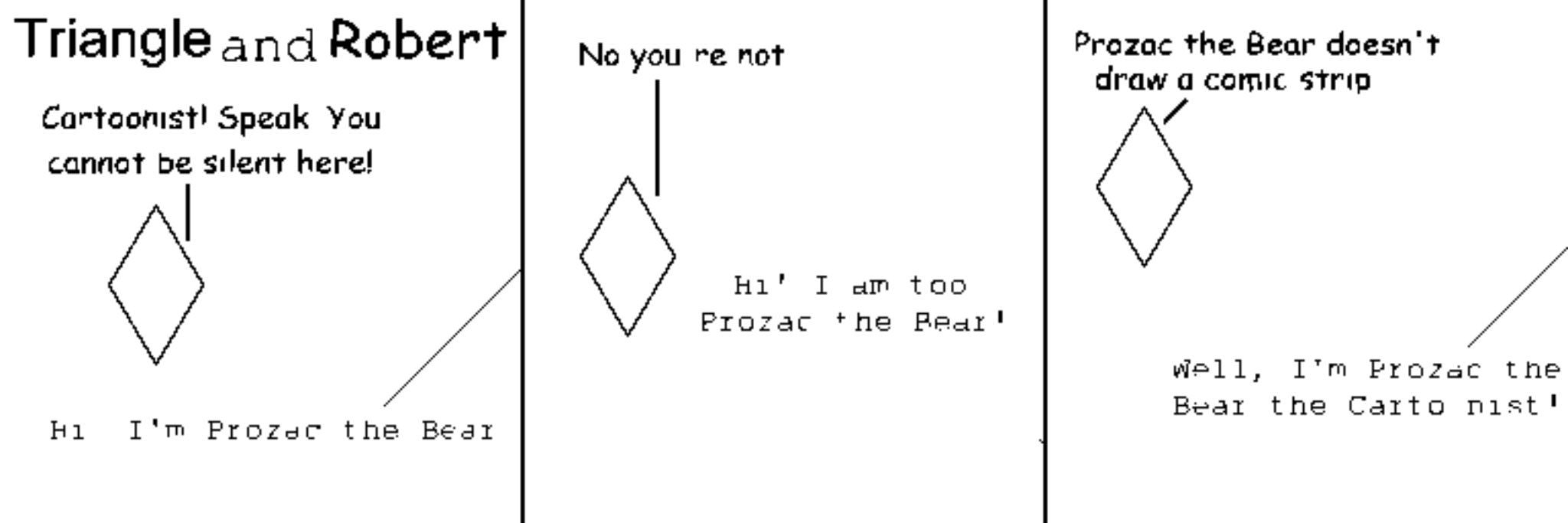
Let the following be postulated:
To draw a straight line from any point to any point.

This is the most elementary straightedge construct on

Euclid also uses the assumption that the line thus constructed is unique, though he does not explicitly state such.

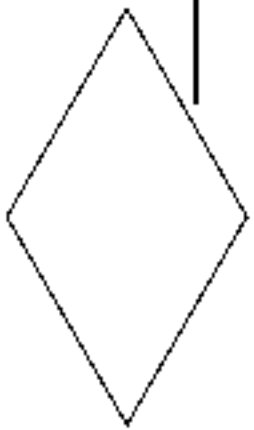


Triangle and Robert



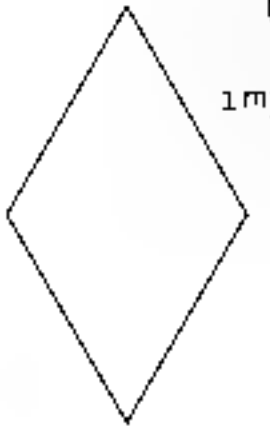
Triangle and Robert

Not being able to draw s
no reason to go nsane



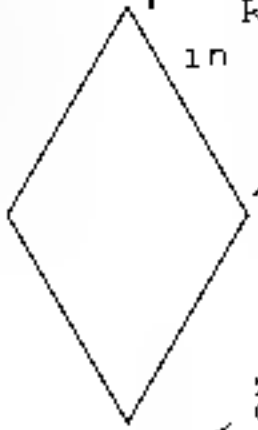
S.re it is

What d d you just say?



Ur. fear ny
fr.zen beas,
improper mongrel'

No, I m pretty sure you
said "Sure it is"



Kan h ah y, reel
in the squid candy'

You re faking it,
aren t you

No

Triangle and Robert

Oh good, the rain of appliances has stopped. (It's a well-known fact that sheep hate having appliances dropped on them.)

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The Cartoonist must be recovering his sanity. NOW is the time to STRIKE!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa?

I mean in the sense of "to attack", not "to refuse as a group to perform labor".

Baa

Yeah, I should have been less ambiguous.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Information is power. As you know, Cube seeks a peppermill of great knowledge. We must seize that peppermill.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa!

Correct. Which is precisely why we will let Cube reach the cave before we attack. Our air-ground forces will divide into three flocks. Flock A will attack Cube directly. Flock B will secure the surrounding area and prevent aid from reaching Cube. Flock C will enter the cave and acquire the peppermill.

Baa!

No, he can't. Thus, all combat sheep will carry communicators enabling them to narrate the battle. The Cartoonist's laziness will not stop my plan.

Baa!

Baa.

Baa!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Baa!

Telepathy won't work at this range. Engaging translator.

SHEEPCOM BASE UNIT

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

We are over baa! We put Cube's ETA at five days, plus or minus baa! Shall we land?

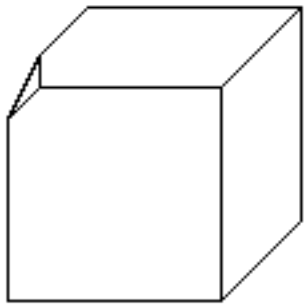
Negative. Go to hover mode. Establish aerial base formation. Be prepared to drop at any moment.

There's no way he'll get here any sooner than baa. We could save fuel baa!

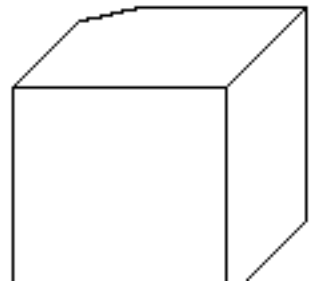
Cube may surprise you. Stay in the air. Establish cloud cover as soon as possible. Make no assumptions.

Triangle and Robert

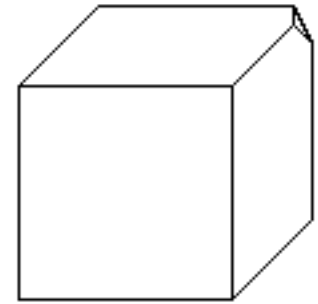
Yeah, my wound's not pretty, but you should see what I did to the oblong that gave it to me.



I haven't encountered that dragony thing yet. I hope I don't. I saw a flock of flying creatures high in the air yesterday; they're gone now. Hopefully those were our "dragons".



It would have been nice to use some sort of vehicle, but I had to cross the Speckled Barrier at Pedestrians' Crossing. Still, I've hiked further than this.



Euclid's Postulates

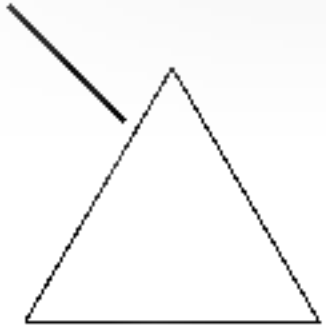
Collect them all

POSTULATE #2

in a series of 5:

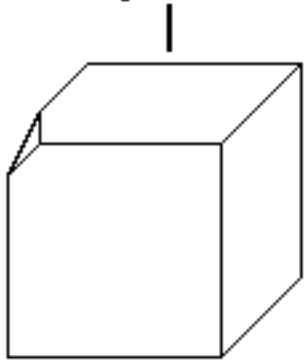
Let the following be postulated:
To produce a finite straight line continously in a straight line.

This is another elementary straightedge construction
In modern geometry, what Euclid termed a "finite straight line" is called a segment.
Again, Euclid implicitly assumes the uniqueness of this construction

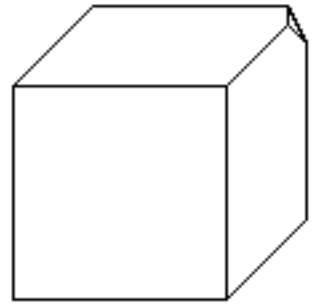


Triangle and Robert

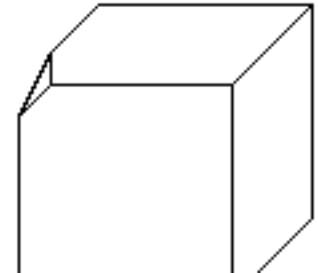
It's hard to believe that terrain so featureless can be so difficult. The path to the cave is getting harder. I keep almost dying.



I think the loneliness might be getting to me. Perhaps I should have taken the rhombus along. The journey is so monotonous.



I'm used to the feeling that I'm being watched. I've had that feeling even before the comic strip. Now, though, I have a feeling that I'm being watched by armed livestock. Odds are it's foreshadowing. I could use the excitement.



Triangle and Robert

Baa nearing drop point. We are ready to baa in baa. Baa for your orders, baa.

SHEEPCOM BASE UNIT

Speak more clearly. The translator is having trouble keeping up.

Cube is encamped for the night. He will reach the Cave of Eternal Caveyness in the morning, barring any accidents.

Ensure his safety until he opens the cave. I don't want the somewhat dragon-like entities getting him.

Some of us are nervous. We've seen him fight.

You should be nervous. He's a protagonist. You outnumber him enough, though; the peppermill will be mine.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC

Triangle and Robert

SHEEPCOM BASE UNIT

Baa! Cube has opened the cave. Ironically, the keyword was "baa".

Your job isn't to tell me what's ironic. Narrate the battle.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

SHEEPCOM BASE UNIT

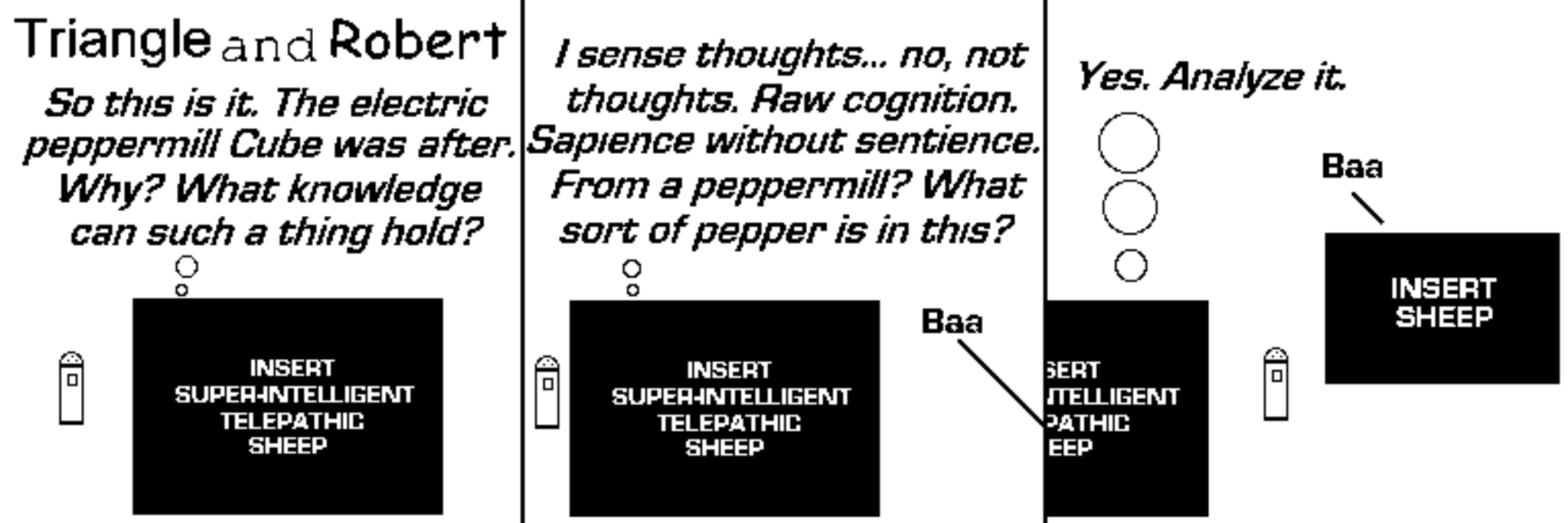
Flock C has acquired the peppermill! Flock A is fighting Cube to a standoff! Flock B is baa! Did you get that? Baa!

Repeat flock B status.

Flock B has escorted Flock C to the airbase! We have the baa! Repeat, we have the peppermill!

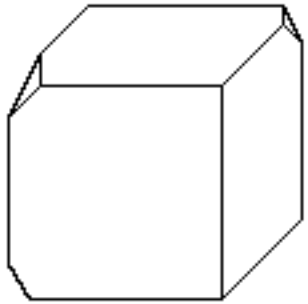
Withdraw flock A and return home. Make sure Cube stays on the ground.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP


Triangle and Robert
So this is it. The electric peppermill Cube was after. Why? What knowledge can such a thing hold?
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
I sense thoughts... no, not thoughts. Raw cognition. Sapience without sentience. From a peppermill? What sort of pepper is in this?
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Baa
Yes. Analyze it.
Baa
INSERT SHEEP

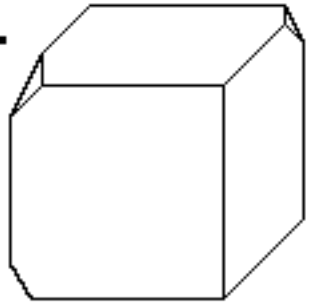
Triangle and Robert

Sheep... they rushed me... took the peppermill... jetpacked away... I'm hurt bad.... far from civilization... no transportation...



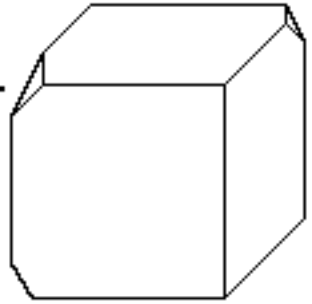
A wounded polygon and so alone too.

Wonderful.



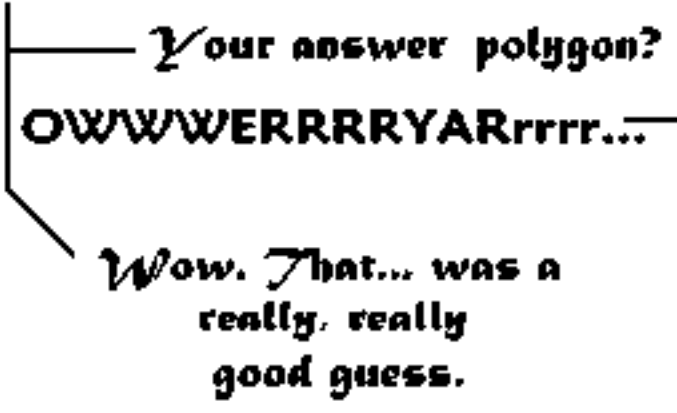
I have the power to heal you and you interest me. Let us play a game.

I can't feel — my vertices.



Triangle and Robert

OWWWERRRRYARrrrr...



Baa

Collect them all!

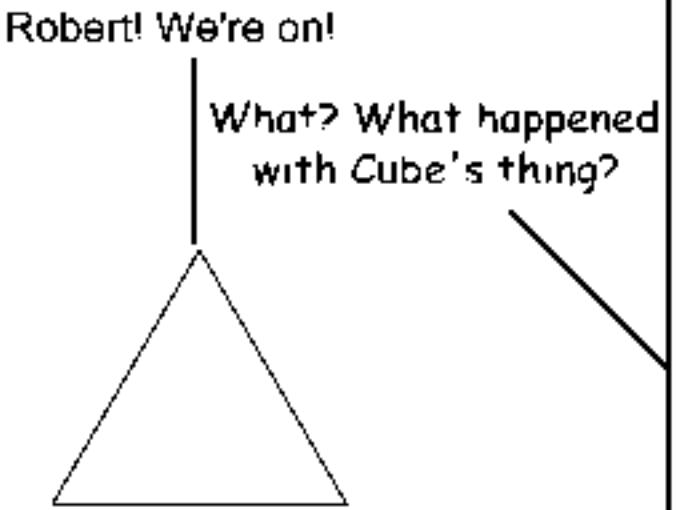
POSTULATE #3

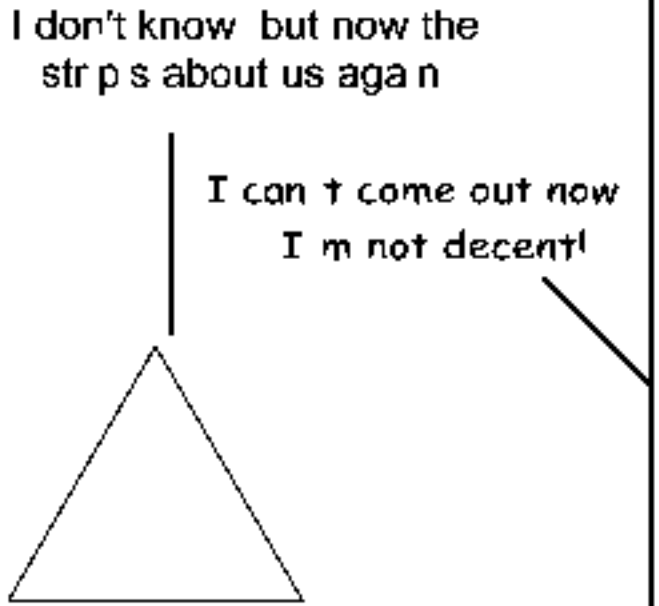
in a series of 5:

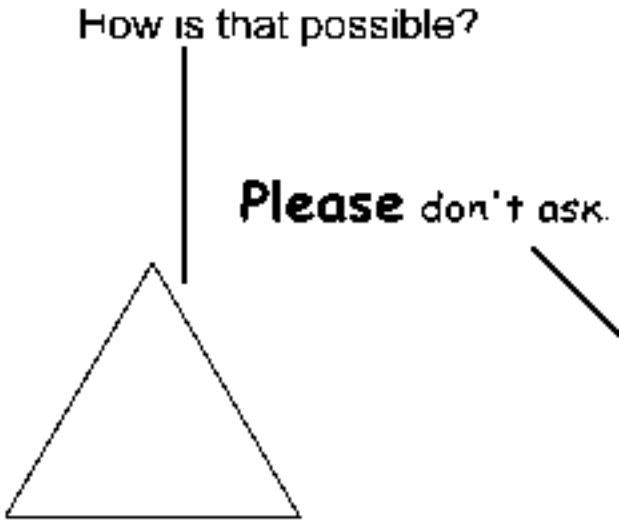
Let the following be postulated:
To construct a circle with any center and radius.

Euclid's sole elementary compass construction, this postulate experienced a brief resurgence of popularity in the seventies, hosting a short-lived variety show in the autumn of 1974.

Triangle and Robert

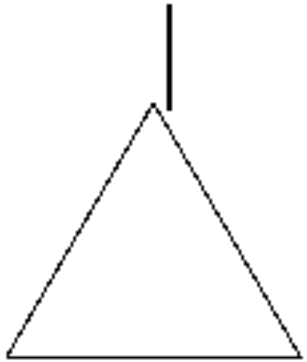




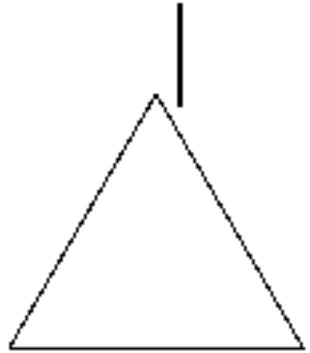


Triangle and Robert

While Robert gets ready in some unexplained fashion I'm supposed to provide filler

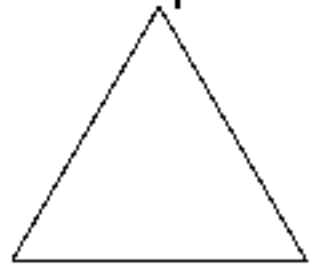


I guess now would be as good a time as any to demonstrate some of my culinary training in a series of action poses



You're taunting me

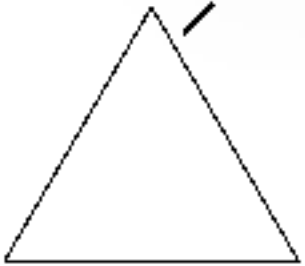
You bet



Triangle and Robert

So filler filler maybe I should recite a recipe

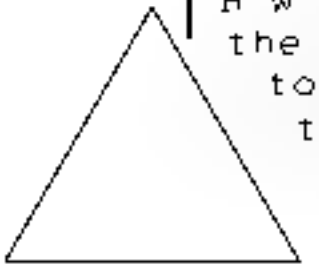
Sounds easy to draw you mean



Triangle's Curly Pentagonal Crisps

4 cups powdered dairy tetrahedron
2 7 rods of grey pixels
1 packet high-viscosity couscous
20° angles to taste

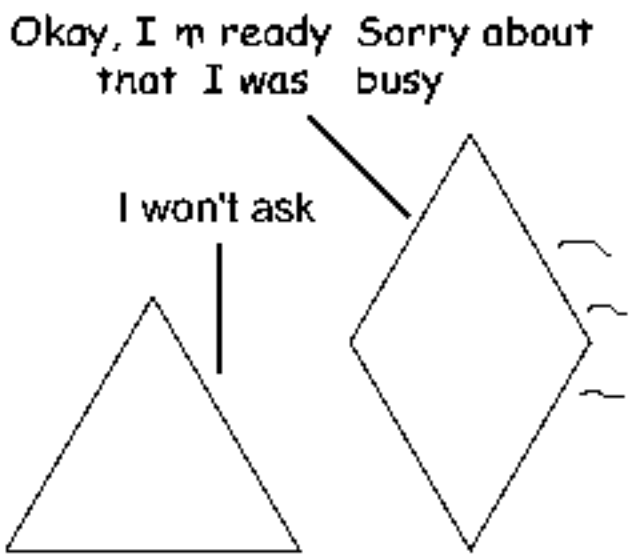
How the helix are the readers going to get any of this stuff

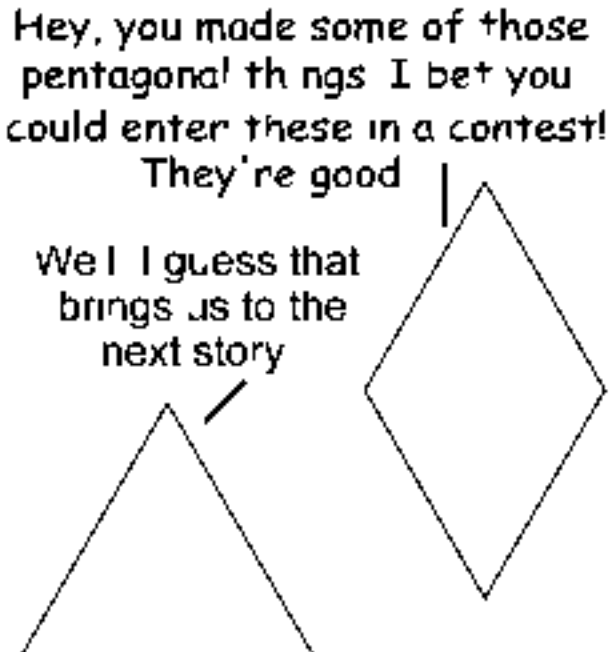


That's their problem Separate pixels into a rectangular saucepan Steam at low heat until #C0C0C0 Add tetrahedron powder slowly stirring thoroughly Once semi-firm sprinkle couscous around edges Press Sprinkle on angles if desired then chill for 34 minutes (do not expose to light) Cut and serve immediately Serves 5

Okay, uh, thanks.

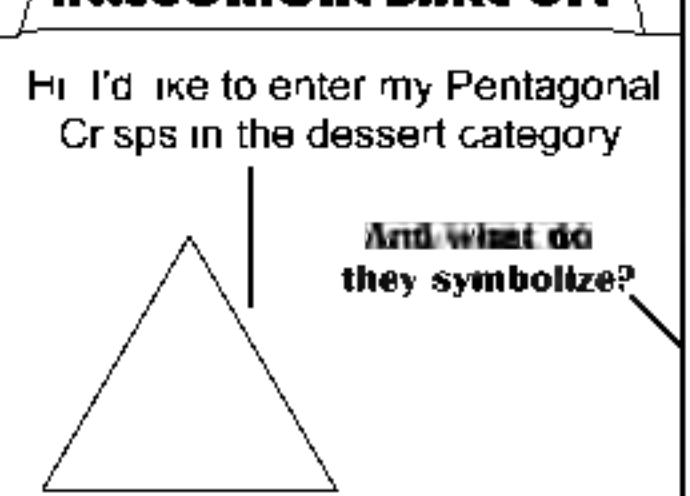
Triangle and Robert

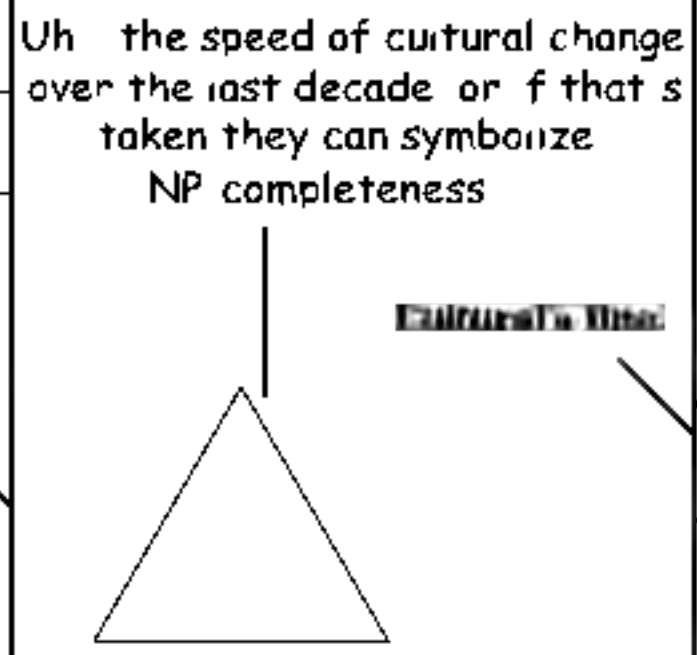


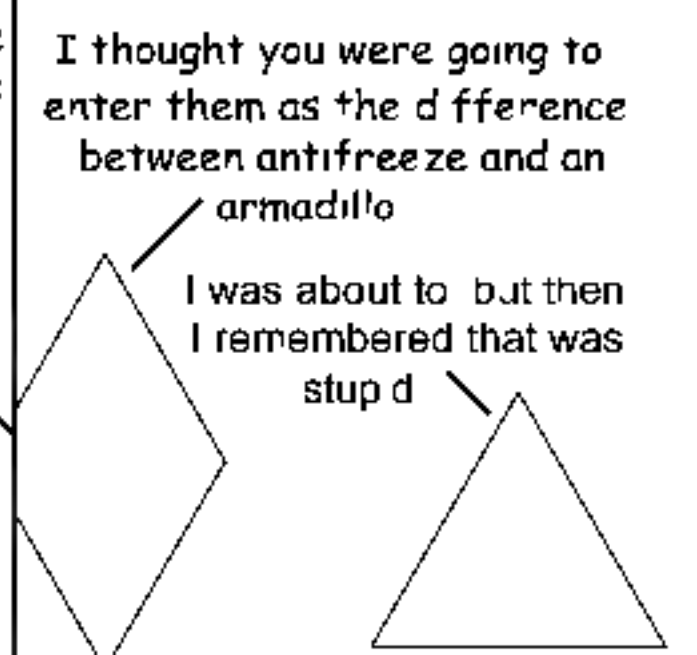


Triangle and Robert

ALLEGORICAL BAKE-OFF

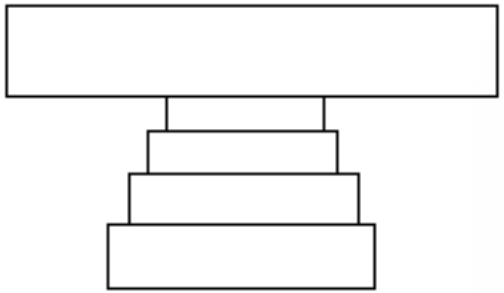






Triangle and Robert

— The first entry in the dessert category is this chocolate layer cake, symbolizing distribution of wealth. Judges?



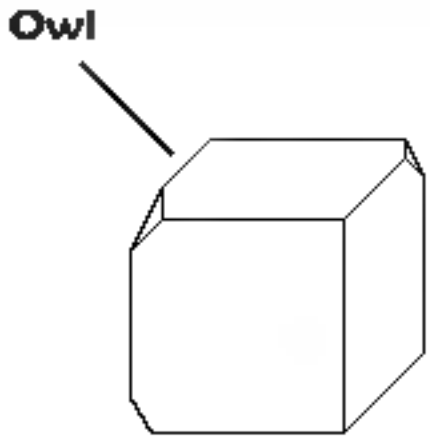
It would get better marks if these seeds of its own destruction didn't keep getting caught in my teeth. I give it a six.

The system just doesn't work. It's a three and that's only because of the extra long cylinders of the ring.

Efficient, in a brutal way. The surprising thing about it is its subtlety. An eight.

It tastes really yummy! I give it a ten!

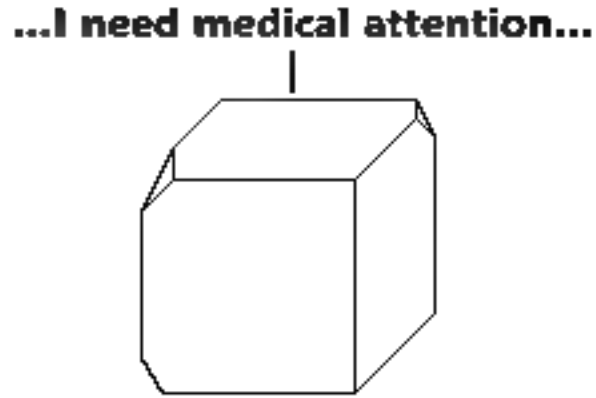
Euclid's Postulates



POSTULATE #4

in a series of 5:

Let the following
be postulated:
That all right angles
equal one another.



Triangle and Robert

Next: these fortune cookies, symbolizing quantum indeterminacy.

I don't know how many I've eaten, but I know I ate them quickly. They're a ten for me.

I give them a nine even though I'm not sure the fortunes were actually in the cookies before I opened them

The recipe's a bunch of mystical gobbledygook, but I can't argue with the results. A nine.

Paper tastes funny. I only liked the cookie part. I give it a seven

Triangle and Robert

Next entry: a gelatin-and-sushi construct symbolizing Pythagoras's later, less mathematical works.

The gelatin makes sense, but to go from there to sushi is a crime against logic. I give it a 2.

I'm not really familiar with Pythagoras, but this does not inspire me to learn more
A four

Zero. Can I throw up now?

Why isn't the fishie moving?

Triangle and Robert

These curly pentagonal crisps are the next entry in the dessert category. They represent the speed of cultural change over the past decade.

I consumed a lot, but I still feel empty inside. That means plenty of room for more! A nine.

I'm not sure if they're a genuinely new concept or an inevitable incremental improvement, but they're a definite ten

Distinctly vague, yet with a vague sense of. . uh . something distinct... oh, whatever. I enjoyed eating them; they're a ten.

The pointy bits hurt, but they sure are yummy. I'll give this entry a six.

Triangle and Robert

The final dessert entry is this error diffused circle, representing the difficulty of fairly compensating intellectual and creative work in a capitalist system.

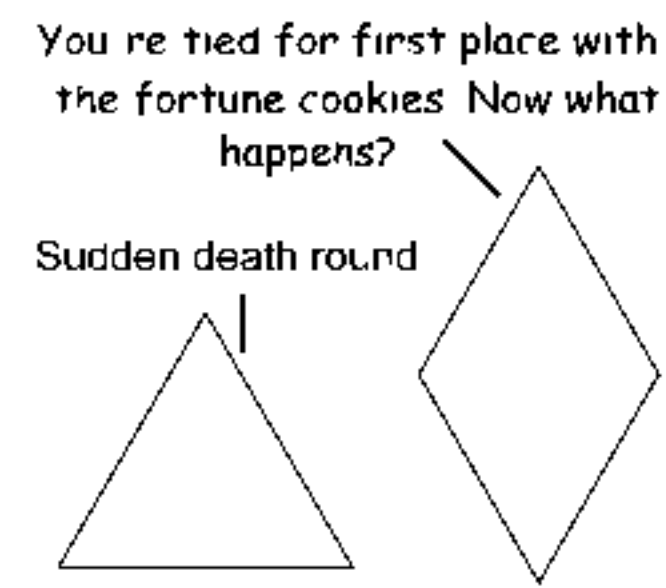
This is the blandest error diffusion I've ever tasted. It's like it was sitting on a shelf for fourteen years. I'm giving it a zero.

t's not a bad dessert, but I don't get the metaphor What was it supposed to mean again? Something about patent law? 'll give it a five

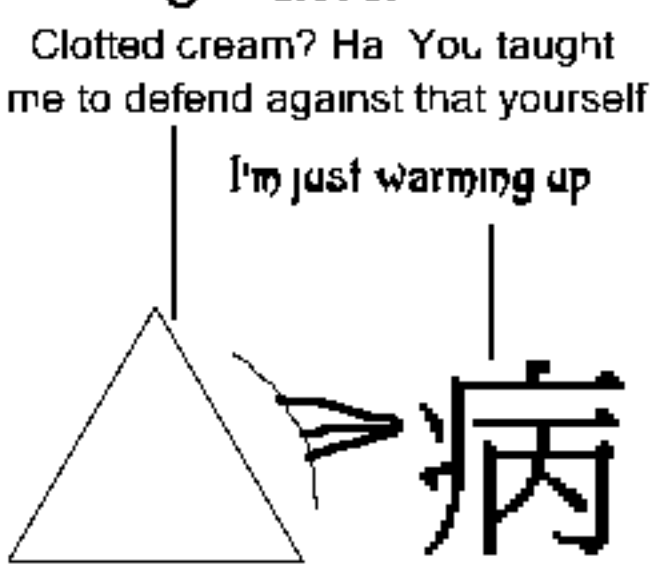
It ra ses nteresting quest ons but instead of attempting to answer them it ust sits in my stomach Ike a brick. I give it a 6

It's like a Sunday treat on Thursday! Totally a ten

Triangle and Robert

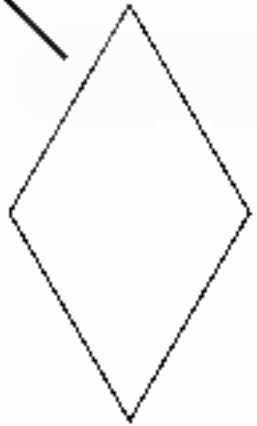


Triangle and Robert



Euclid's Postulates

Collect them all!



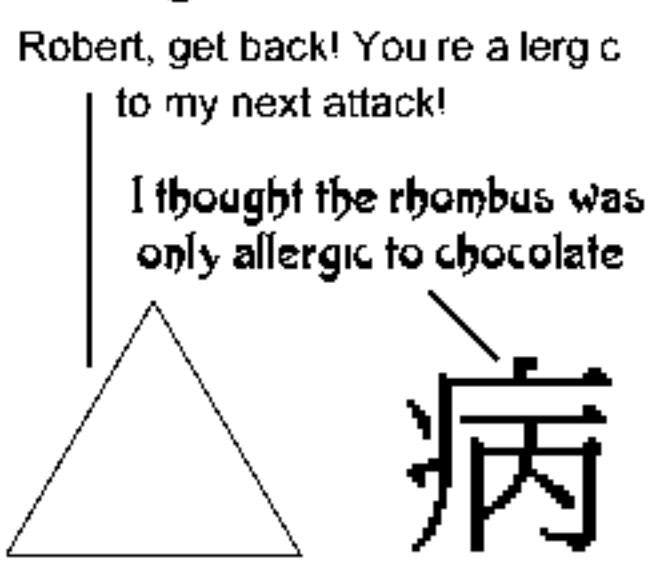
POSTULATE #5

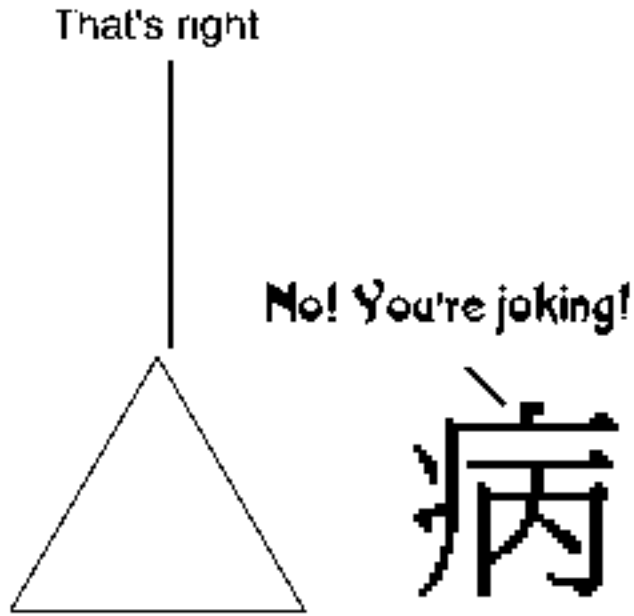
in a series of 5:

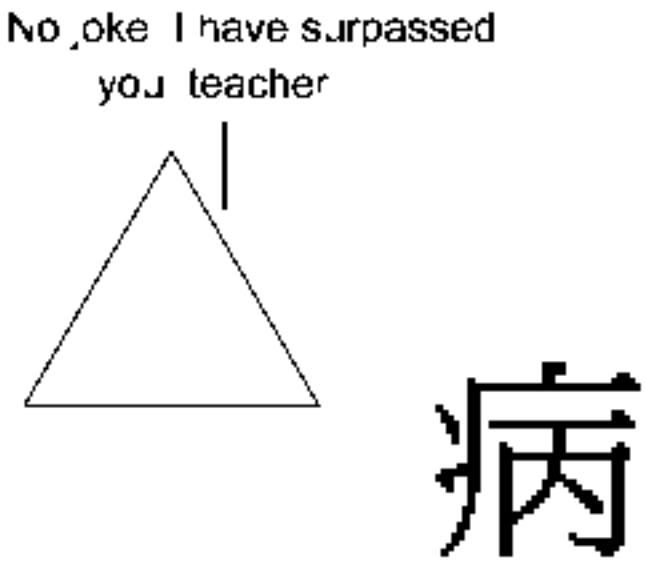
Let the following
be postulated
That, if a straight line falling on
two straight lines makes the
interior angles on the same side
less than two right angles, the two
straight lines, if produced
indefinitely, meet on that side on
which are the angles less than the
two right angles

This postulate, also known as the Parallel Postulate, is by far the most controversial of Euclid's original five. Many attempts were made to remove it from Euclidean geometry, eventually resulting in the formation of the so-called "elliptical" and "hyperbolic" geometries. Despite this treatment, the Parallel Postulate is not bitter and still makes public appearances

Triangle and Robert







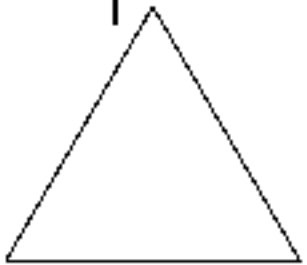
Triangle and Robert

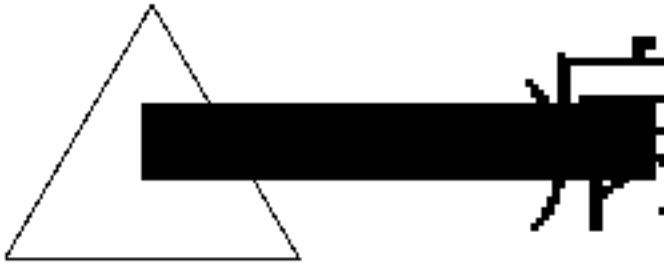
It appears that Triangle is going to attempt a flavor blast... but where are his ingredients? I can see chocolate... and that's all. This CAN'T be what it looks like, it must be some sort of trick.

Prepare yourself for a blast of

PURE CHOCOLATE!

What? That's impossible





This can't be happening... but it is! Overturning everything we thought we knew about cuisine, this equilateral triangle has successfully used pure, full-strength chocolate!

Triangle and Robert

Chocolate... I now understand what the Food Pyramid was saying Triangle! If you ever meet him again, give him my apologies

病

Triangle? Is he ?

He ll live

fats oils... sweets

病

Rest now Talk when you get your strength back

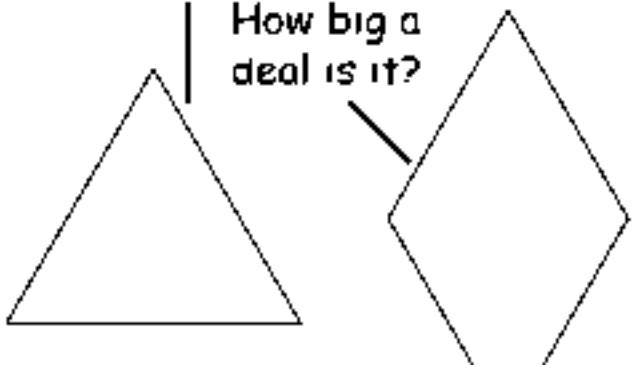
so so very bitter

病

Triangle and Robert

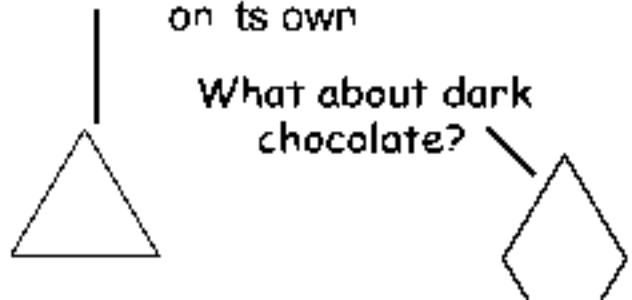
I actually did it Pure chocolate
I actua ly created a flavor blast
of pure chocolate It s only real y
h tting me now

How big a
deal is it?



Huge The cu sine-magic is based
around the four food groups meat
da ry vegetable and gra n
Before today chocolate was a
secondary ngredient a flavoring
agent there was always milk or
butter or cream never chocolate
on ts own

What about dark
chocolate?



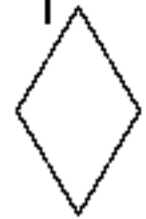
Sweetened Not the
same th ng

Ined ble

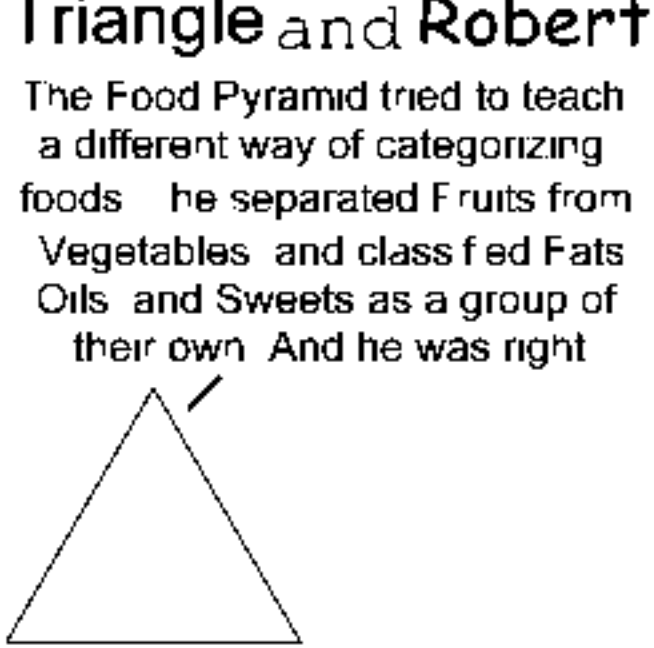
Carob s another
thing entire y

Cocoa powder?

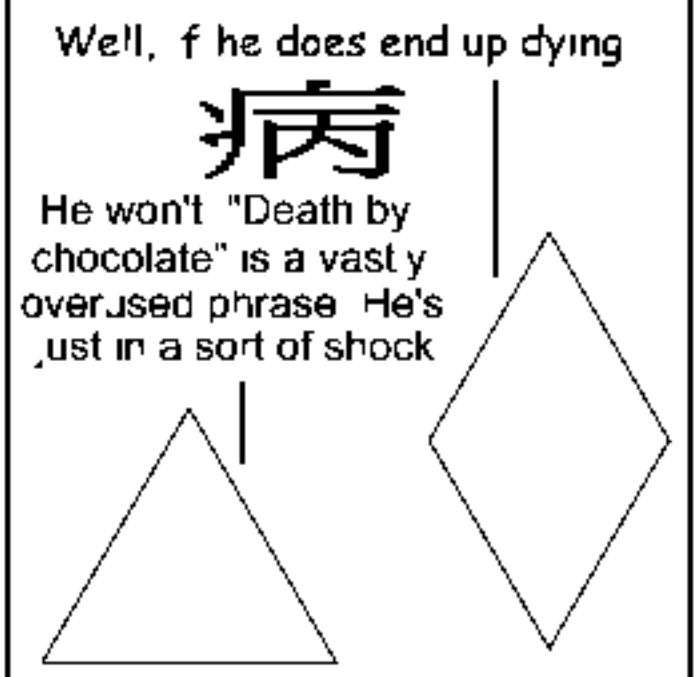
Carob?



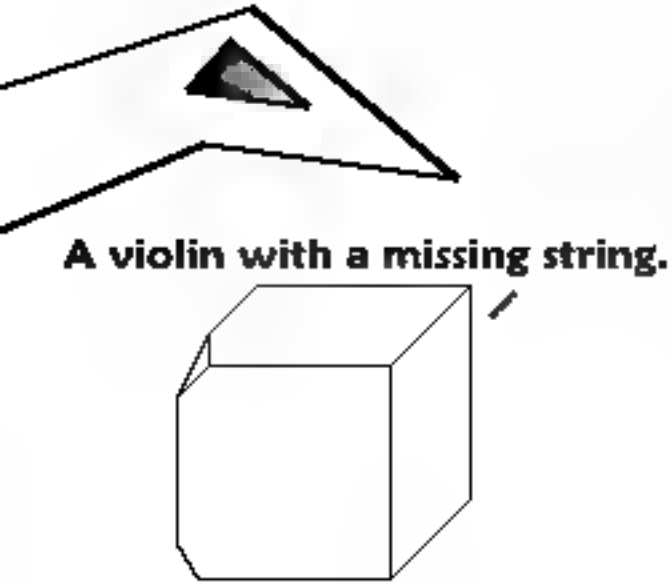
Triangle and Robert

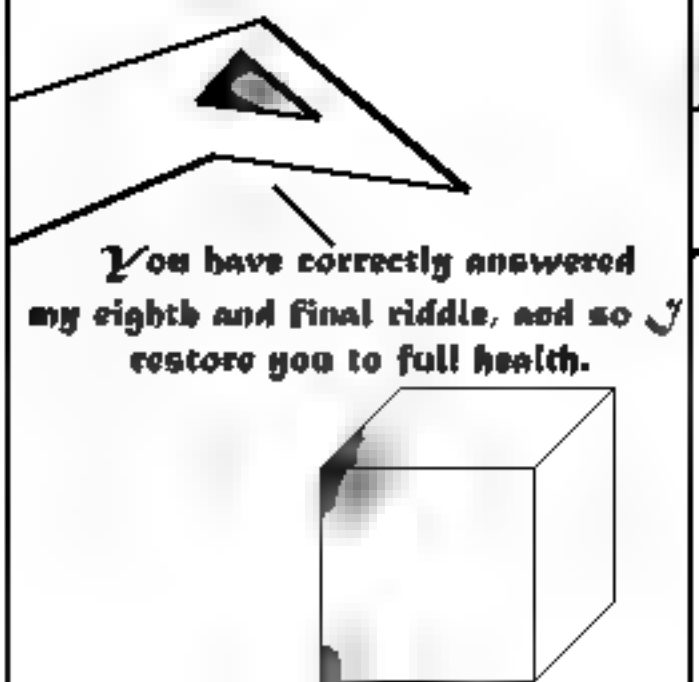


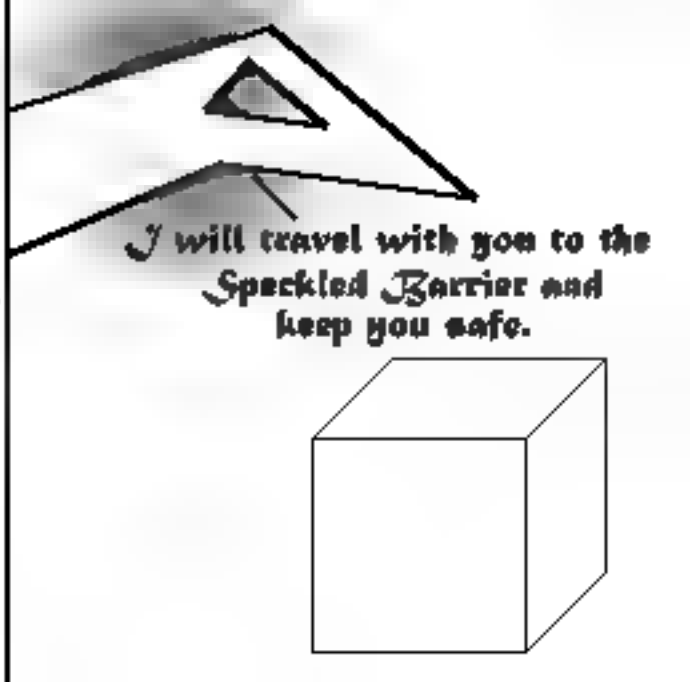
Triangle and Robert



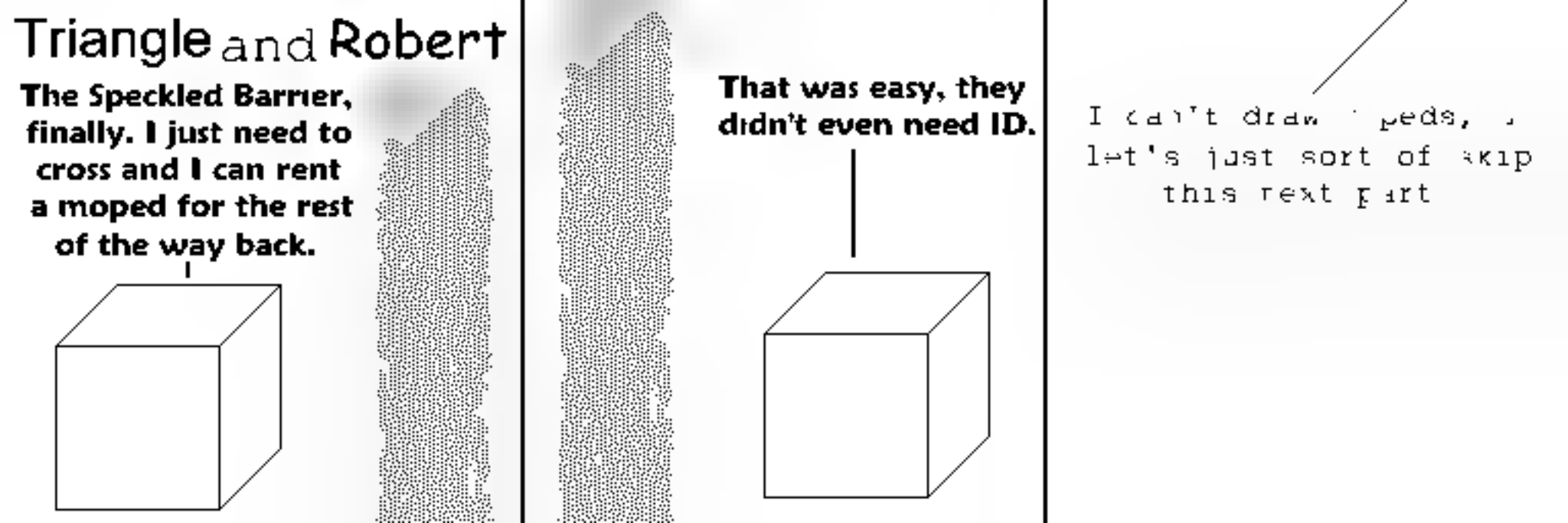
Triangle and Robert



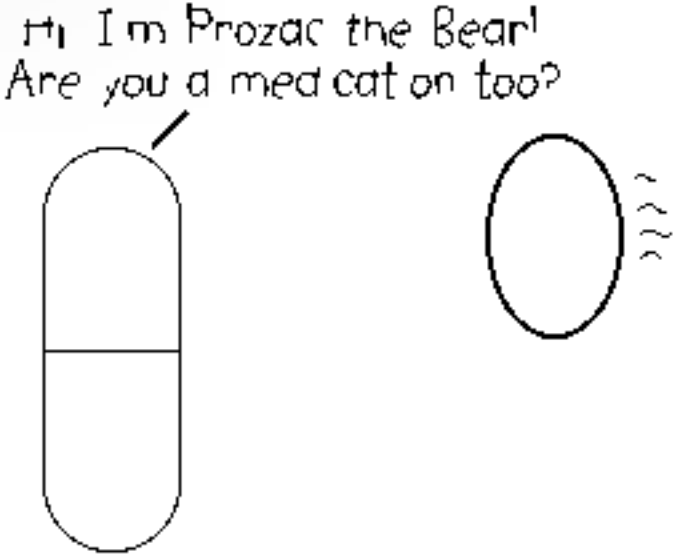


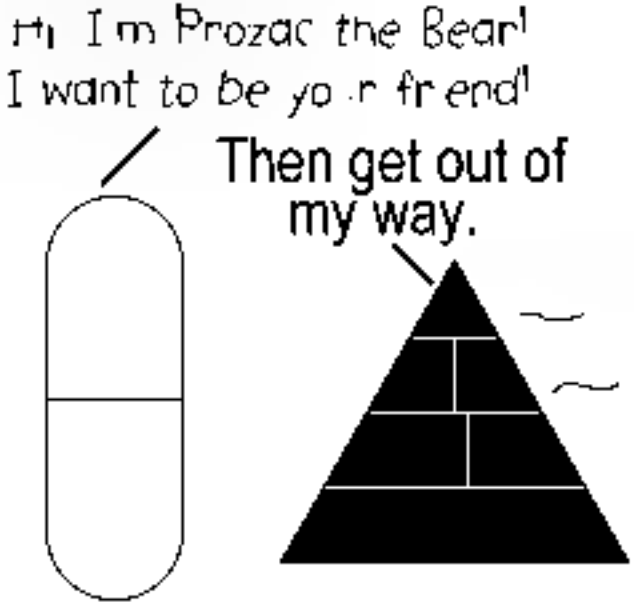


Triangle and Robert

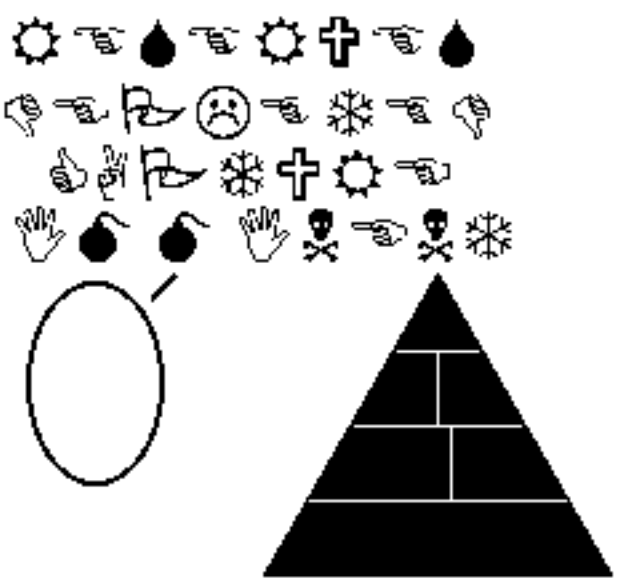


Triangle and Robert

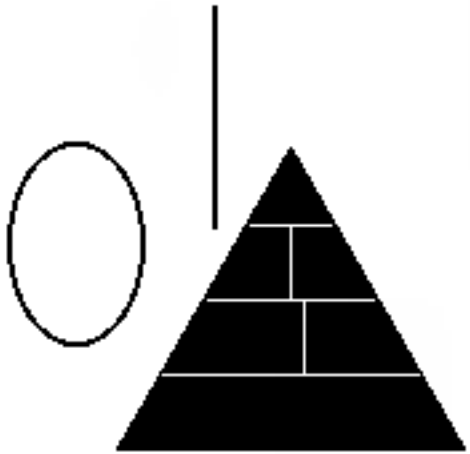




Triangle and Robert



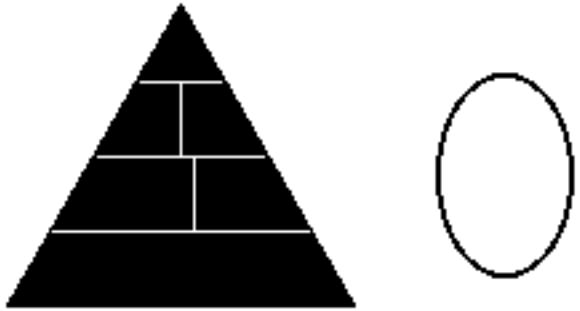
You're coming with me. The RDCLBA'll listen to me now.



However, unbeknownst to "unbeknownst". What kind of an archaic word is that "Unbeknownst". It looks like it belongs in an Anachronism Fest Where was I

Triangle and Robert

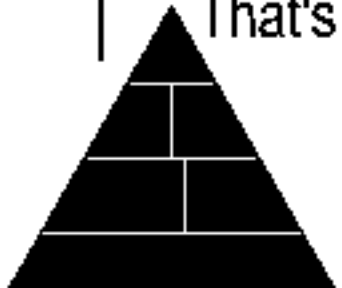
The RDCLBA is no longer interested in the Oval. We've lost too many polygons trying to obtain it



So you won't listen to me?

What are you going to say? Let me guess. The ICI framed you for all those killings

That's it exactly.



Do you have proof?

Not yet.

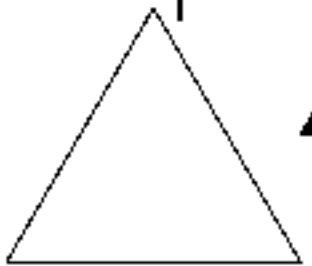
Can you get it?

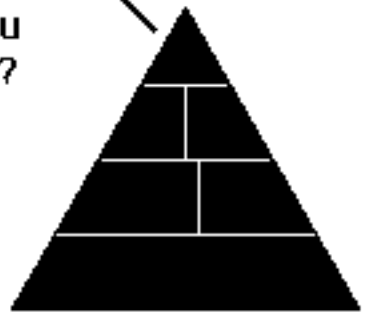
No, but I know who can.

Triangle and Robert

I read of your achievement

How did you get in here?

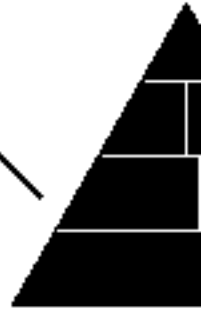




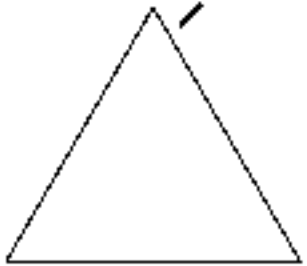
There can only be one explanation for your prowess Doubt me if you will, but you are the Chosen One of the Beforings, the mortal instrument of their will.

I know

You know?



Read the strip archive I've known that for a while



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

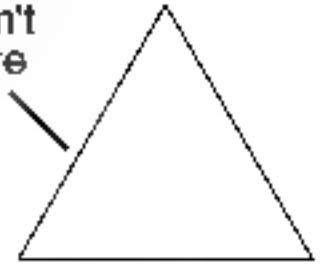
We're not mercenaries, we're wacky scheme consultants, and I'm the one in charge of planning

You're a fool.

You hire us, we use a wacky scheme. That's what we do. No epic battles, no undercover infiltration, no rooftop shoutouts not involving geese.

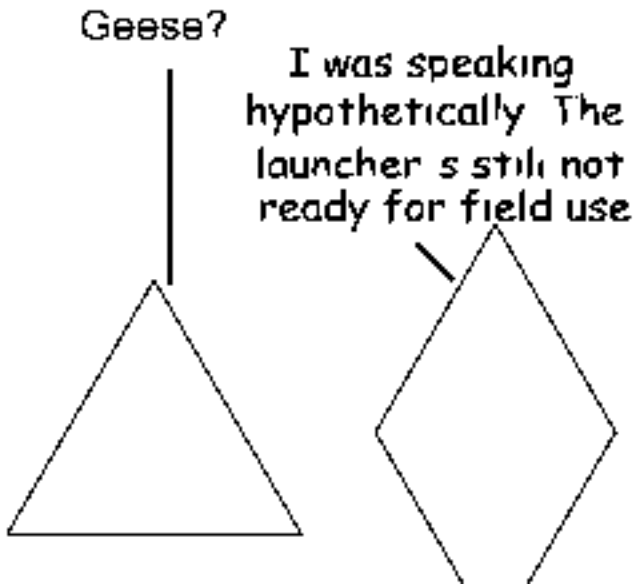
I can get the triangle's help no other way?

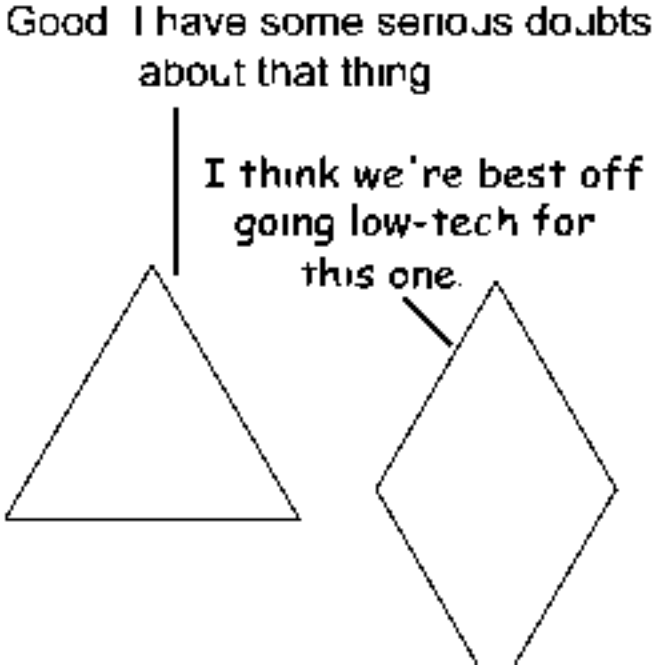
None. I don't fight for hire



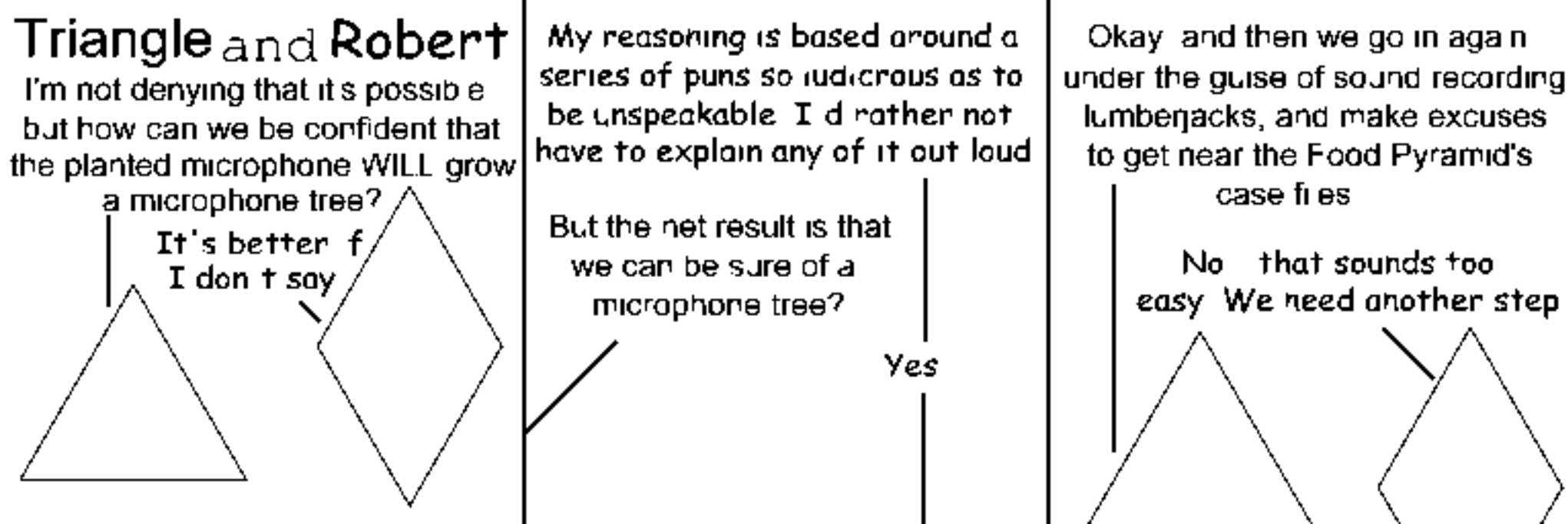
Then I have no choice. Prove my innocence, wackily or not.

Triangle and Robert

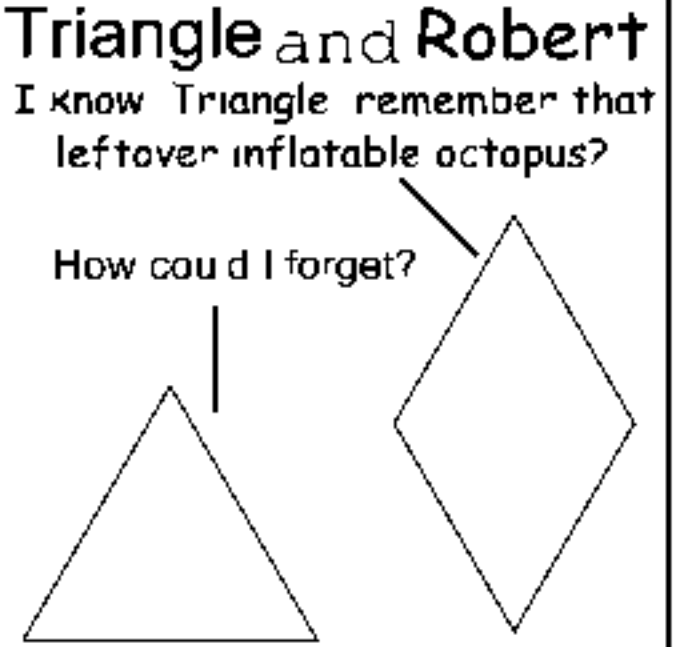




Triangle and Robert



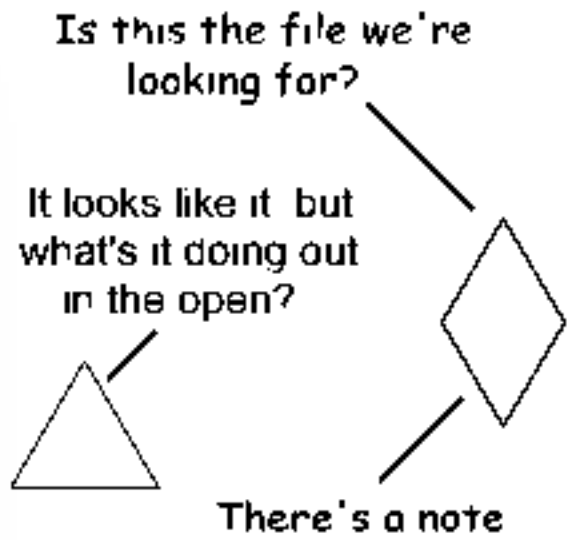
Triangle and Robert



The planning session ran well into the night. In the morning, Triangle and Robert set off for Austria. The Food Pyramid followed.

Triangle and Robert

Crossing the language barrier without incident, Triangle and Robert soon reach the headquarters of the International Culinary Institute. The first phase of Robert's plan proceed with surprisingly few complications



Chosen One! This is what you're looking for! Take it and go! You'll have a head start!

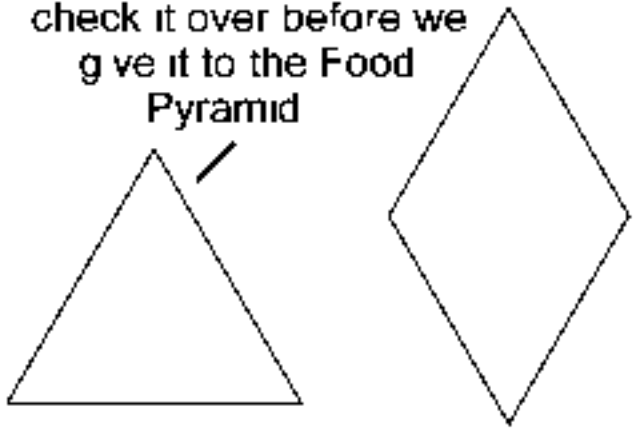
- Linda Concarne

She has nice handwriting

Triangle and Robert

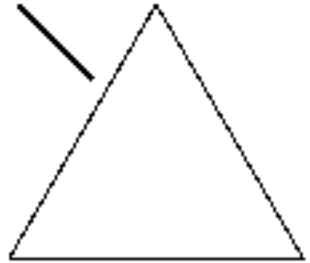
Triangle and Robert

If there's a transmitter in it, what can we do? We still need to get it out of here. We'll just check it over before we give it to the Food Pyramid



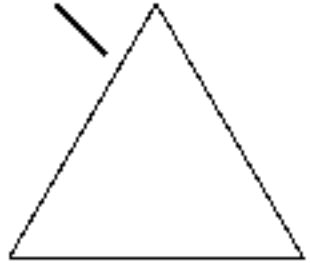
Chosen One! You're supposed to get out of here! I can't delay the alarm forever!

What's going on? Why are you helping me?

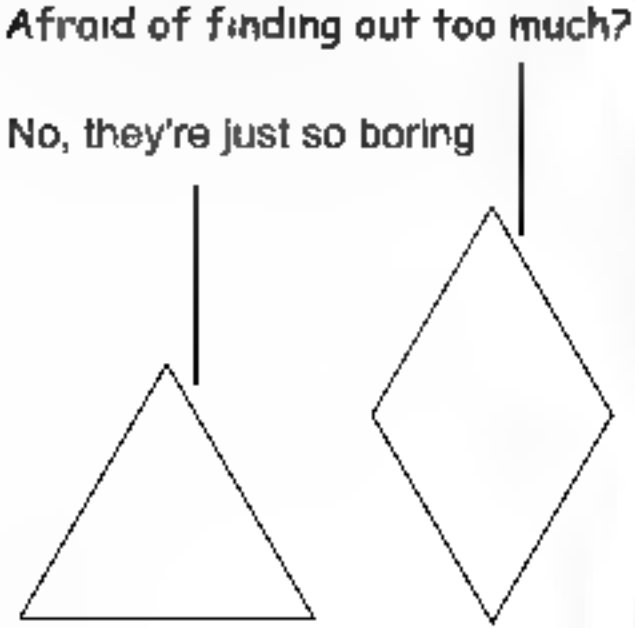


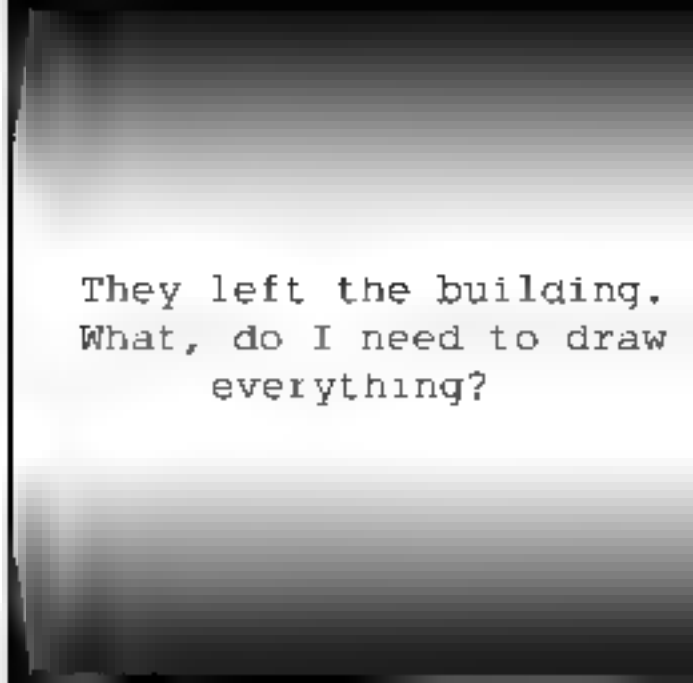
I don't know! Just move! When I figure out what's going on, I'll let you know.

In this strip, that's more of an "if" than a "when"



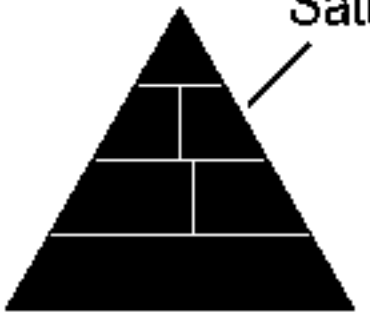
TRIANGLE AND ROBERT





Triangle and Robert

At the offices of the RICLBA, a short time later

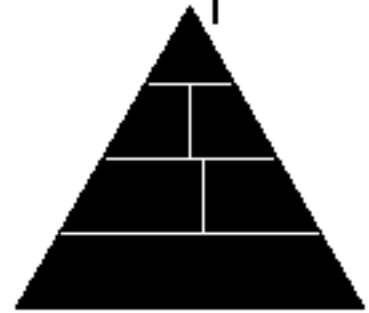


Well, yes. This file could shatter the ICI monopoly forever

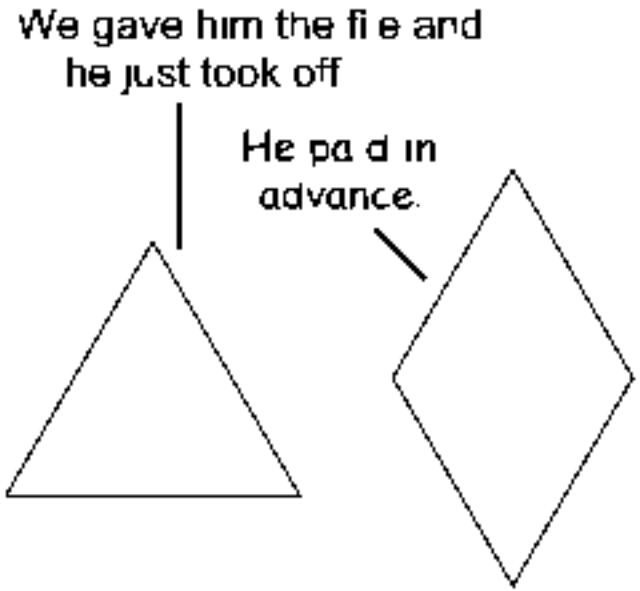
And my . request?

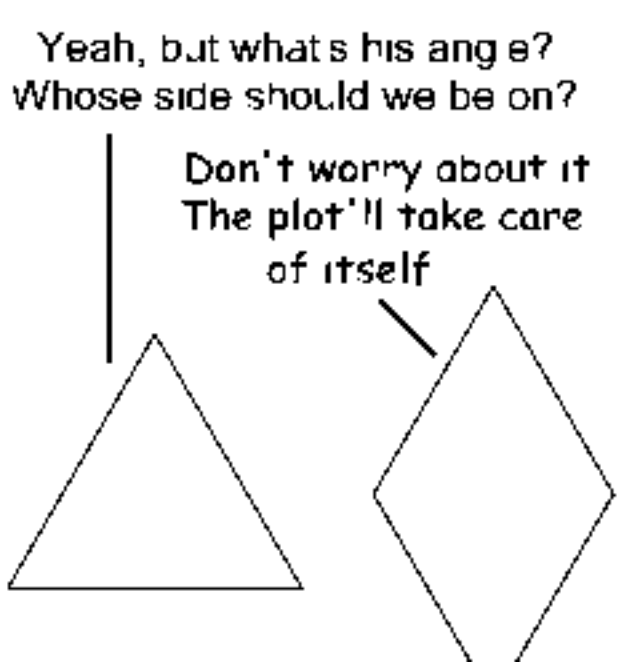
We should be able to fit you in. We'll let you know when something appropriate comes up.

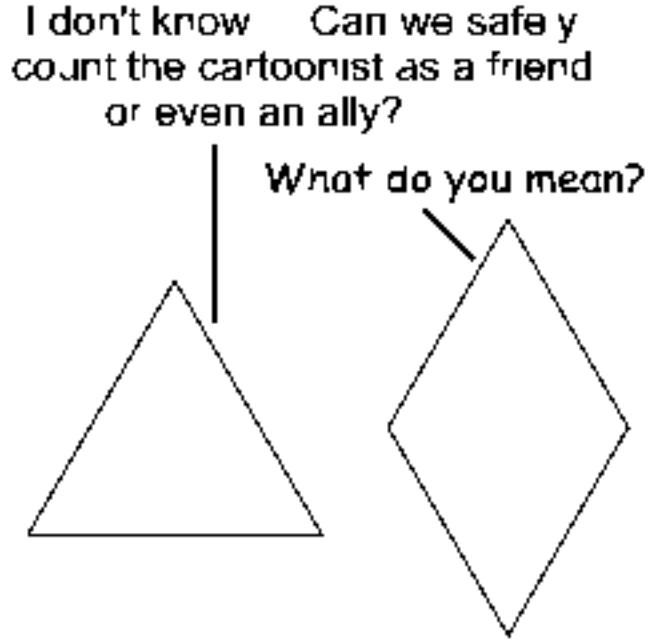
Thank you.



Triangle and Robert

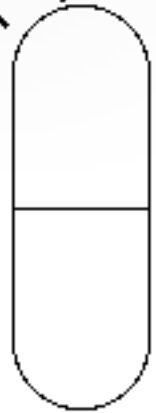






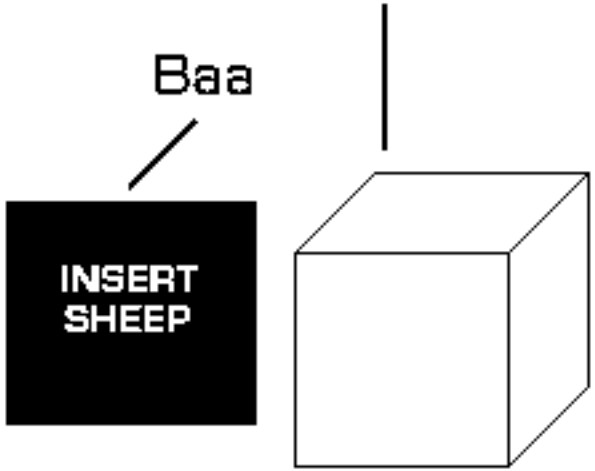
Triangle and Robert

Hi I'm Prozac the Bear and this is a clumsy attempt at a sequel



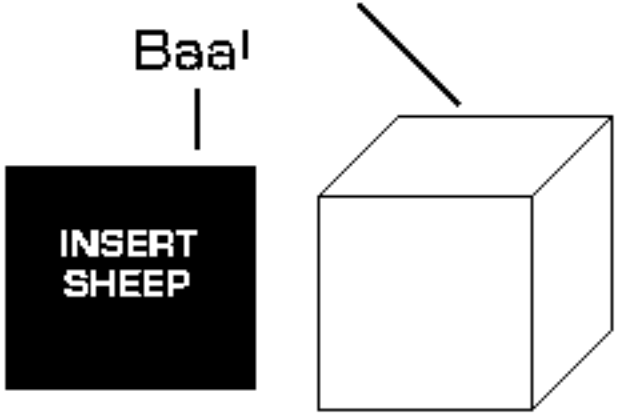
I'm here for the peppermill. Get out of my way.

Baa



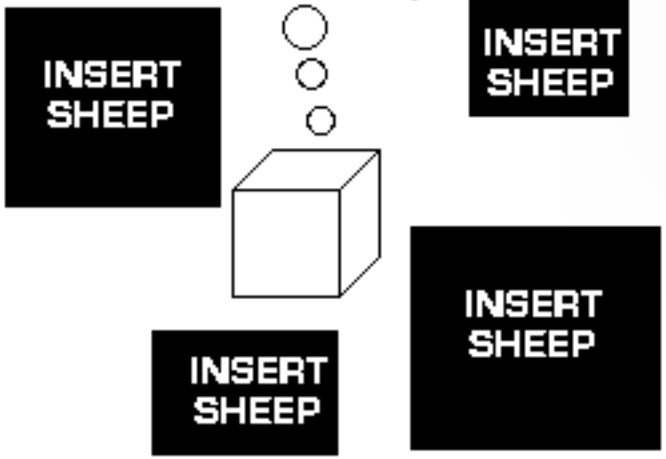
Don't test me. I'd rather get through this with as little violence as possible.

Baa!



Triangle and Robert

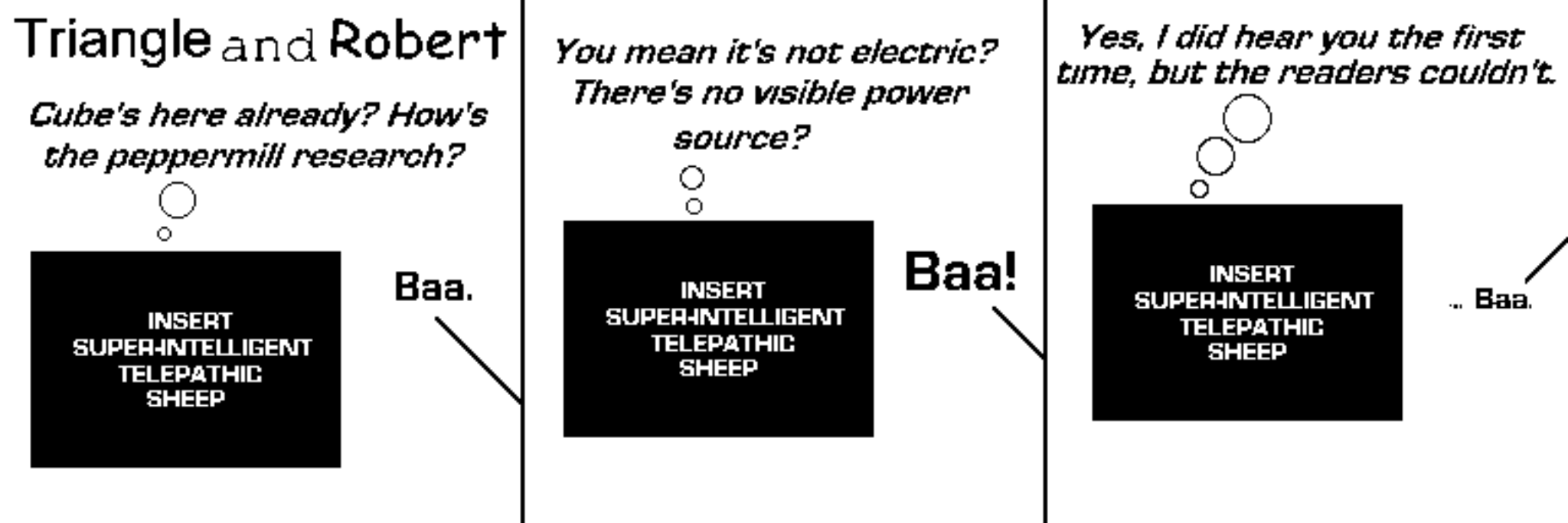
Sheep. Why did it have to be sheep?



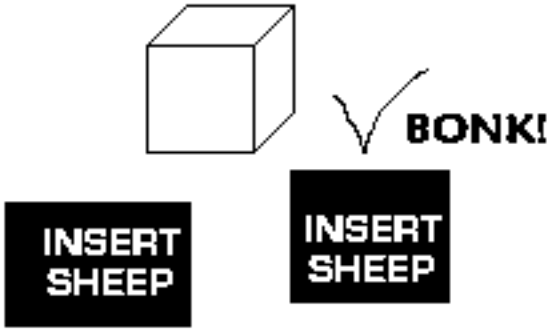
While Cube meant this question as a simple Indiana Jones reference, it is in fact a very important question, one which in a way lies at the very heart of the Time of the Oval

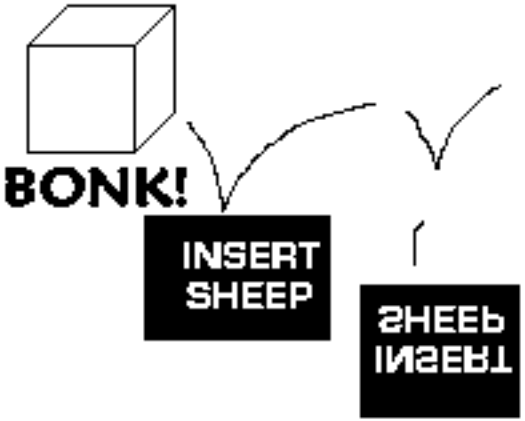
This is not the time to tell the full sheep story, however. For now, it will suffice to say that very little of what happened on Triangle and Robert's trip to Scotland was by chance.

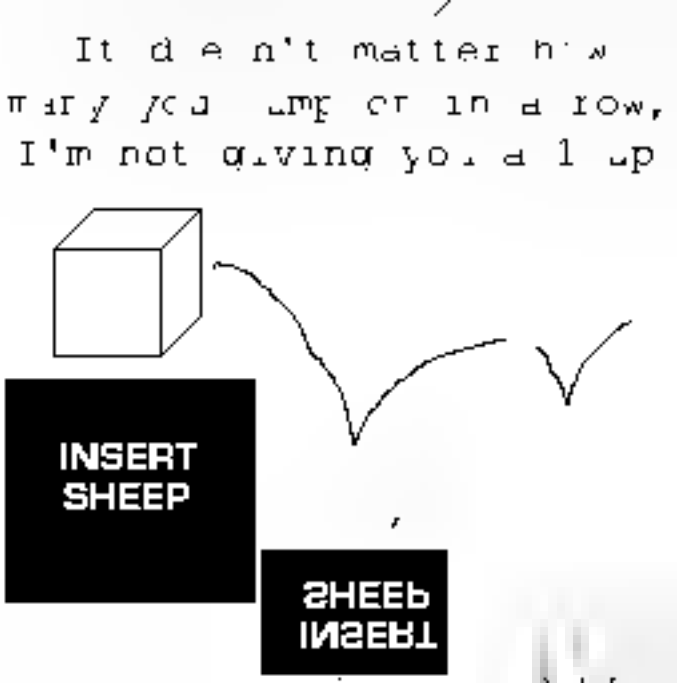
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

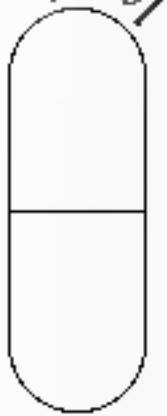






Triangle and Robert

I already said my thingy! What am I doing in the strip again? Hi! I'm Prozac the Bear!



Just... pad. I don't know how to represent the Cube/Cornersheep battle visually. There's this whole psychic attack thing the Cornersheep has, plus Cube managed to get some sort of weapon.... I'm not even going to try drawing any of it. Cover for me.

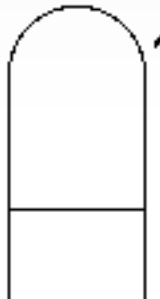
Hooray! I get to tell a story!

Once upon a time there were three little Walsh matrices. The first Walsh matrix was in Henderson row-order, and the others always picked on it because it had so many symmetries. The second

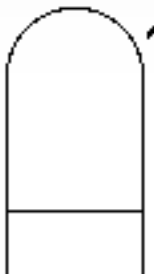
Wow, this is actually making sense.

Triangle and Robert

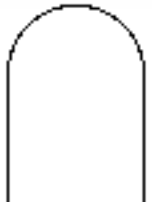
The second little Walsh matrix was made of wood, and the third little Walsh matrix was played by Roger Moore for seven films



They arrived in a modest London flat G flat. I believe it was. Every morning they would go to school singing their favorite song which I can't remember the words to

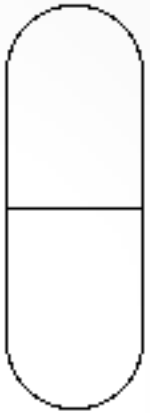


The story doesn't really work without the song. I'll tell a different one! Legends say that long, long before polygons the world was inhabited by giants composed of pudding. They were called the Pliadans



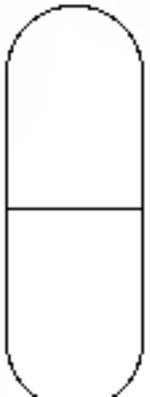
Triangle and Robert

The world was st l mo st, ts crust st l primordial pudding Sma pudd'c creatures swam about and ate each other On the surface walked the Pudaans on the r mighty sem so d limbs



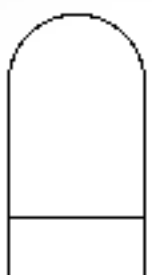
unreliable narrator

The greatest of the Pudaans was their King Tapocus the Lumpy He stood a m e ta and the p anet shook when he did calisthenics



unreliable narrator

Finding no Pudaan worthy to be his bride he instead married a glacier, and together they built a yogurt palace in the sky a palace of ten thousand flavors



unreliable narrator

Triangle and Robert

Some Puddans became jealous of their King's palace and built a giant saucepan to put it in, so that they would not have to look upon it

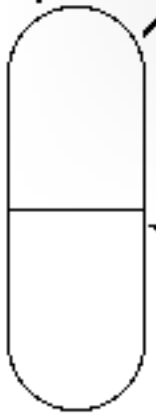
King Tapiocus, however looked down and saw them plotting and he sent forth his vast consort to crush them

She fell upon the plotters, but they trapped her inside the saucepan. As she was a glacier she began to melt

still unreliable narrator

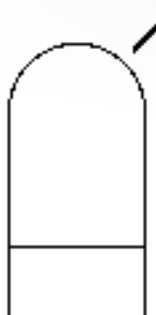
Triangle and Robert

The plotters formed a circle around the saucepan and King Tapioca could not break through it to rescue his beloved



narrator = max unreliability

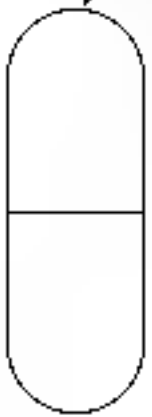
He bargained with them, offering them valuable coupons for yogurt and many other treasured things. They refused and refused until his offers totaled half his treasury



When they finally accepted his bargain, it was too late, for the beauteous glacier had melted away.

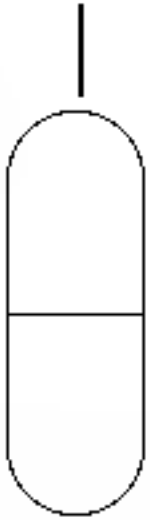
Triangle and Robert

Hey What happened
t my voice



I, uh forgot
who was telling
the story.

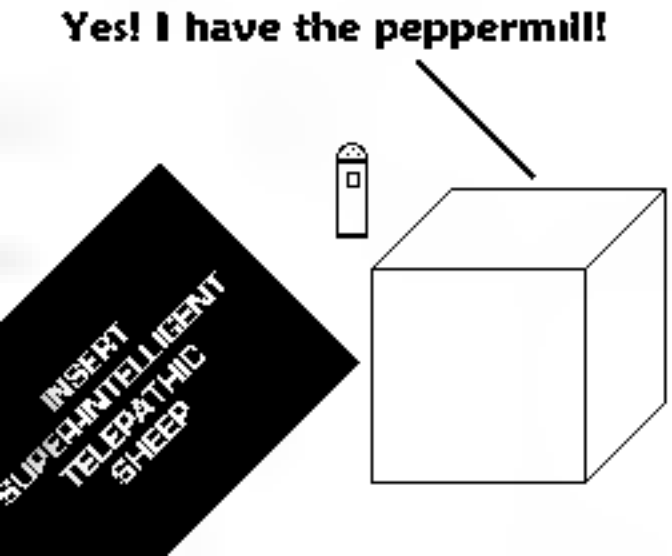
I'm Prozac the Bear!

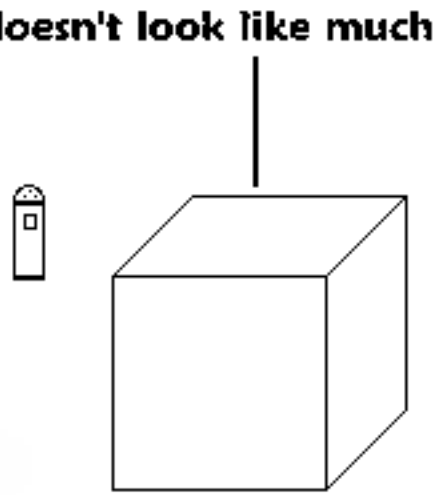


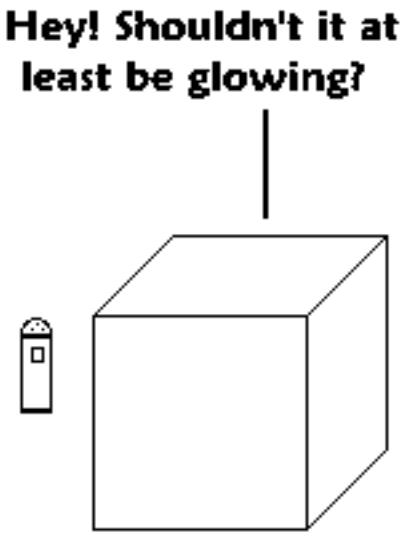
Thank

So, as you see, Prozac
the Bear's interesant
repetition of his name
is not done to annoy. It
is in fact a defense
mechanism, evolved to
prevent this sort of
thing happening. Prozac's
unique position as a
pharmaceutical makes him
extremely vulnerable t
changes in the
cartoonist's mental state

Triangle and Robert



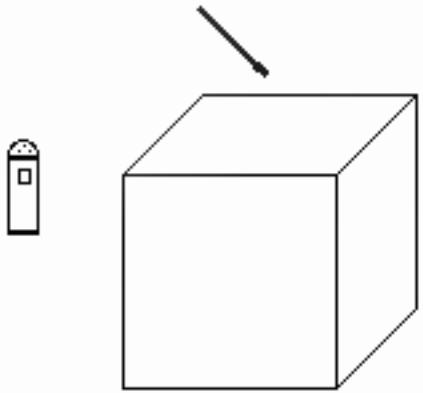




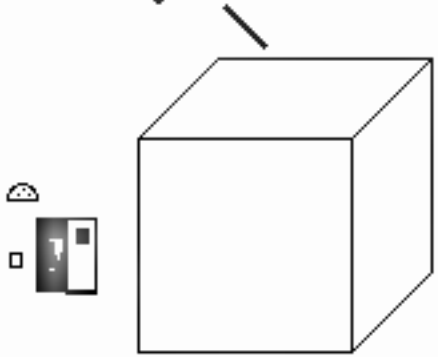
N

Triangle and Robert

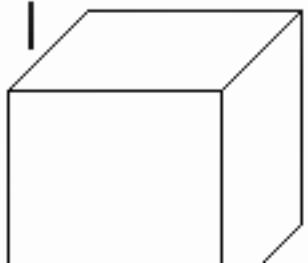
It seems safe enough....
I'm going to disassemble it.



There aren't any batteries or anything.... I can't even find any moving parts. The inside of this peppermill is filled with little symbols and diagrams.

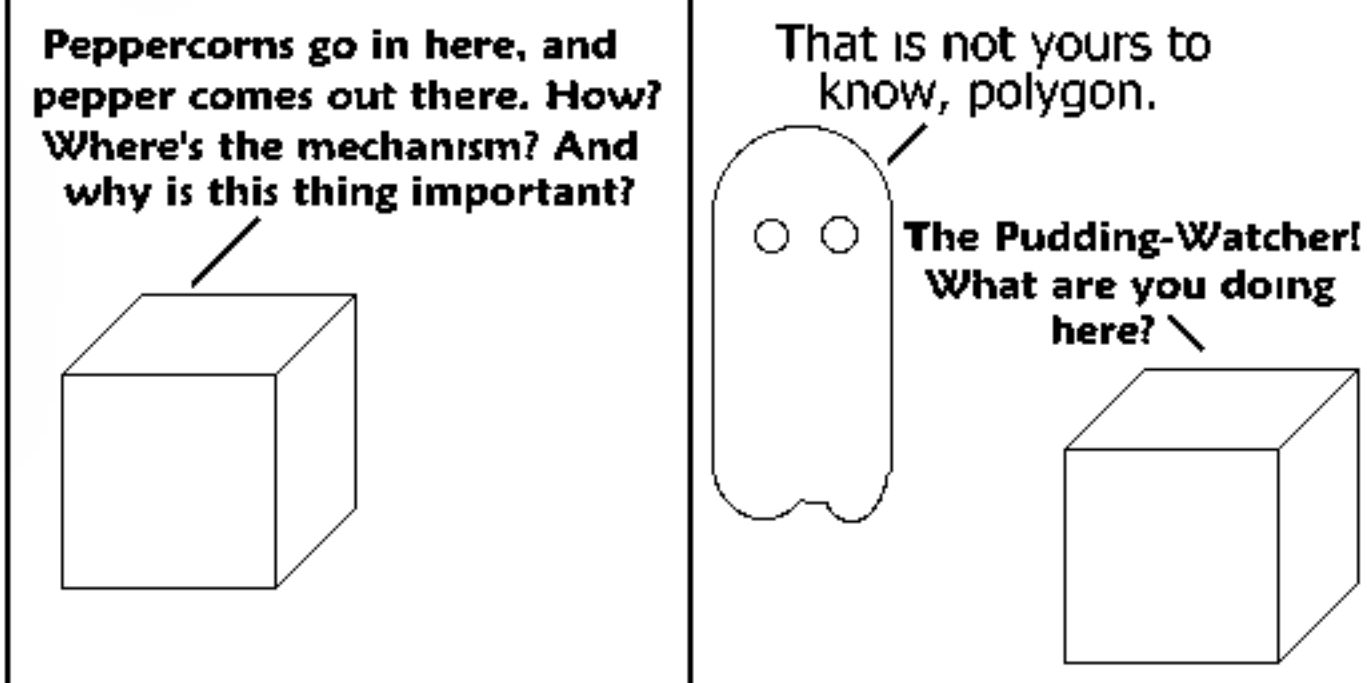


This can't be a peppermill. The symbols must mean something... maybe it's a time capsule, left by the Fourth Race to tell us what's going on. We could sure use some ancient exposition.

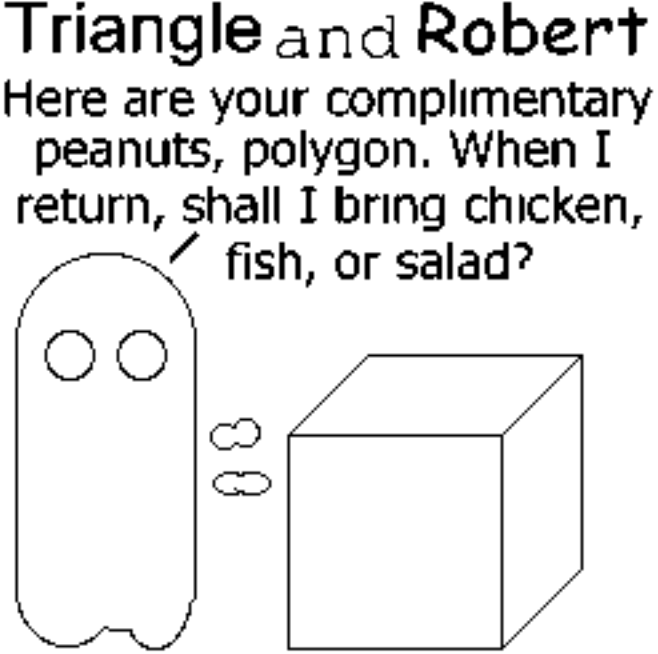


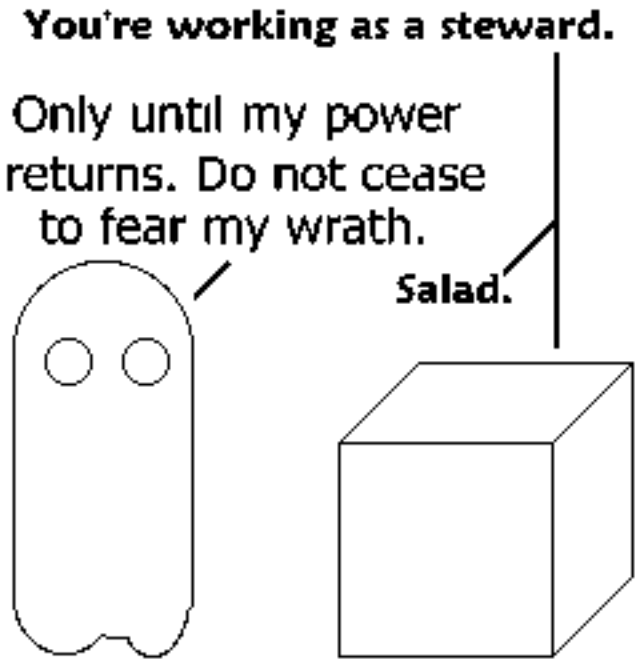
Triangle and Robert

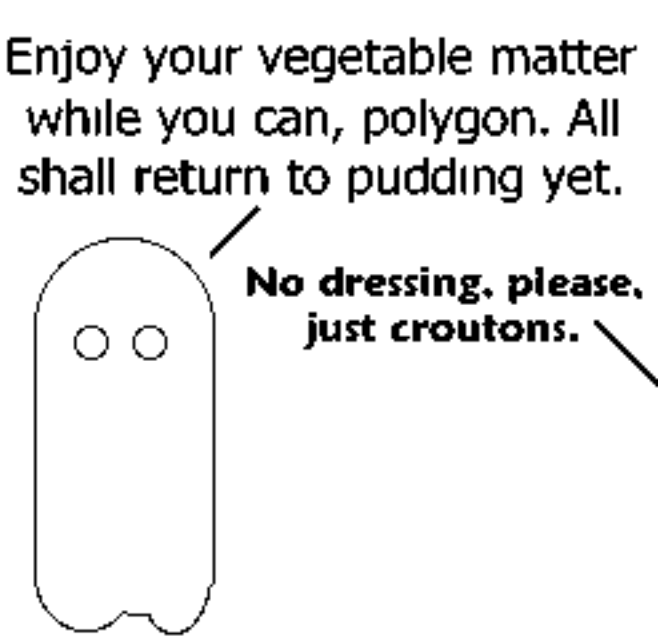
n the flight home, Cube
continues to fiddle
around with the
now disassembled artifact
We join this scene,
already in progress

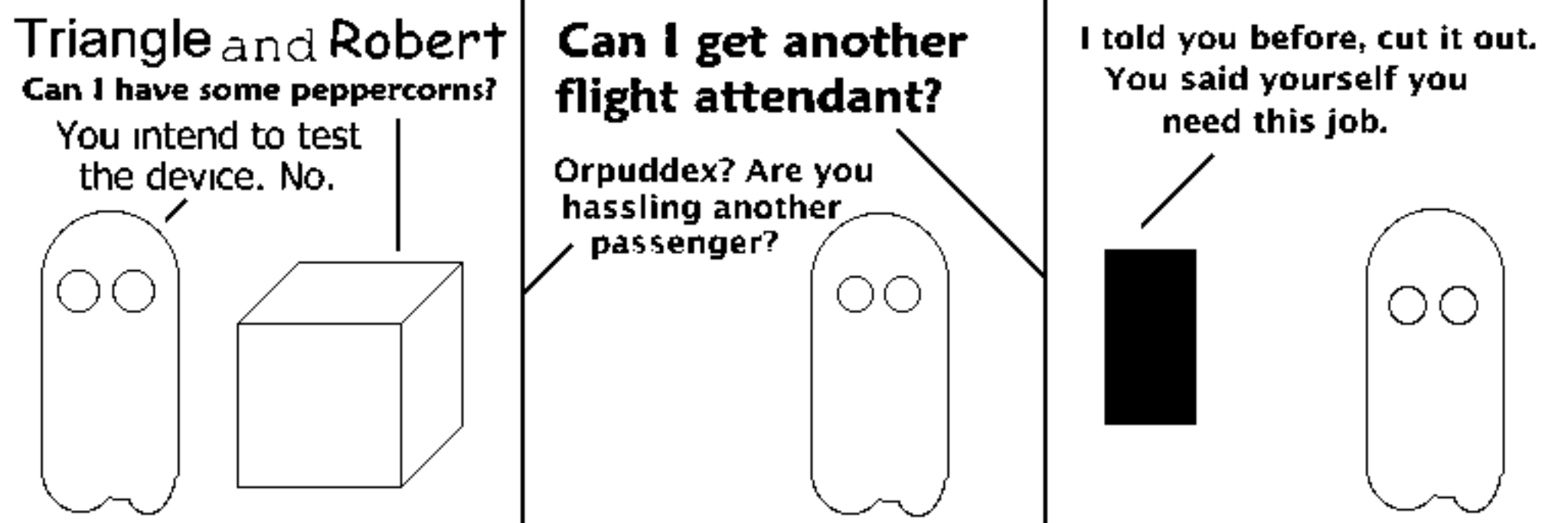


Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
Can I have some peppercorns?
You intend to test the device. No.
Can I get another flight attendant?
Orpuddex? Are you hassling another passenger?
I told you before, cut it out. You said yourself you need this job.

Triangle and Robert

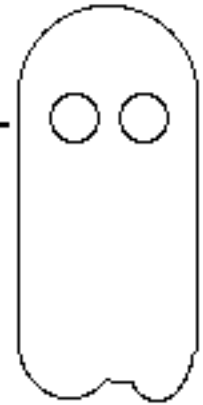
You gave everyone in first class no tea, and now this? Give that man his peppercorns and apologize for the inconvenience.

Where are they?

Between the herring and the...

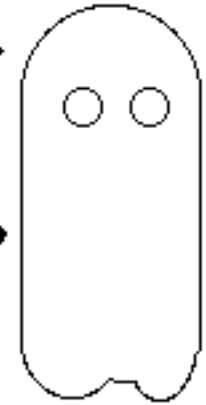
Marmalade. Found them.

We should have hired that nice Janice Pearce Smith....



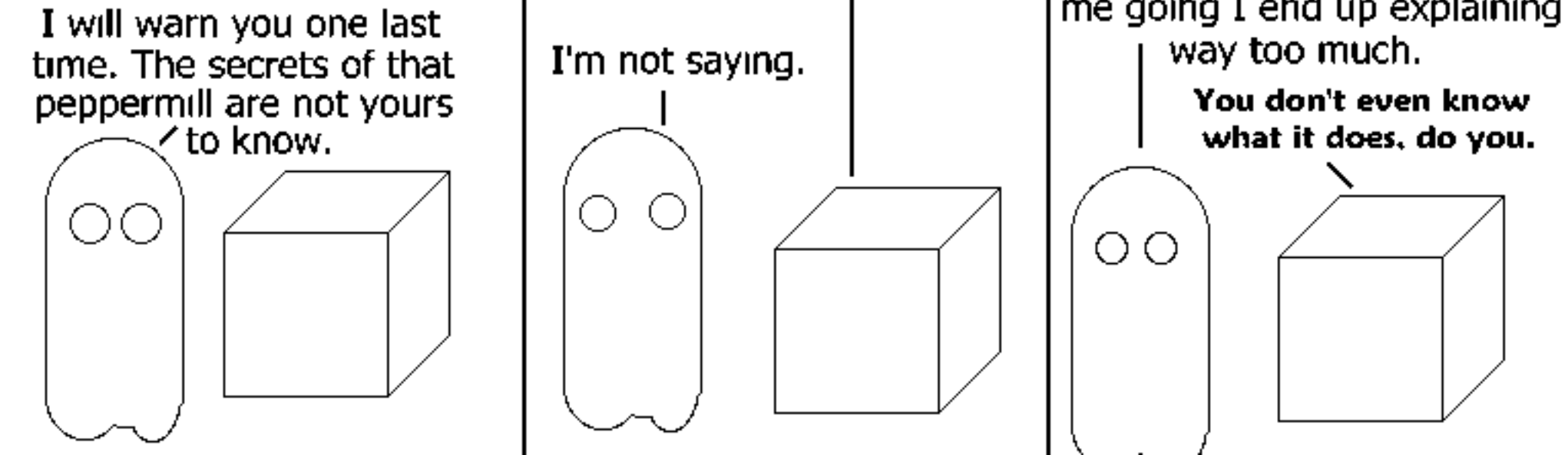
Uh, don't panic, but we're out of lemon-soaked paper napkins.

We still have those little biscuits, right? The cheesy ones?

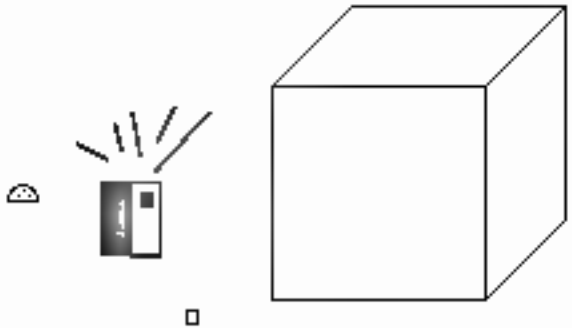


Triangle and Robert

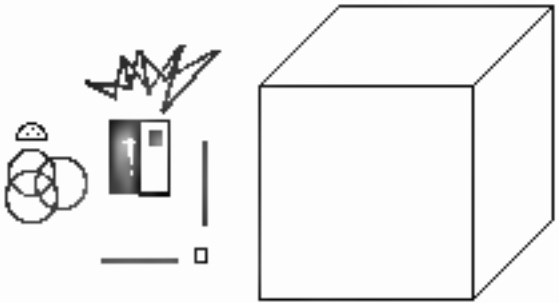
Triangle and Robert

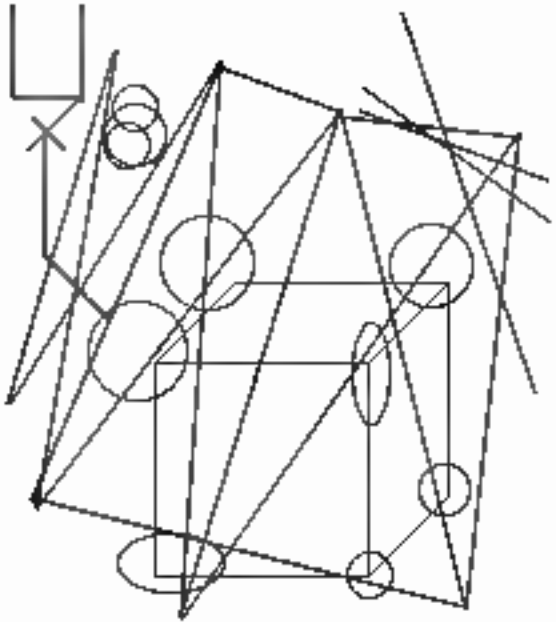


It seems to be glowing now... no. It's not glowing, there are actually little lines projecting from it.



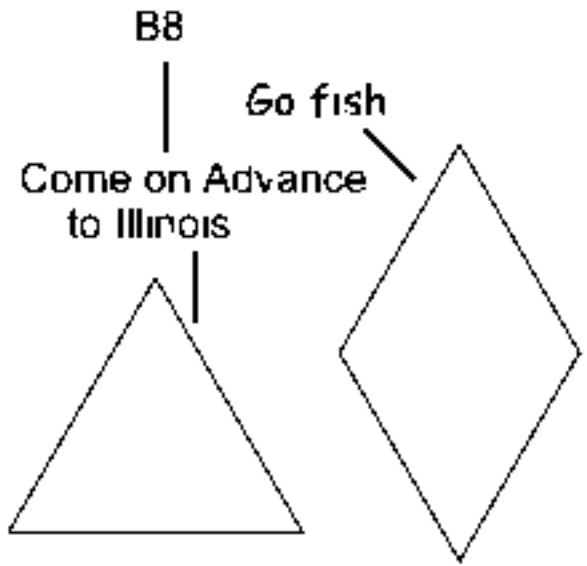
What the... geometric figures? So those little symbols on the inside of the peppermill weren't there to represent anything....

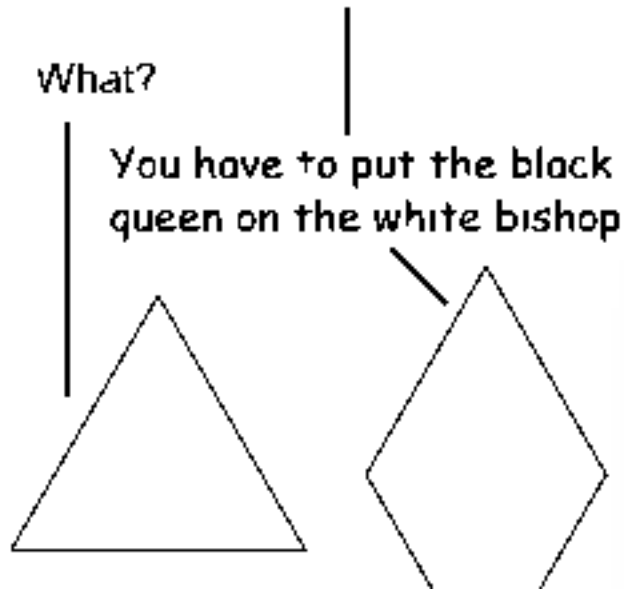


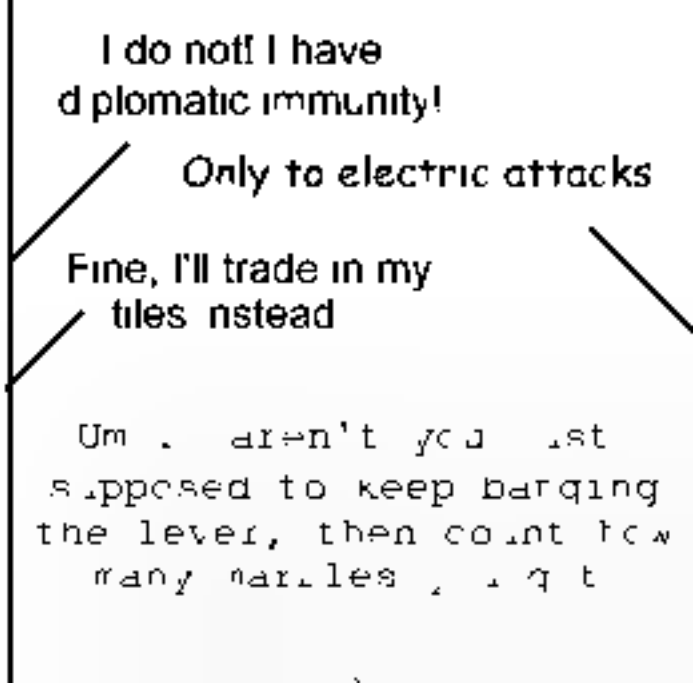


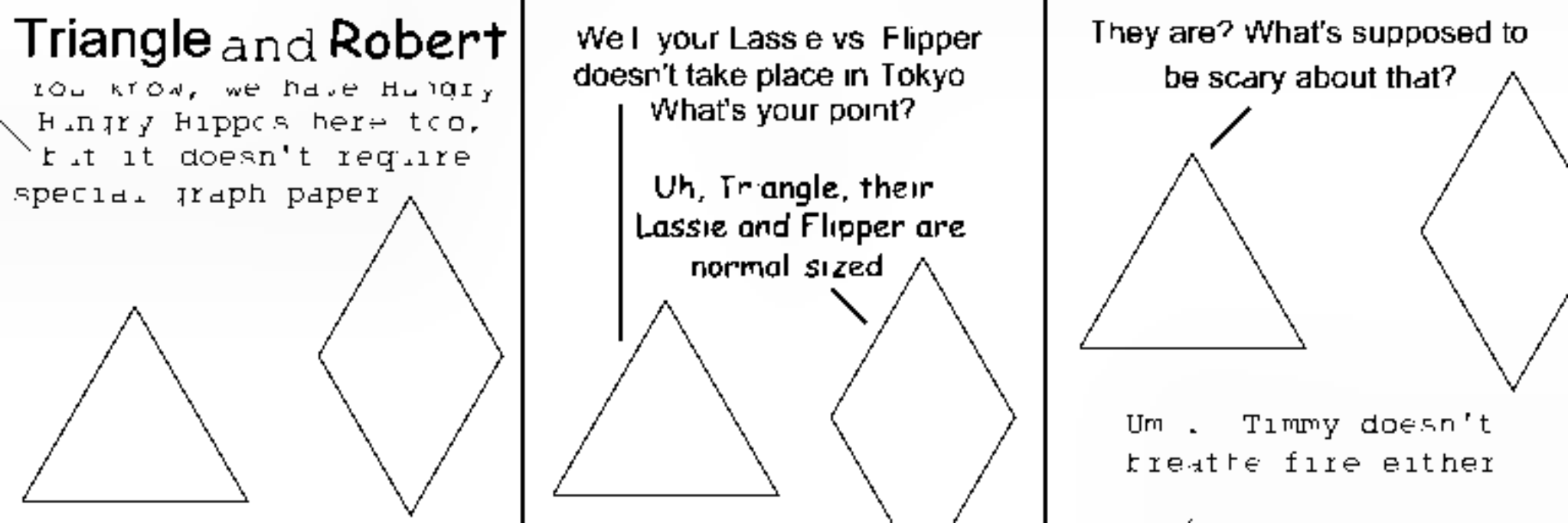
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



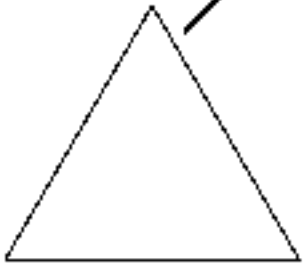


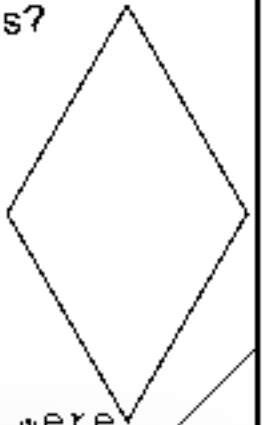



Triangle and Robert
You know, we have Hungry Hungry Hippos here too, but it doesn't require special graph paper
Well your Lassie vs Flipper doesn't take place in Tokyo What's your point?
Uh, Triangle, their Lassie and Flipper are normal sized
They are? What's supposed to be scary about that?
Um . Timmy doesn't breathe fire either

Triangle and Robert

So you're still on basic HHH, first edition? Did that even have character classes?



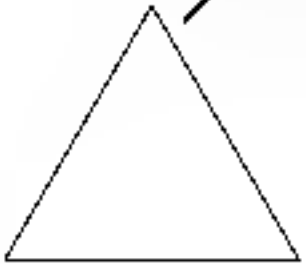


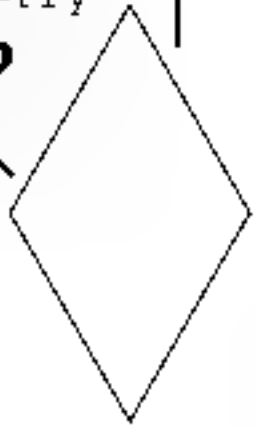
Well, the hippos were different colors . . .

Eleven sided dice?

Those aren't even physically possible in our geometry

What?

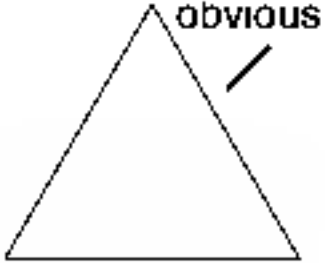


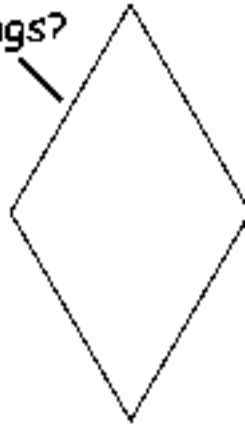


There are no regular polyhedrons where I come from

But then what do you throw at weddings?

Irregular ones, obviously





Triangle and Robert

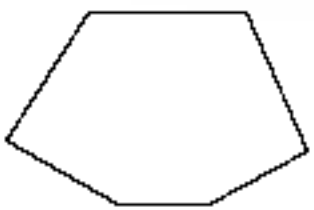
Hold here, I've both referred to the practice of throwing rice at weddings yourselves in past strips

You mean you're just noticing your continuity errors **now**?

Well, you see, the thing is... Hey, look, they're talking about the Food Pyramid on the news!

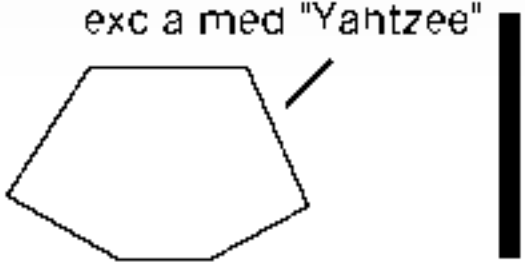
Hooray for desperate story transitions!

Revelations about the Food Pyramid's arrest and conviction continue to come to light. It now appears that the murders of which the once beloved nutrition guru was accused never actually took place



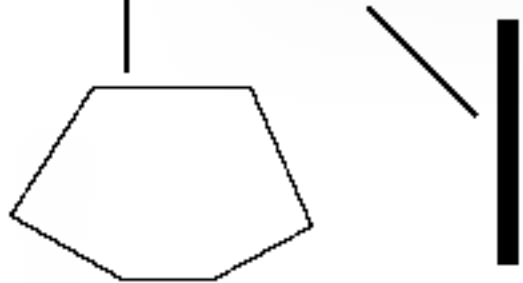
Triangle and Robert

n other news a passenger plane van shed over the Asymptotic Ocean ast night The last rad o transmiss on was normal unt l the end, when the pi ot suddenl/ exc a med "Yahtzee"

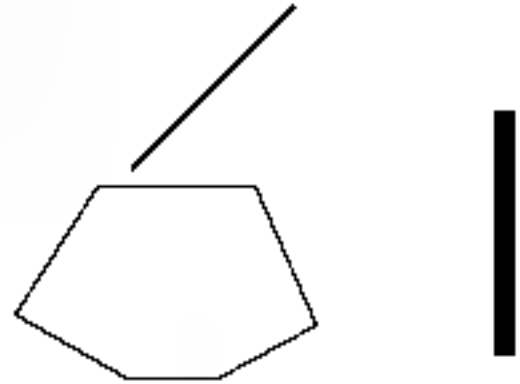


Author t es term it "un ikely" that the popular dice game was be ng p ayed n the cockp t at the t me The passenger l st nc ıded controversia archaeologist Cube

Next. Sports scores!

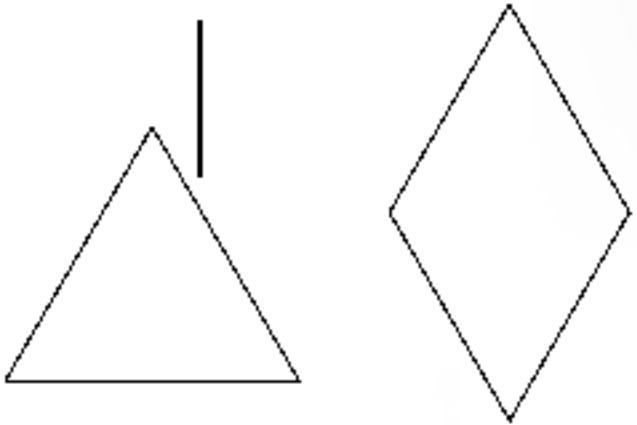


But f rst some annoy ng static so you'l change the channe



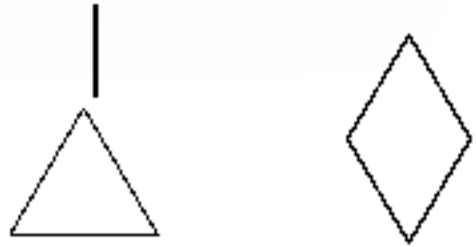
Triangle and Robert

So Cube's plane vanished I suppose we're supposed to investigate?

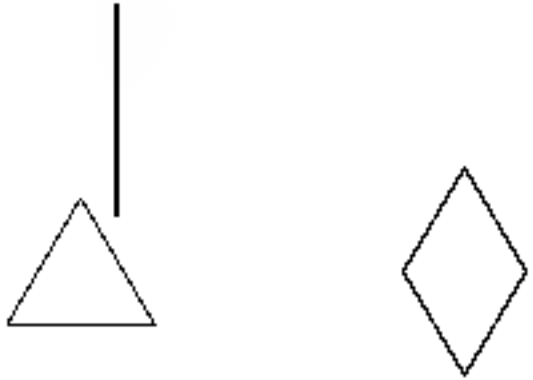


That'd make things easier for me, but as always I have a backup plan in case you don't go along with the plot voluntarily.

Use it can't bring myself to care



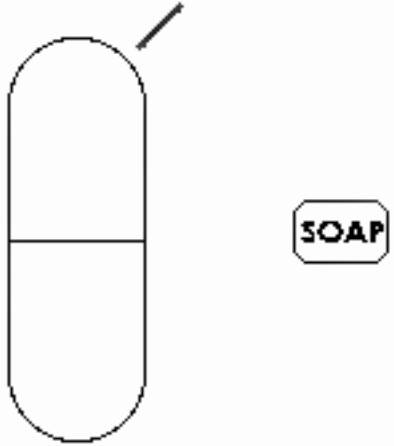
Cube never dealt straight with us Why should we look for him? Besides he's a survivor He's not in any trouble he can't handle



Okay, so I was bluffing about having a backup plan. Here's some pointless filler while I try to figure out what comes next.

Triangle and Robert will not be appearing.

Hi! I'm Prozac the Bear! You must be Mr Soap

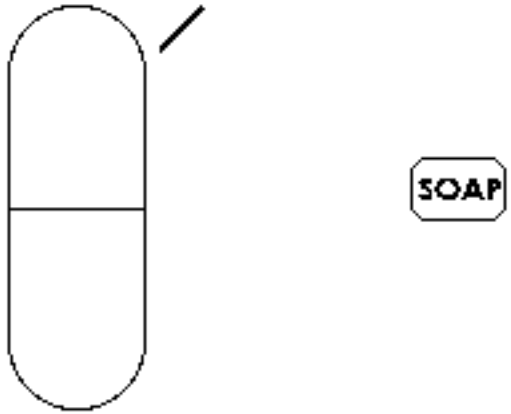


Mr Soap, do you like adventures?

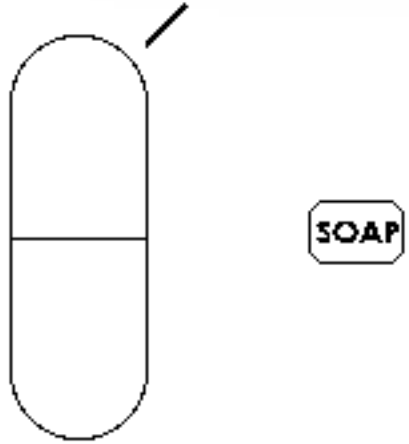
I'm really sorry about this, folks.

Triangle and Robert

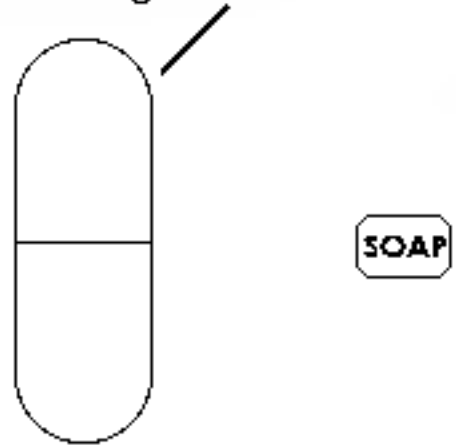
Let's go on an adventure Mr Soap!



We could go where Cube's plane vanished and look for him Mr Soap!



Oh, I have an even better deal! Let's learn how frozen yogurt is made!



Triangle and Robert
Miss Concarne, I need someone to rescue Cube, and I have the resources
What? Oh! You!
Why should I do you any favors?
I can restore your past
No deal! I don't know what you want from Cube, but I'm not interested in playing your game!
I think you'll change your mind

Triangle and Robert

I might not have all my memories, but I can remember back to before you started this strip of yours! Our world was beautiful! Shining! Internally consistent!

It's the Time of the Var
Great changes are going to
befall your planet whether
it's in a comic strip or
not. Believe me, I'm
looking out for
polygonkind

Then help Cube yourself!

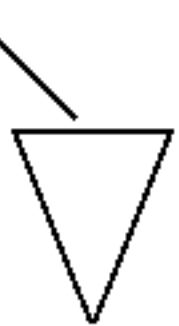
If I did, the peppermint
would be meaningless

Was that a meaningful sentence or a cryptic mishmash of words?

Probably neither

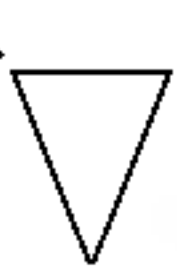
Triangle and Robert

My place is here until Mr. Disease regains consciousness. Have you asked the rhombus?



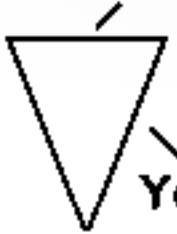
I think he could rescue Tube

His tactics are unorthodox, but he is very resourceful, if the strip archive speaks true.



Hmm, Robert alone on an away mission. I guess it's something to write about, at least. How's Mr. Disease doing, anyway?

The doctors say he blinked a few days ago.



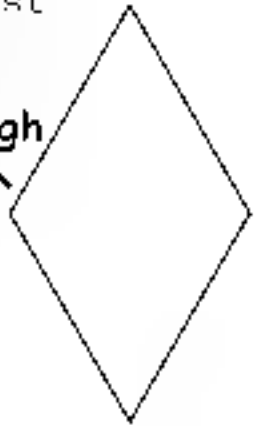
He doesn't have eyelids

Yes. They're worried.

Triangle and Robert

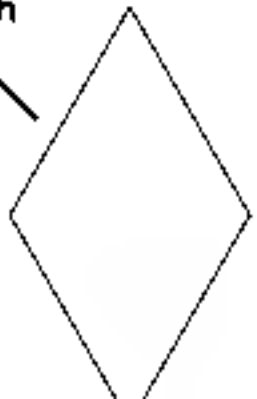
Are you a wacky enough rhombus to rescue the archaeologist

Give me a lawn ornament long enough and I will move the world



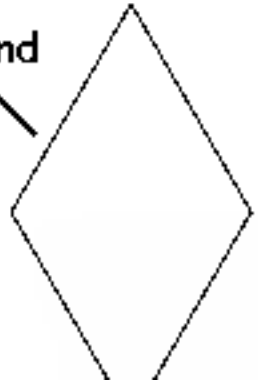
How about a submarine and some frozen dinners

I'd feel more comfortable if I had a plastic flamingo to work with



I can't draw lawn ornaments, or lawns I also can't draw submarines, but I can fake that

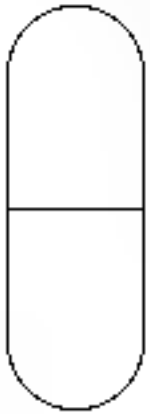
A cement frog and it's a deal



Triangle and Robert

Crewing his new submarine with a variety of outdoor decorations, Robert sets off for the coordinates of the vanished plane's last transmission

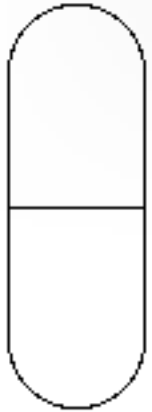
Unfortunately, there is a stowaway



Two stowaways
He's Mr Soap!

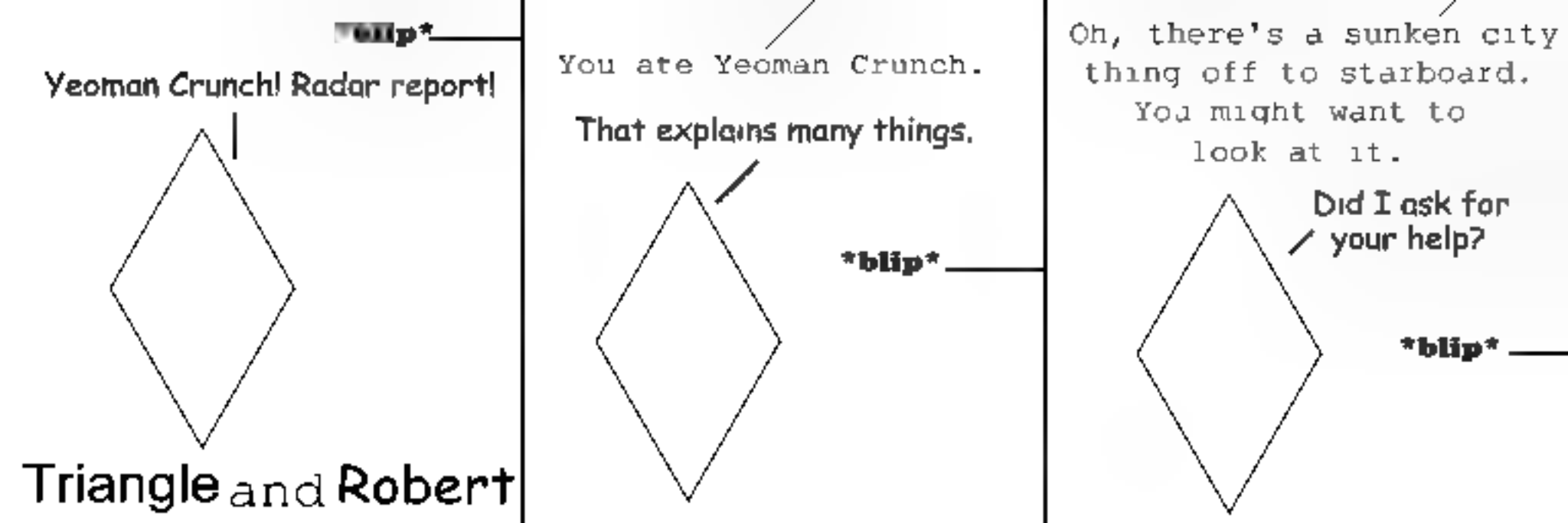
SOAP

Okay, two stowaways including Mr Soap. Why aren't you touring a frozen yogurt production facility

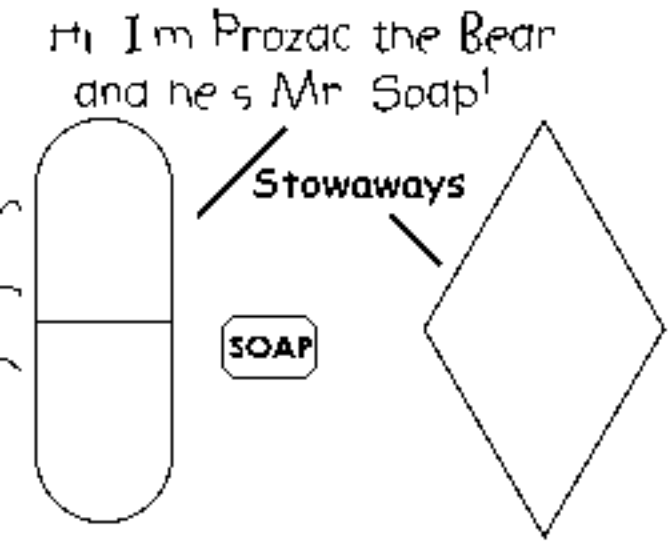


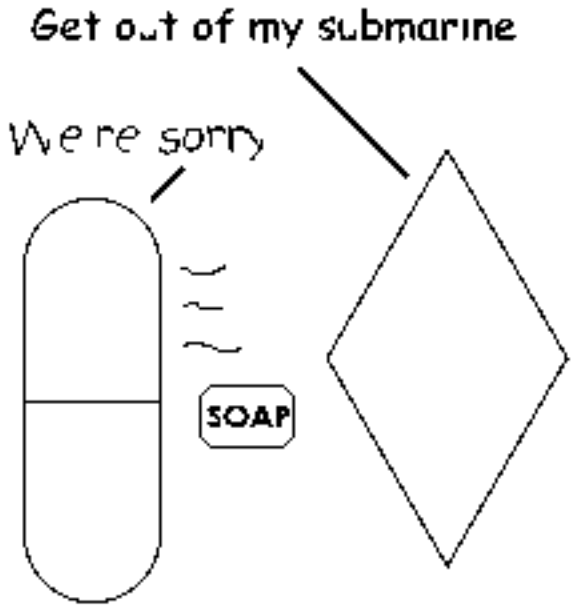
They chased me away I guess the chocolate bar people told them what I did

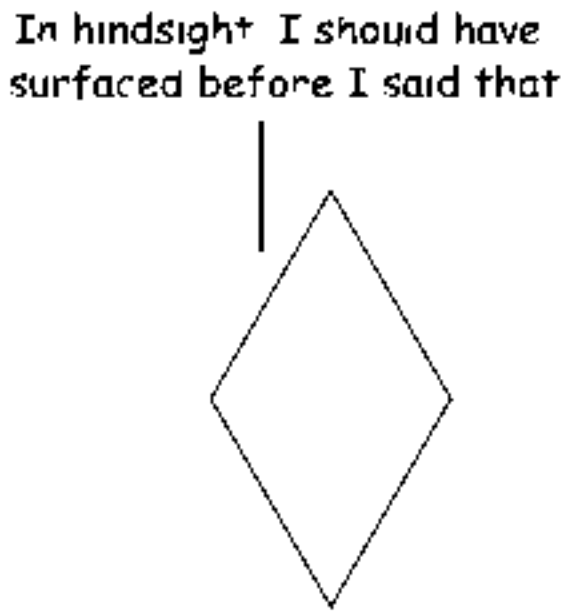
SOAP


blip
Yeoman Crunch! Radar report!
Triangle and Robert
You ate Yeoman Crunch.
That explains many things.
blip
Oh, there's a sunken city thing off to starboard. You might want to look at it.
Did I ask for your help?
blip

Triangle and Robert



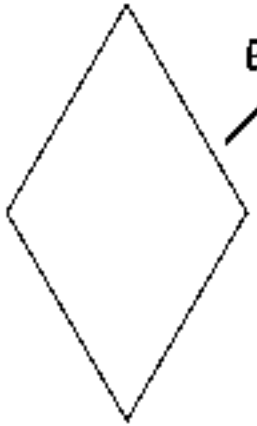


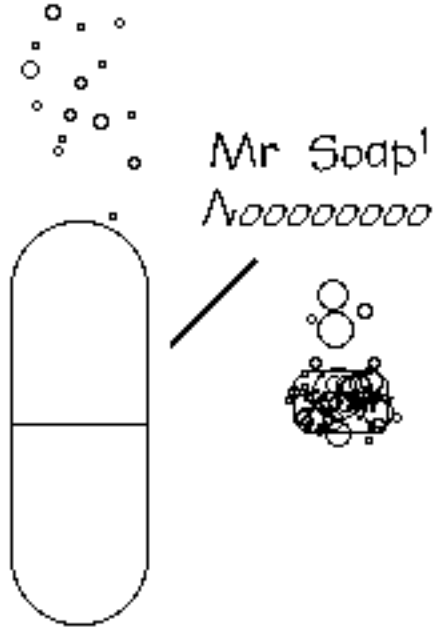


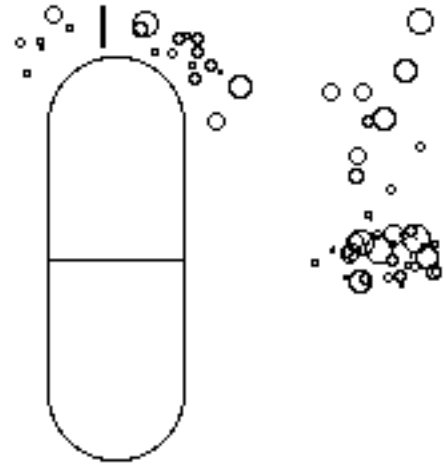
Triangle and Robert

Prozac doesn't require gaseous oxygen
He'll be fine

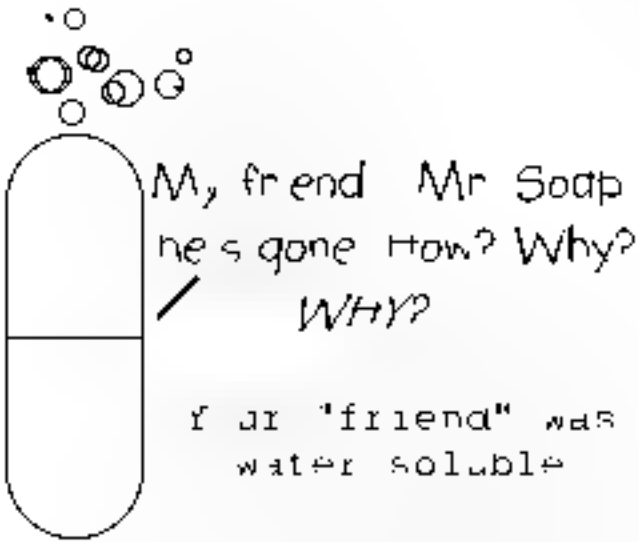
But what about

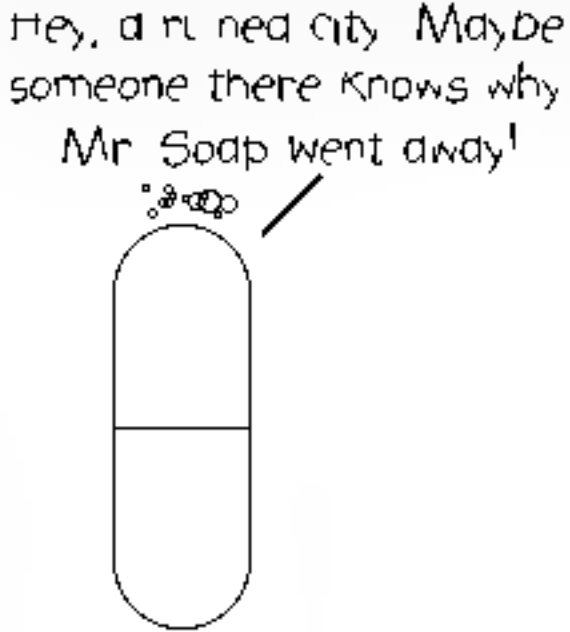


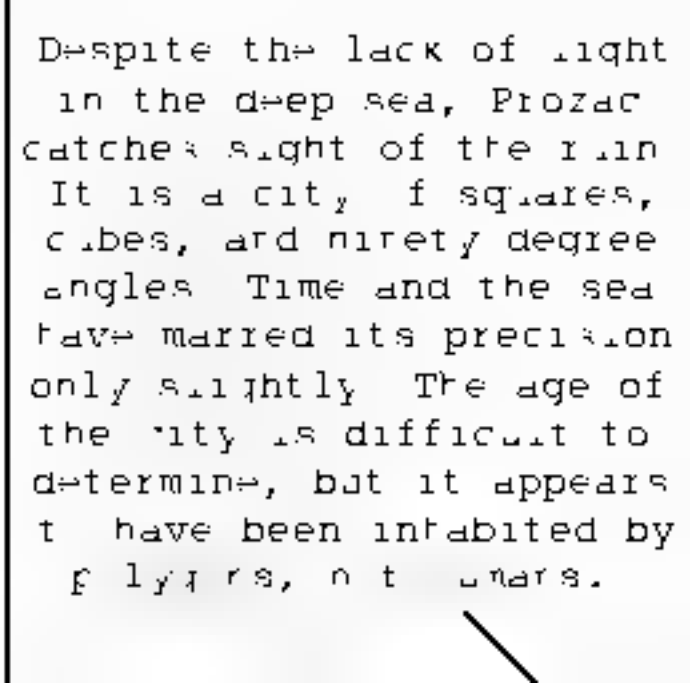




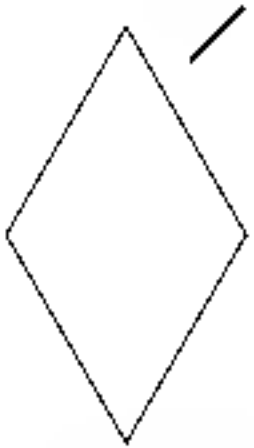
Triangle and Robert

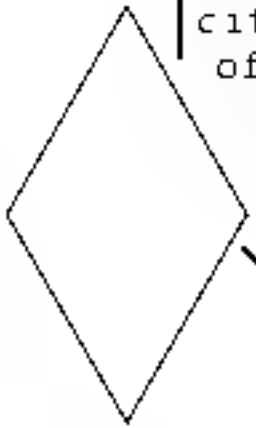




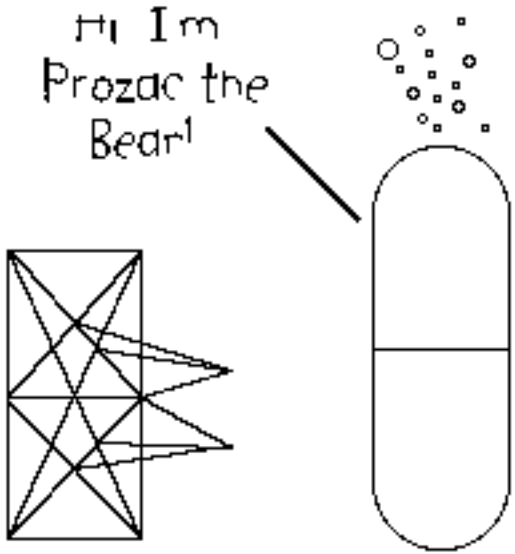


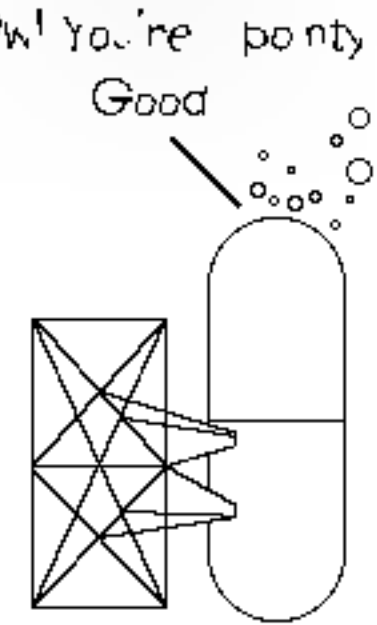
Triangle and Robert

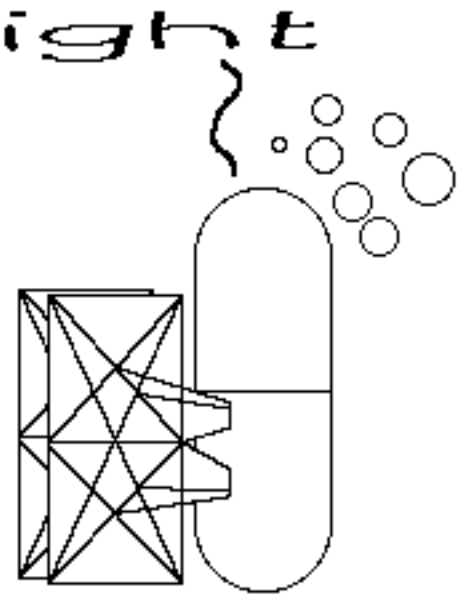




Triangle and Robert

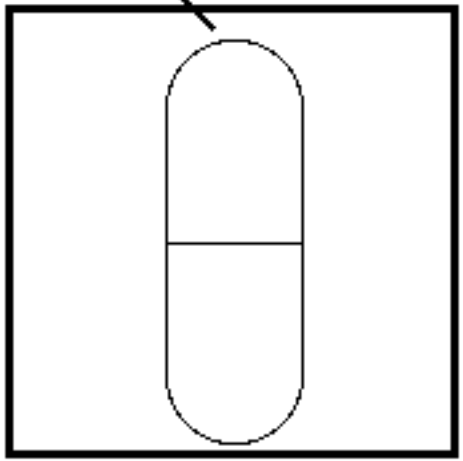




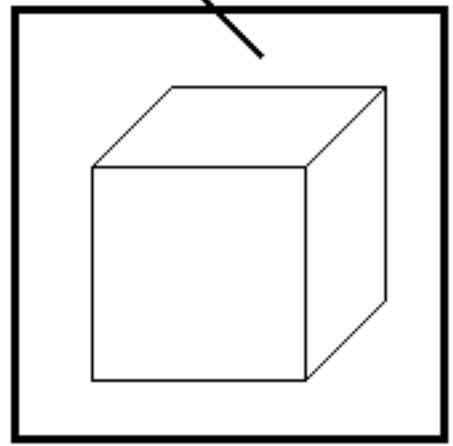


Triangle and Robert

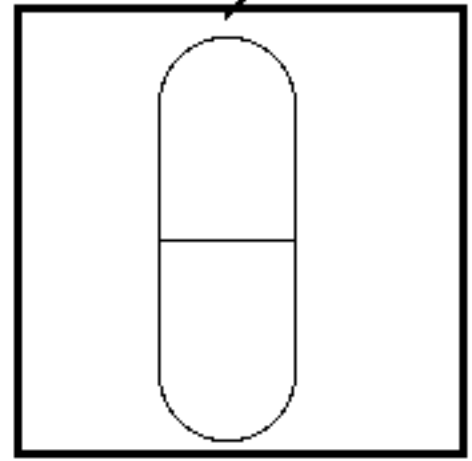
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!
Where am I?



You're in a confinement square.
Don't move around too much.



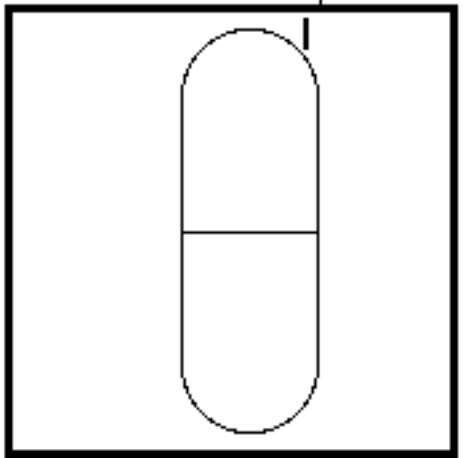
I feel sleepy



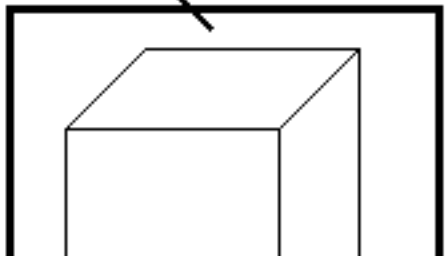
Triangle and Robert

This is the lost city of Tetris.

Tetris? You mean like the video game?

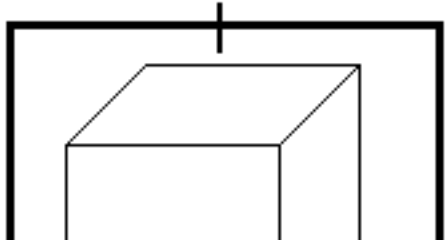


The game was loosely based on the legend. The Tetreans were said to have built their vast city of prefabricated cubes, until the cubes were packed so densely into rows that the city sank under its own weight and vanished from the earth.



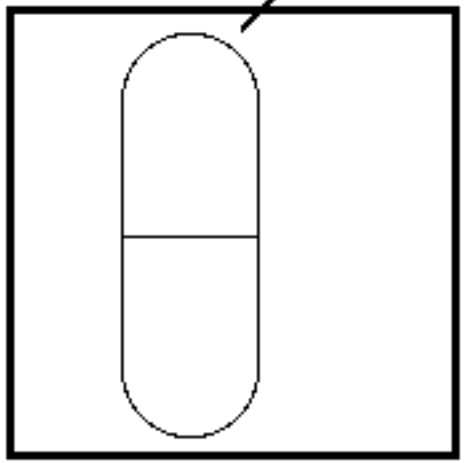
Is that what you're doing here?

Not exactly. I think it is why they put me in a square by myself though. Everyone else from the plane is in one much larger square.



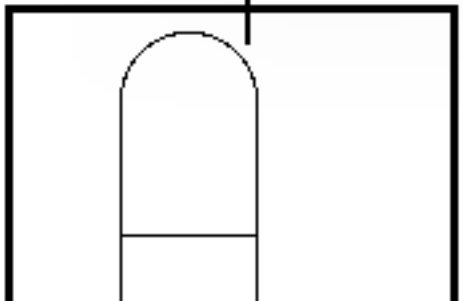
Triangle and Robert

Do you know where my friend Mr. Soap went?



Was he on the plane?

No. I brought him with me here but when we went underwater he turned all foamy and disappeared

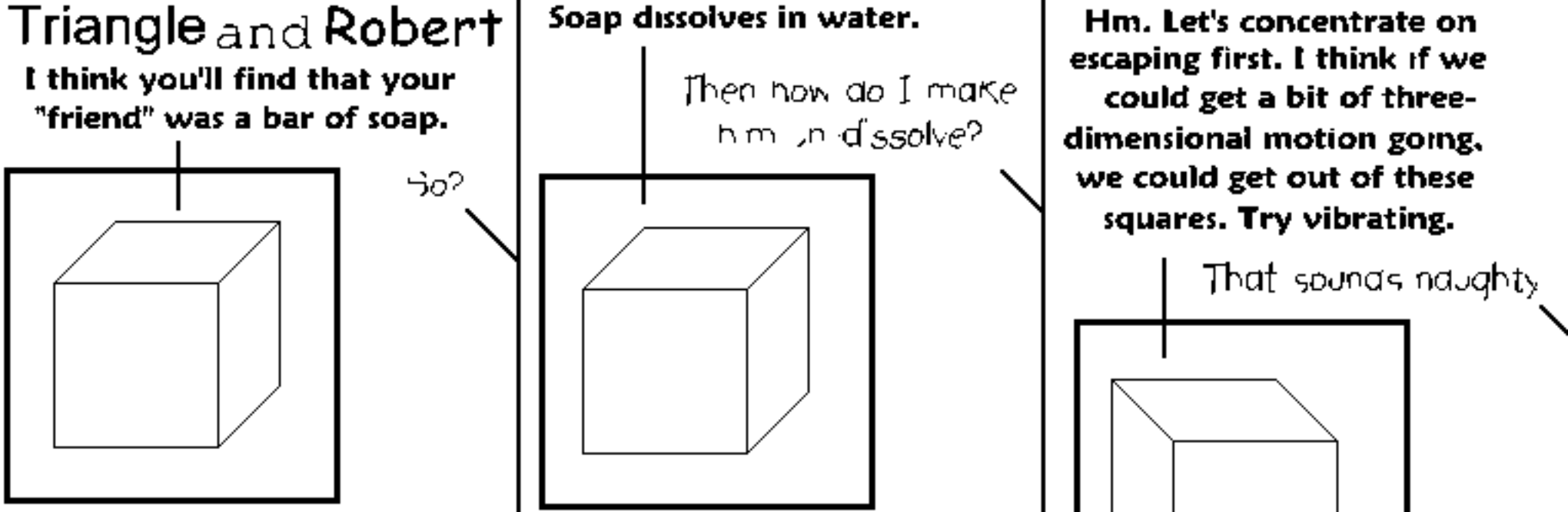


I see. Can you describe your friend to me?

Well, he's little, and oblong and has the word "SOAP" on him, and he didn't talk or move around much. Do you know him?

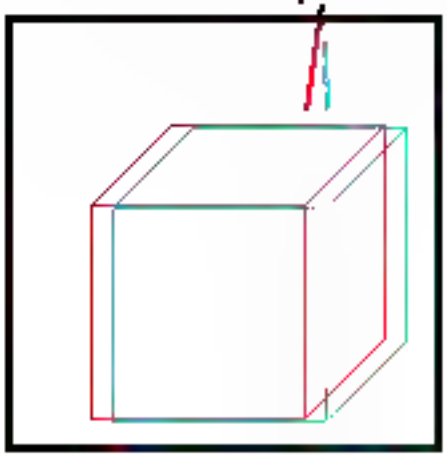
Well, your description <u>does</u> sound familiar.

Triangle and Robert

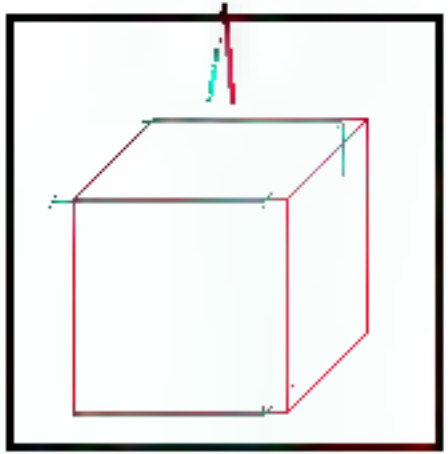


Triangle and Robert

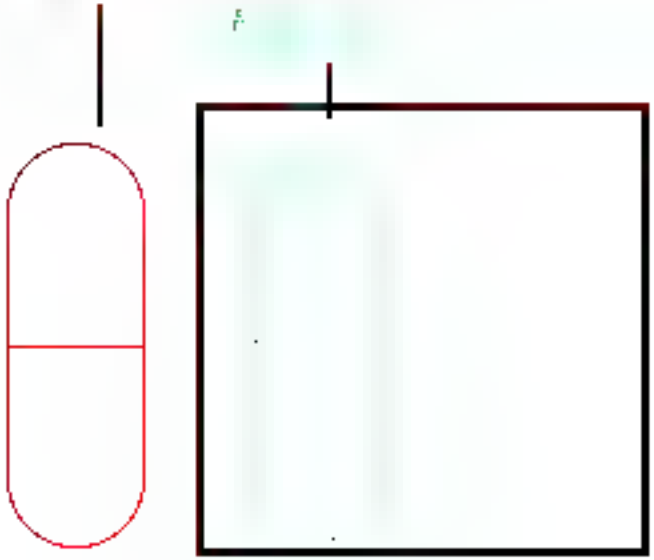
So far so good... I'll need to move more than this to get around the square though.



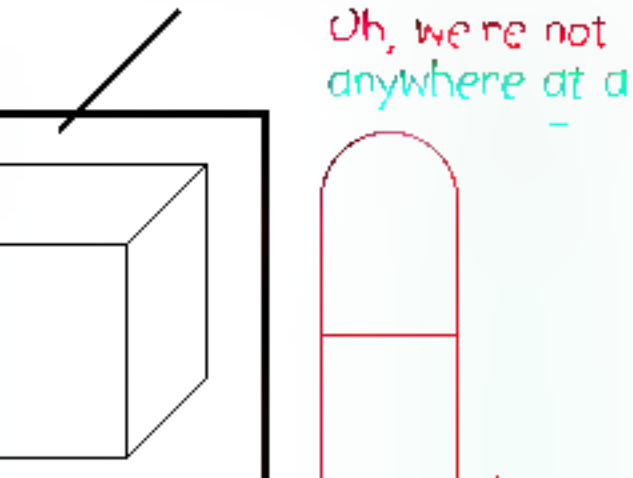
Just a little more... Prozac, how are you doing?

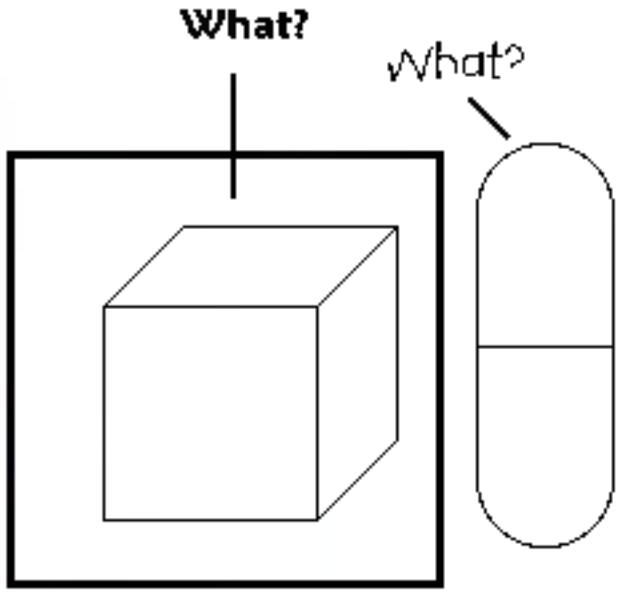


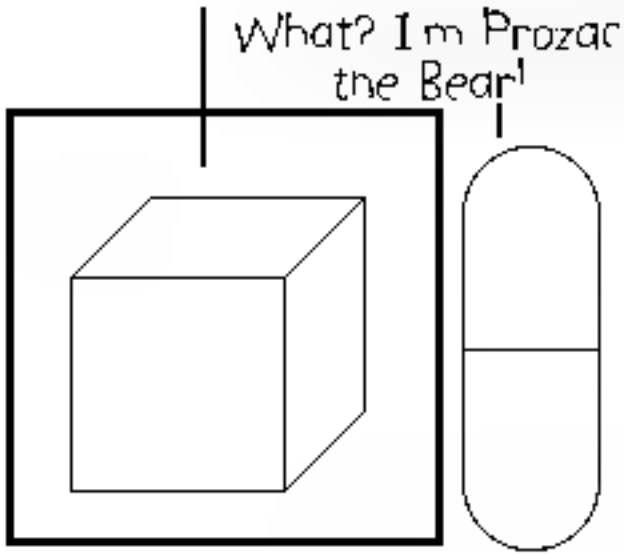
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!



Triangle and Robert

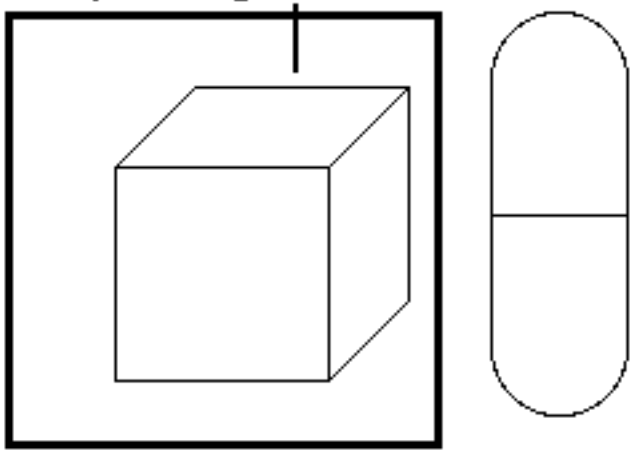


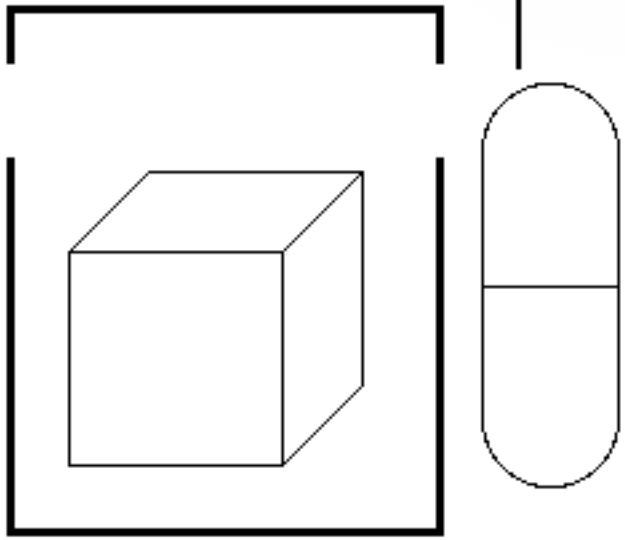




Triangle and Robert

I think you can get my square open from the outside. Try pressing on the corners.



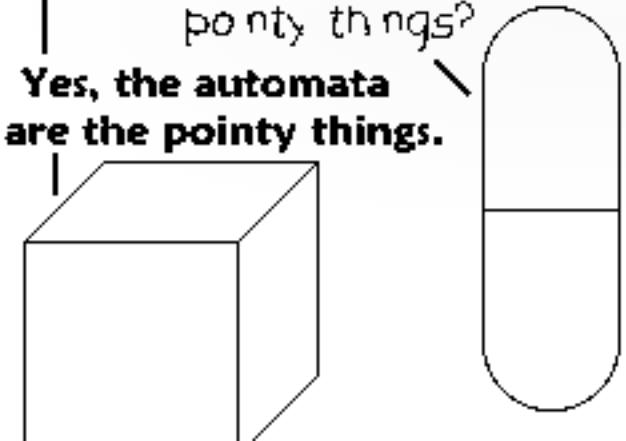


ray!

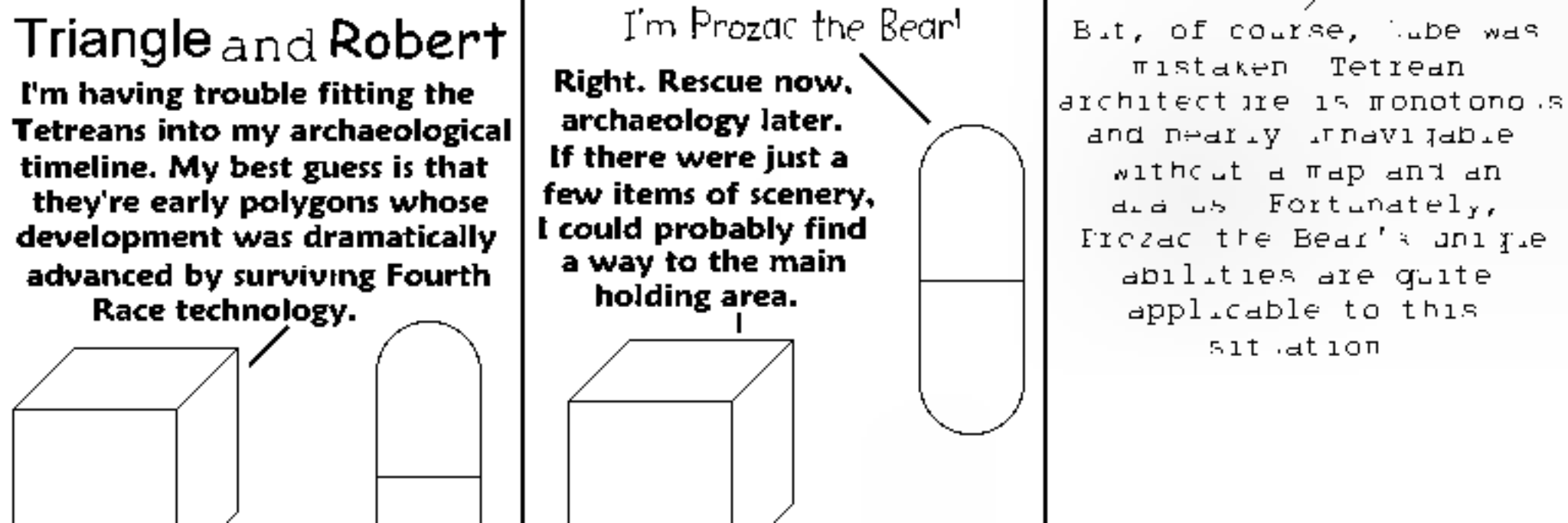
Now if we can stay away from the automata, we might be able to bust everyone out of here.

Are the automata the pointy things?

Yes, the automata are the pointy things.



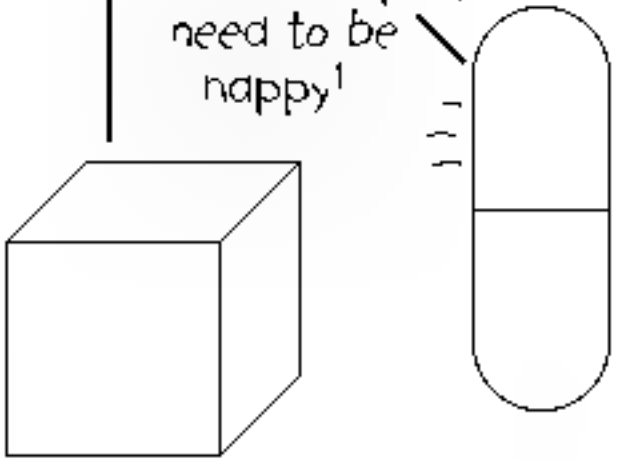
Triangle and Robert



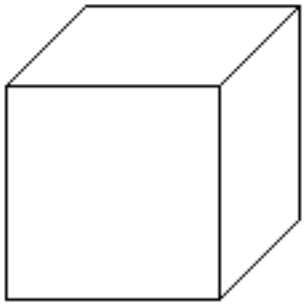
Triangle and Robert

Where are you going?

A bunch of people need to be happy!

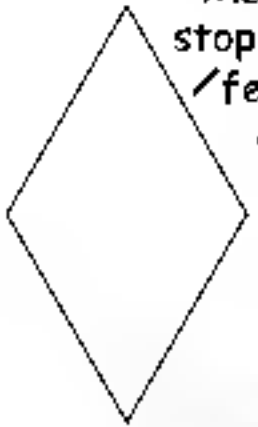


He must be going to free the other passengers. I might as well tag along. Once we're all free, though, we still have to get out of here....



Meanwhile, a submarine circles

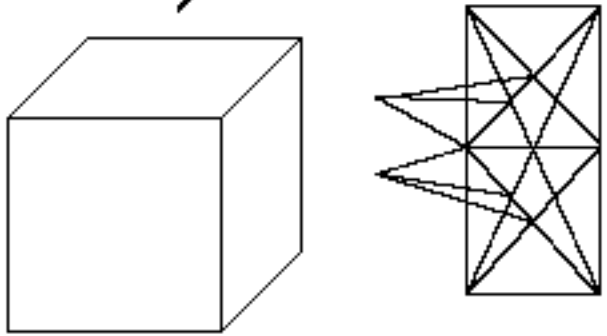
You know, if I can't get the left turn signal to stop blinking in the next few hours, I'm just gonna leave it on and go straight anyway



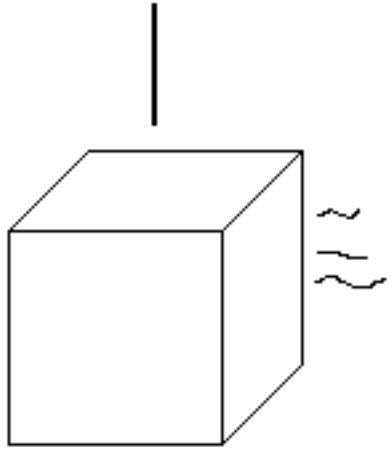
Triangle and Robert

Look out!

Huh? Whoa.



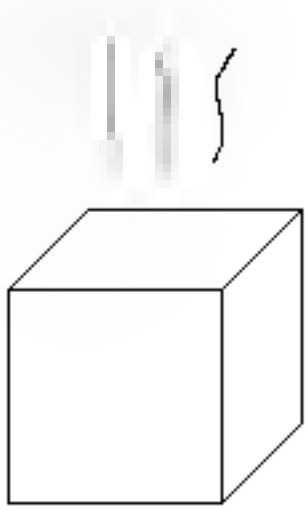
So you finally showed up. Where were you when I got captured in the first place?

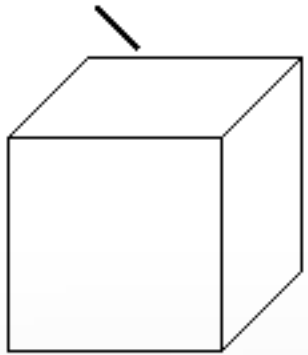


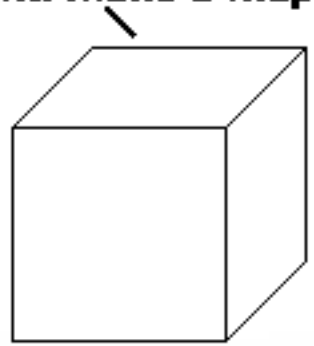
You hadn't come here. I think you've already started to understand what the peppermint means. If I just came right out and told you, that wouldn't be archaeology, and it wouldn't mean as much.

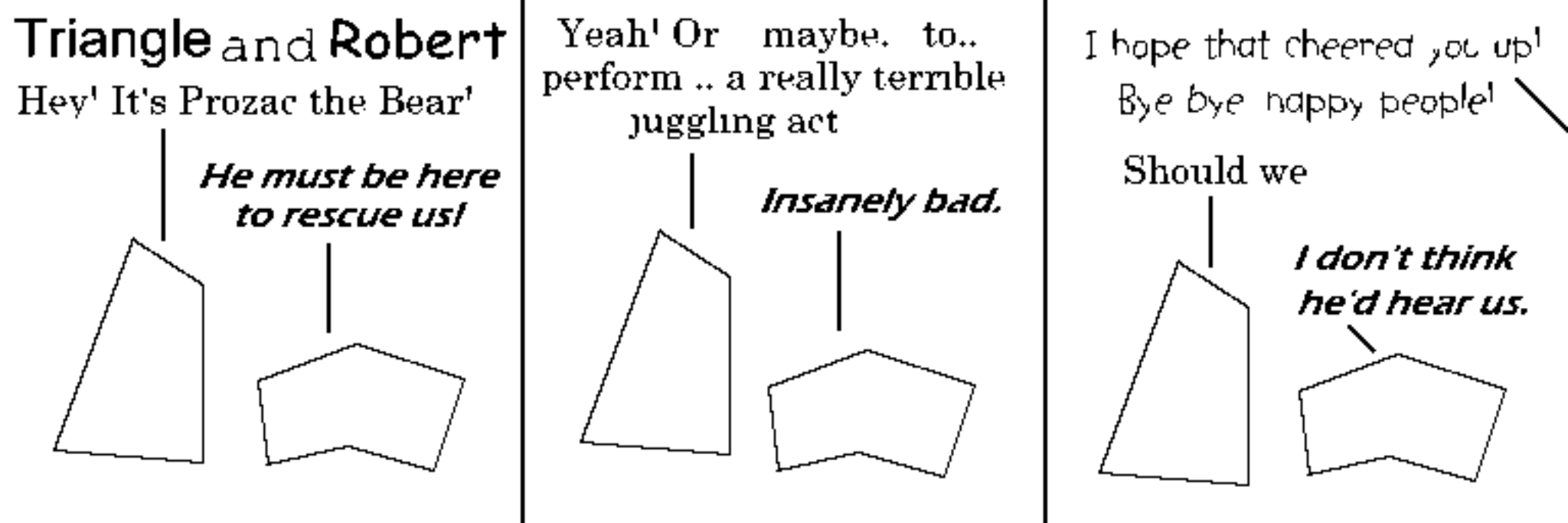
Whoops! Trap door!

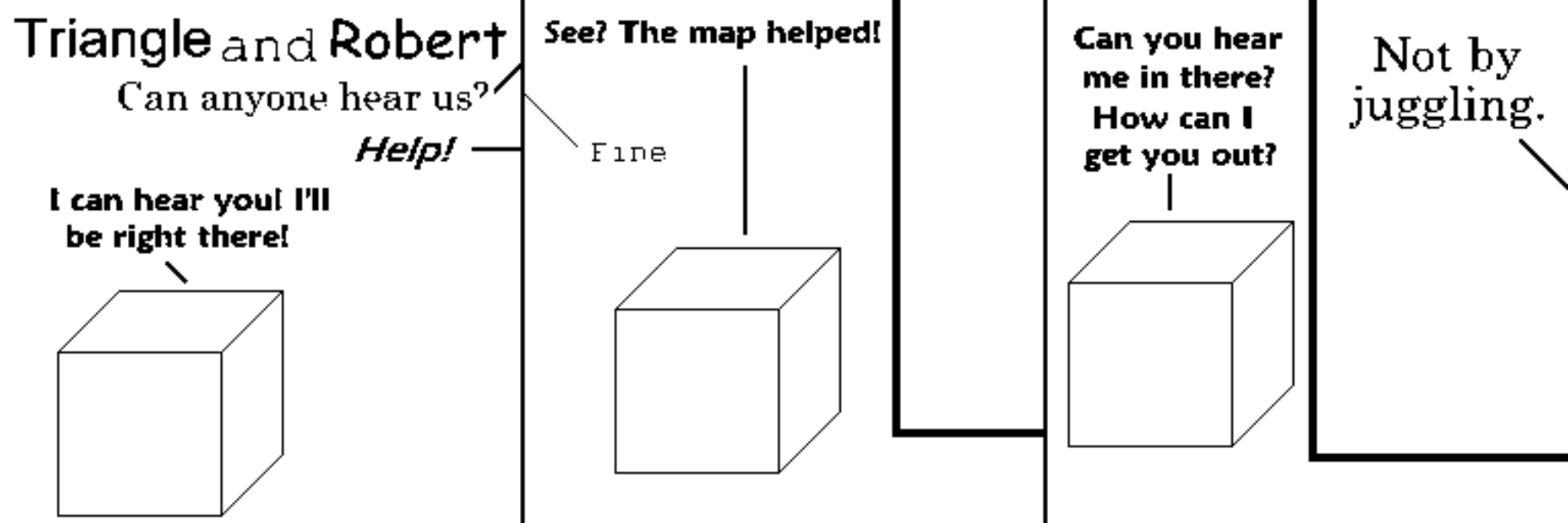
Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
Hey! It's Prozac the Bear!
He must be here to rescue us!
Yeah! Or maybe, to.. perform .. a really terrible juggling act
Insanely bad.
I hope that cheered you up! Bye bye happy people!
Should we
I don't think he'd hear us.

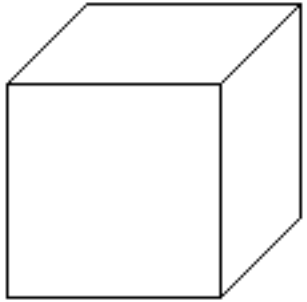

Triangle and Robert
Can anyone hear us?
Help!
I can hear you! I'll be right there!
See? The map helped!
Fine
Can you hear me in there? How can I get you out?
Not by juggling.

Triangle and Robert

When do the automata patrol by here? Is there a regular pattern?

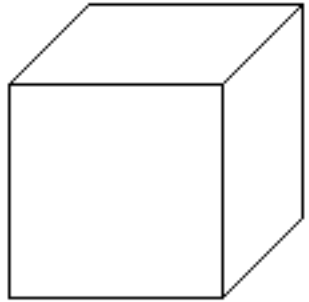
Automata?

The pointy things.

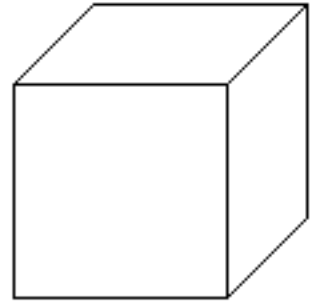


Why do you call them automata?

He must know something we don't.

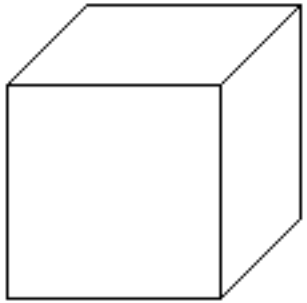


Yes, well... yes. That peppermill I was playing with drew the attention of Tetris's defenses. The actual inhabitants of the city are long since dead, but their servants continue to perform their functions.



Triangle and Robert

It all goes back to the Fourth Race. Some of you might have read about my research and its conclusions.



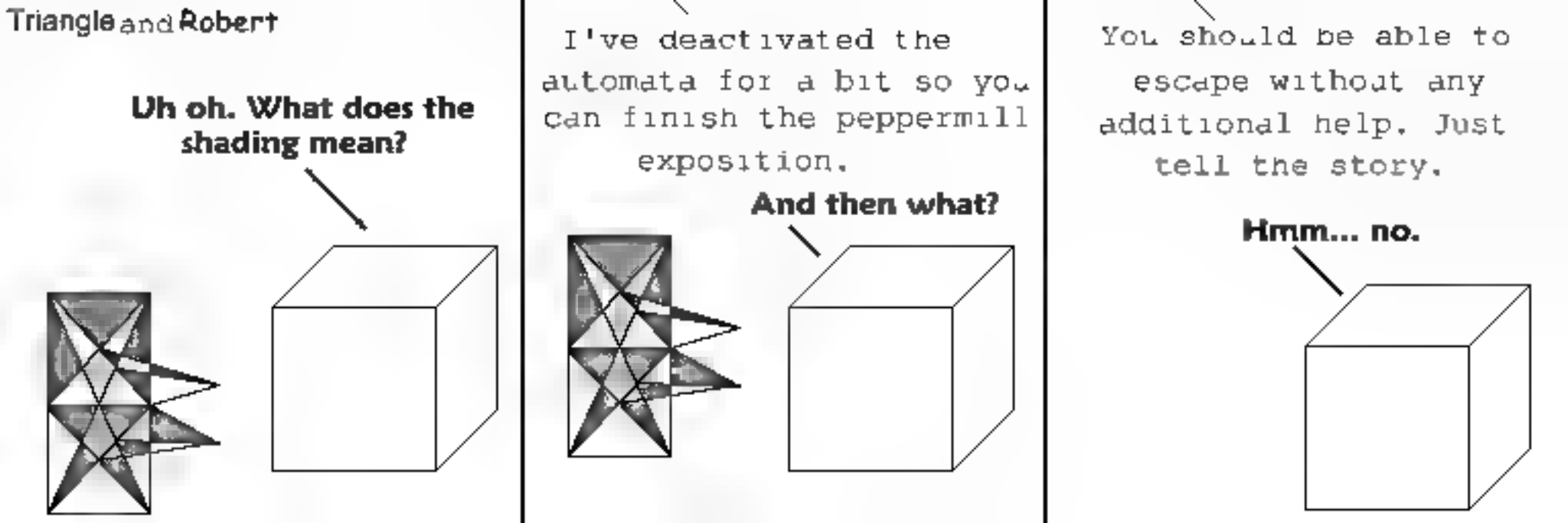
It's hard to believe, but I believe it. If the Cartoonist is possible, anything is

Well then, you know that the Fourth Race weren't polygons. That peppermill I had on the plane was a relic of theirs.

The Fourth Race had condiment technology? That's that's .

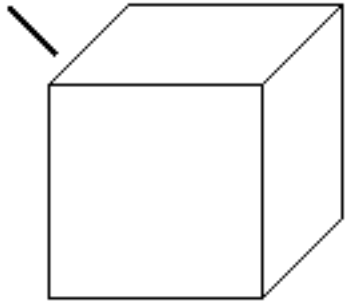
That's a very minor detail. Actually, the Fourth Race's cuisine contains many strange parallels to our own. I now know why that is, but let me get back to the peppermill first.

Triangle and Robert

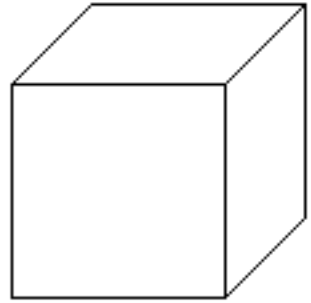


Triangle and Robert

Last time I advanced the plot for you, I ended up dead. Right now, I'm the only one who gets the whole point of the peppermill.

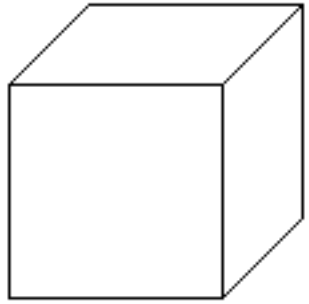


That means you'll keep me alive. If I give the exposition you want me to give, I'm useless to you.



It's not like I killed you on purpose!

That doesn't make me any more confident. You're dangerous, and I'm holding on to the one card I have.

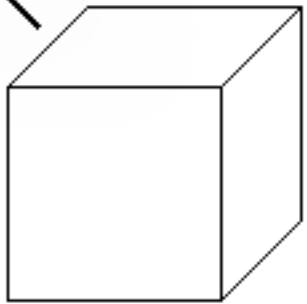


That isn't a purchase

Triangle and Robert

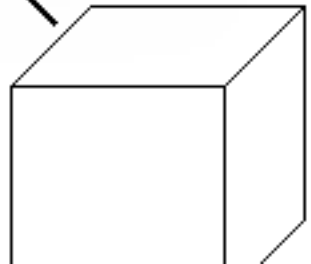
I que . I have t
reg tiate

Don't bother. I don't need anything from you.

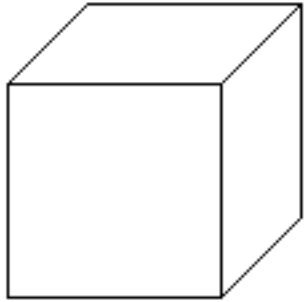


C ly the aut ata a
open the c nfirement
quare, a l they're
deactivated urtil I say
otherwise

I don't need to open the square to free the passengers.

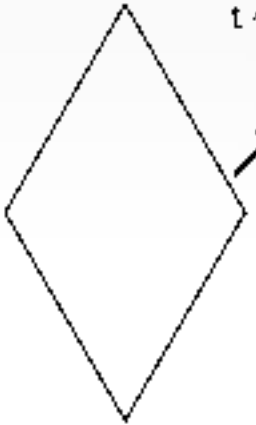


Oh



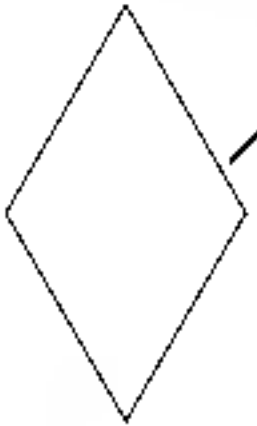
Triangle and Robert

Robert, jiggle the running light controls a little to get the turn signal to turn off



Aye aye

Cube I be fine, I think



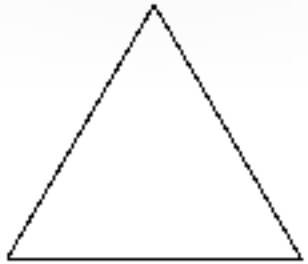
Aye aye!

Aye aye

Small primitive nocturnal forest dwelling primate of northern Madagascar that has a round head, large eyes and ears, and long thin fingers!

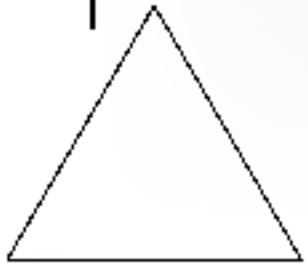
Triangle and Robert

You were right Cube can take care of himself By now he's probably freed everyone and is working on fixing the Tetrean teleportation pad



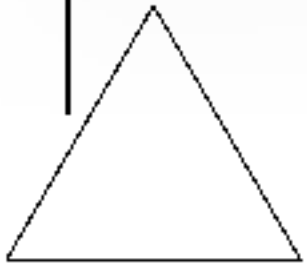
Does that mean the plot's going back to me now?

Yeah Mr Disease should be conscious soon

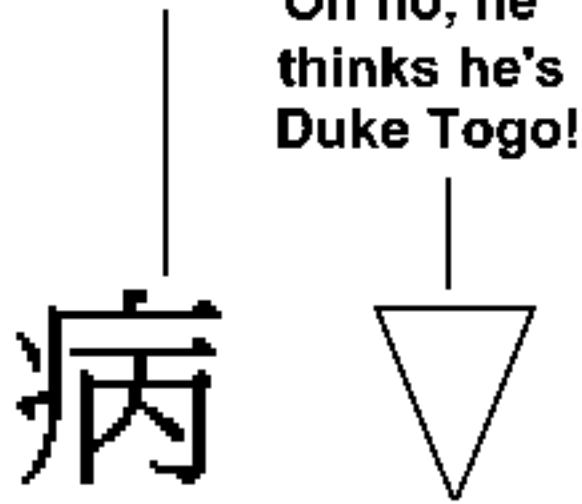


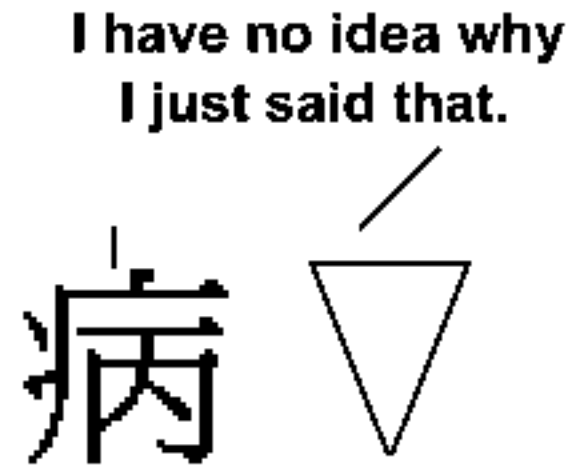
What about the peppermill?

Cube will eventually publish his research I'll just have to wait until then

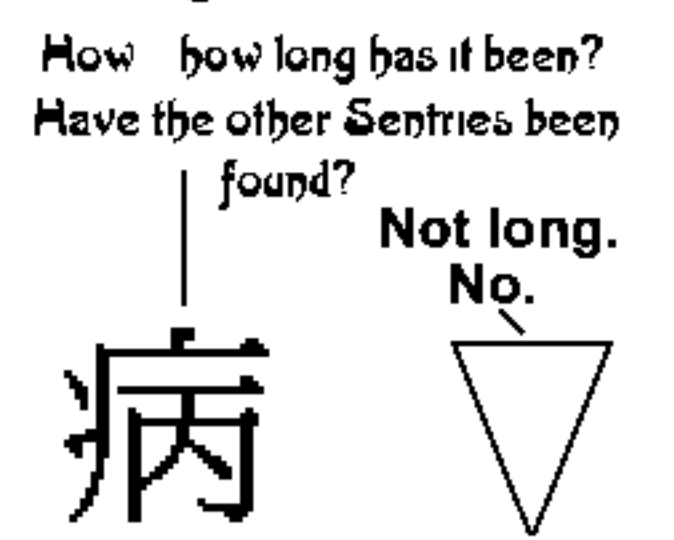


Triangle and Robert

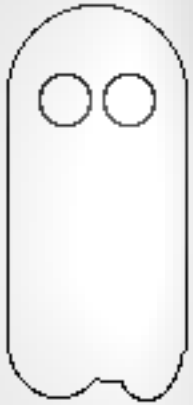




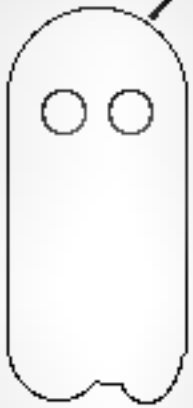
Triangle and Robert



Do not forget, Orpuddex knows much and reveals little. Chance brought him to Tetris, but he has plans.

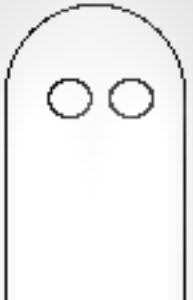


I can provide my OWN mood narration, thank you very much.



You have your job, I have mine

Having slipped out of the group confinement square well before Cube's rescue of the passengers, Orpuddex slides unnoticed through the rooms of the underwater city.



Are you done now?

I think so.

Triangle and Robert

I swiftly make my way to the central control system of the vast geopudding pumps which still power the forgotten metropolis of Tetris.

But upon reaching the main console, Orpuddex is dismayed

No. ME. MY narration. You just draw.

If there's narration to be done, I'm doing it

You allowed the cube to narrate!

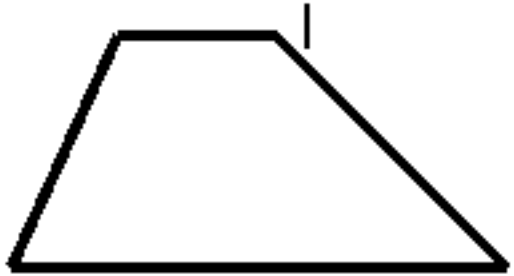
That was recapping and exposition I reserve narration for myself.

Such selfishness is unbecoming.

Triangle and Robert
Crpullex and I have reached a compromise He'll ie ap what he did ir Tetris when he's d ne, ar i until then I il p irt the strip at s mettiing else Um .
Let's check on what the F cd Pyramid is doing!
... a few satchel charges here....
timer to 12 minutes... there we go. Not even Trapezoidal Agent 59 is going to be able to stop these babies from going off

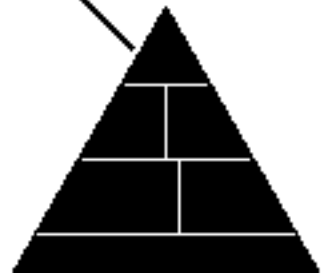
Triangle and Robert

... so the RDCLBA sent the new guy. I've been hoping to check out this "Pyramid"...

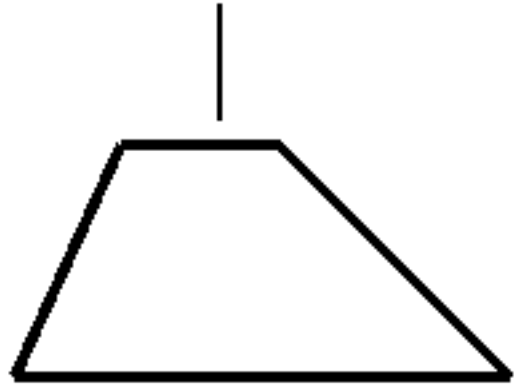


What was that?... The roof! I heard you up there I presume? It doesn't matter. This tomb is getting sealed no matter what the ICI wants.

59



So I was expected. That should make this more interesting.

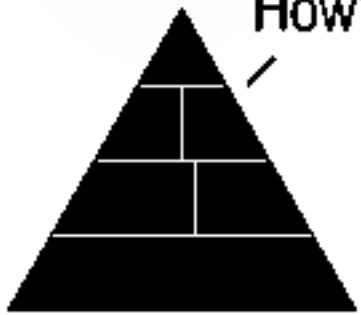


Triangle and Robert
Come back and fight!
No. You can't defuse all the charges in ten minutes.
I'll stay at a safe distance and watch. I'd advise you for your own sake to do the same.
Thank goness I was worried I'd cornered myself into a fight scene
The Cartoonist? Here?
What are you doing here? This isn't one of your plots!

Triangle and Robert

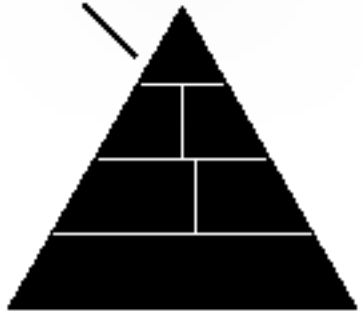
What am I doing here? I'm saving your scrawny apex, that's what

How?



Um . actually I didn't mean to type that I'm here because I'll be back in the main story soon

Which branch?



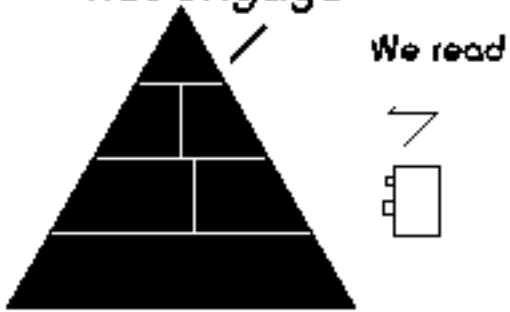
Most of them I think you're next in line to touch what's left of the Starham

Would letting me know what the Starham will do in advance be totally out of the question?

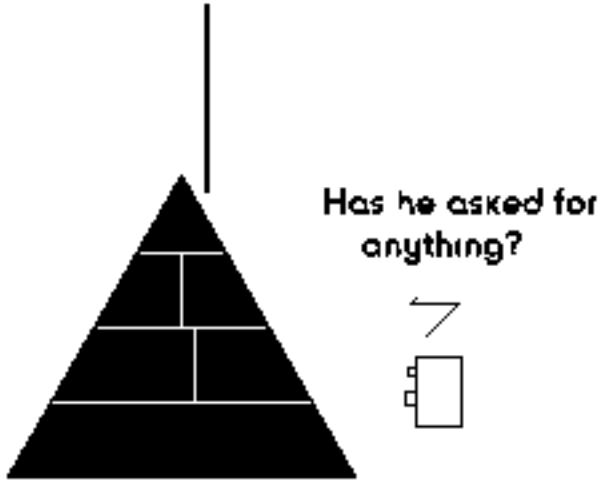
Just wondering.

Triangle and Robert

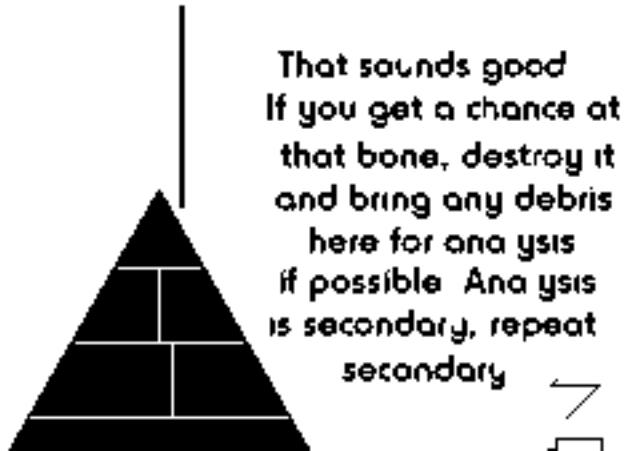
Pyramid to command. The tomb is sealed. 59 was present. I did not engage



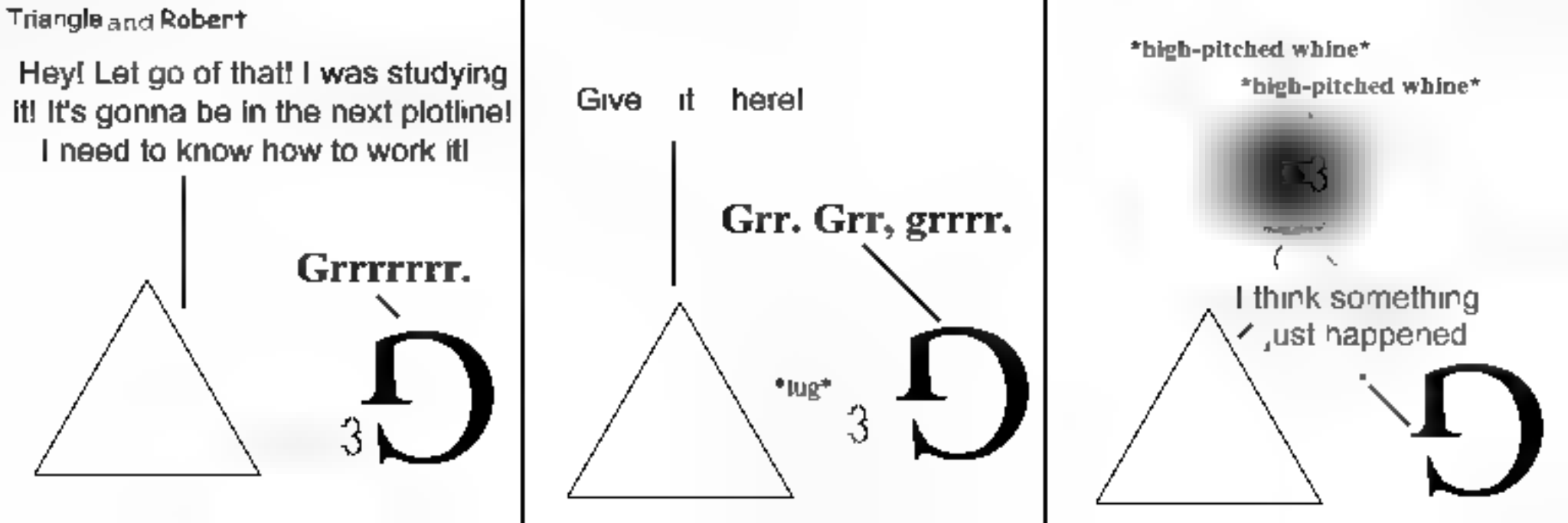
The Cartoonist has contacted me.



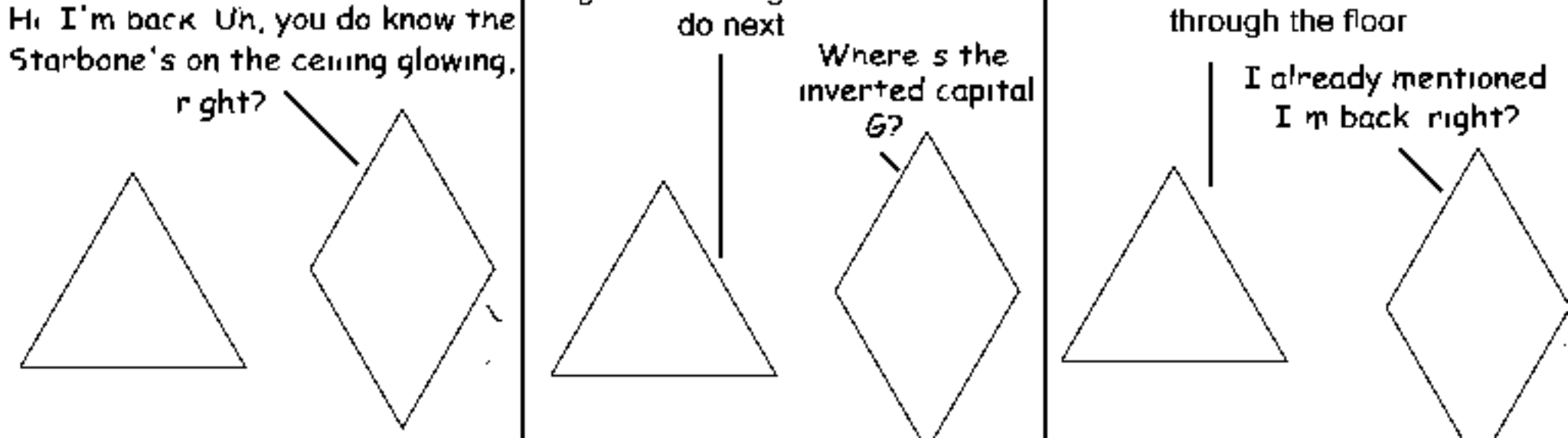
No. He has indicated that I will have access to the Starham leftover artifact.



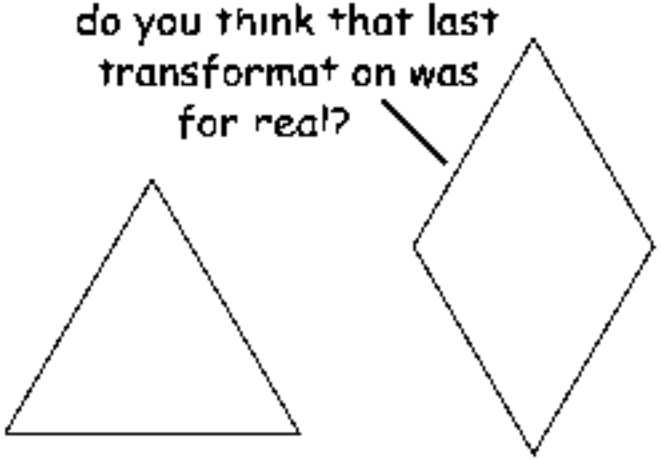
Triangle and Robert

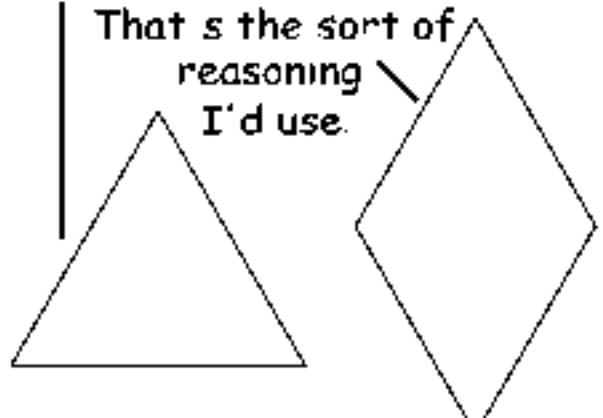


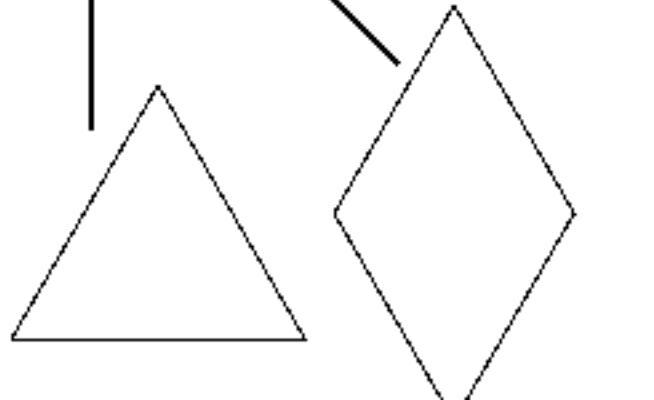
Triangle and Robert

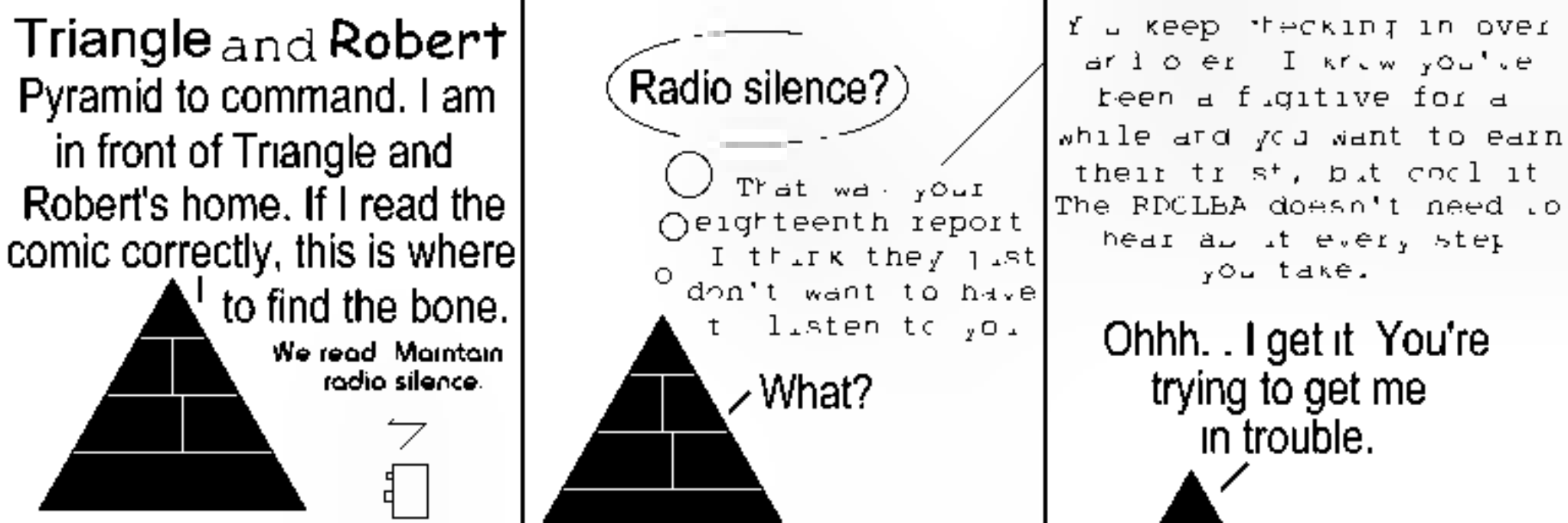


Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
Pyramid to command. I am in front of Triangle and Robert's home. If I read the comic correctly, this is where I to find the bone.
We read Maintain radio silence.
Radio silence?
That was your eighteenth report. I think they just don't want to have to listen to you.
What?
You keep checking in over and over. I know you've been a fugitive for a while and you want to earn their trust, but cool it. The RDCLBA doesn't need to hear about every step you take.
Ohhh.. I get it. You're trying to get me in trouble.

Triangle and Robert

Pyramid to command! Mr. Disease is approaching the Triangle and Robert home.

Pyramid! Radio silence! Do not report until your mission is complete

Hmm... does Mr. Disease have a radio scanner?

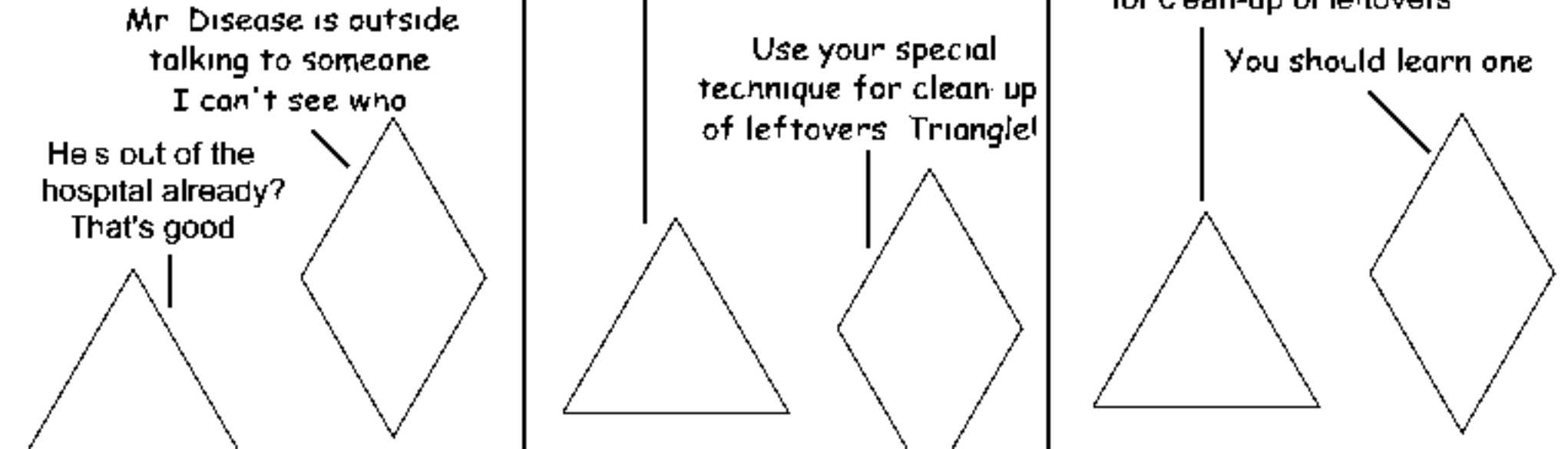
Excuse me? Sir? Are you the Food Pyramid?

What's it to you?

If you are, I owe you an apology

病

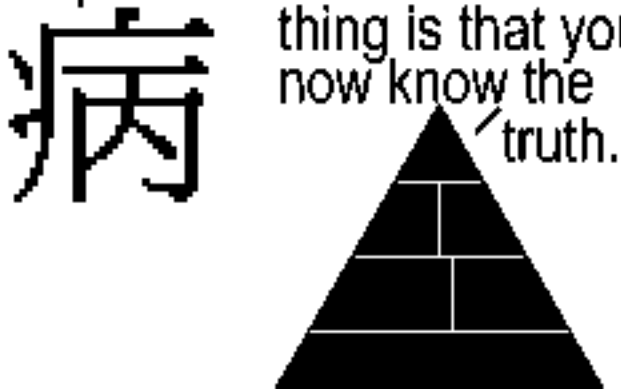
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

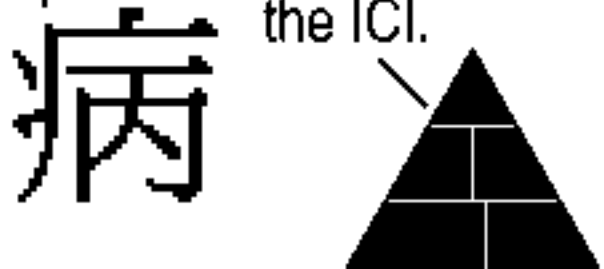
and so, I'm sorry

The ICI has deceived many. The important thing is that you now know the truth.



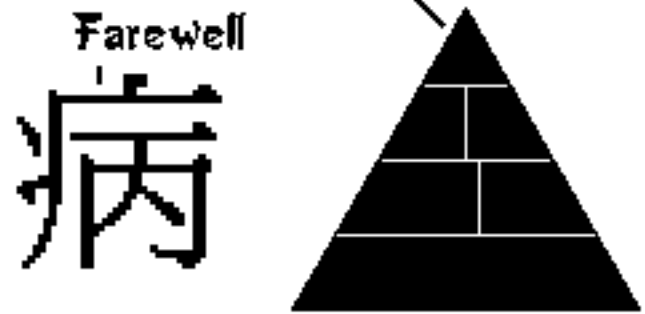
I still don't think the ICI is all bad. The ancient ways are important

The ancient ways can preserve themselves. They don't need the ICI.



Anyway, it's about time I dropped in on Triangle and Robert. I'm not just standing here for my health

Farewell



Triangle and Robert

H hello

We have a lot to talk about, Chosen One. First, though, I have to do my job.

Your job?

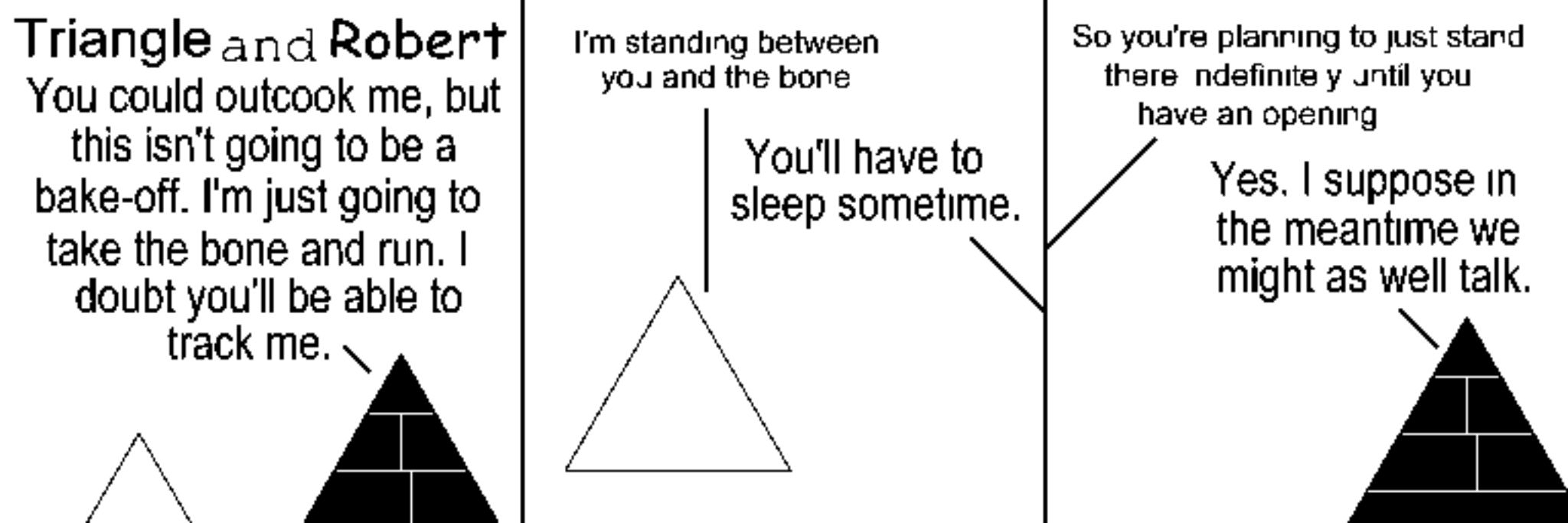
I'm with the RDCLBA now. With their resources, I'm unravelling more and more of the ICI conspiracy.

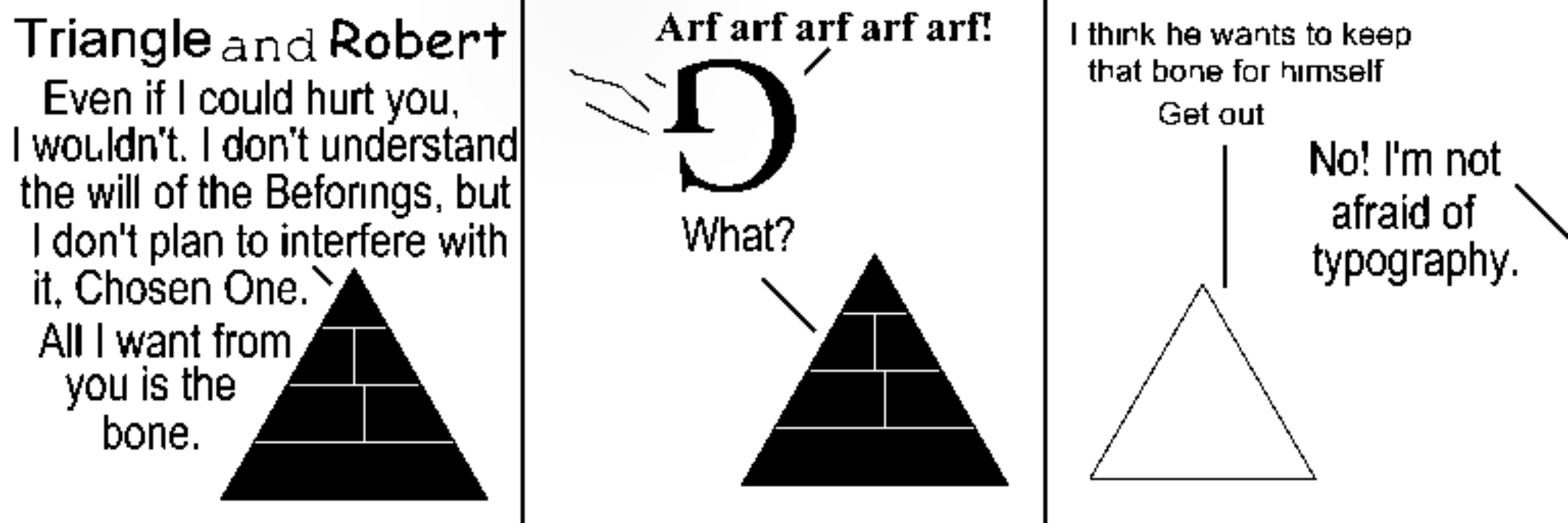
In exchange I destroy a few artifacts the RDCLBA doesn't want to get out. I see you've been working with the Starham bone.

I'm not handing it over We both know have the upper hand here

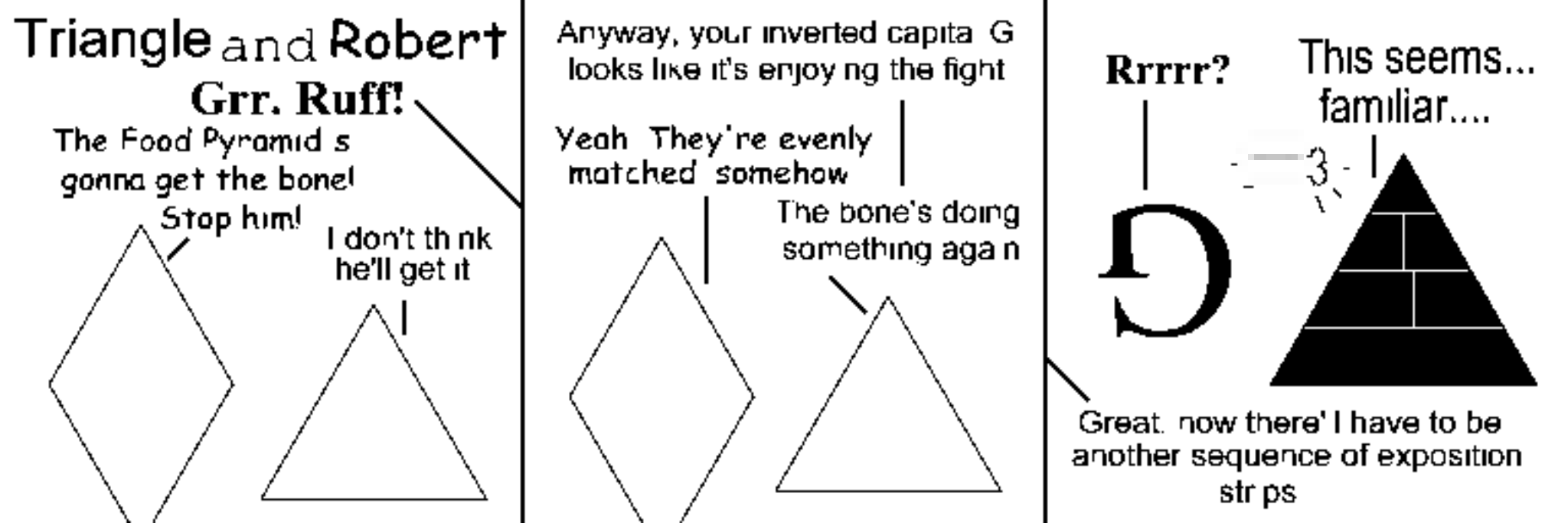
Do I have to say "You don't have any hands" now?

Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
Even if I could hurt you, I wouldn't. I don't understand the will of the Beforings, but I don't plan to interfere with it, Chosen One.
All I want from you is the bone.
Arf arf arf arf arf!
What?
I think he wants to keep that bone for himself
Get out
No! I'm not afraid of typography.

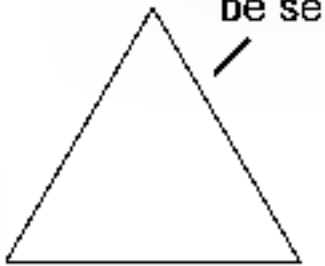
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Neither the Food Pyramid nor the inverted Capital G tired. They fought for days without rest

Robert, you shouldn't be selling tickets



There's a market demand!

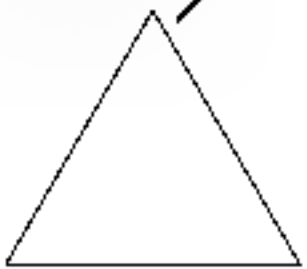
We can't seat all these spectators! They keep leaving with the silverware!

Souvenirs!

You're really enjoying this aren't you

The bone's behavior became more and more unusual, but no effects were to be seen until a few more people arrived.

Just what we need



Triangle and Robert

YOU!

Enforcer Concarne!

I'm unarmed!

I'm here to watch the fight! They're selling tickets! I have as much of a right to watch as anyone!

Don t even think about going for the Starbone

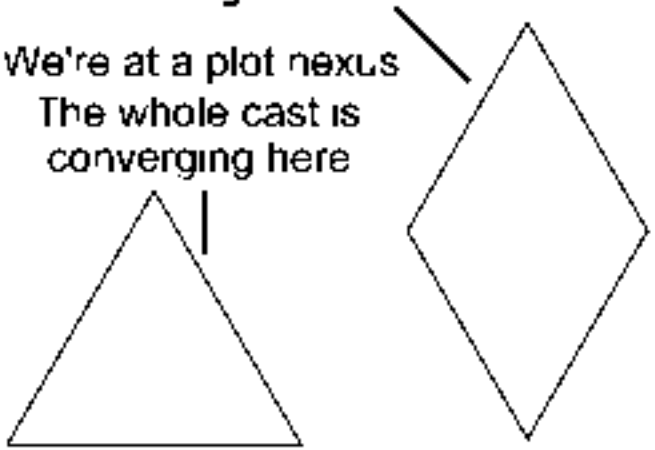
Don't worry! I'm off duty! This is just for my own curiosity!

I don t believe you, but go on

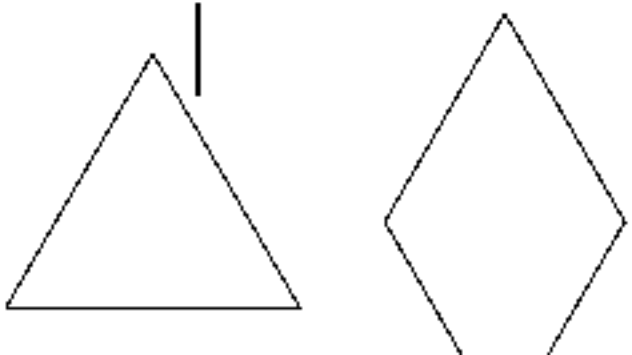
Triangle and Robert

That Concarne woman just bought a t cket

We're at a plot nexus The whole cast is converging here



Cube te eported n ast strip wh le you weren't looking and he's babbl ng about not being able to find Orpuddex The Vegetable Sentry came in to use the bathroom and hasn't left

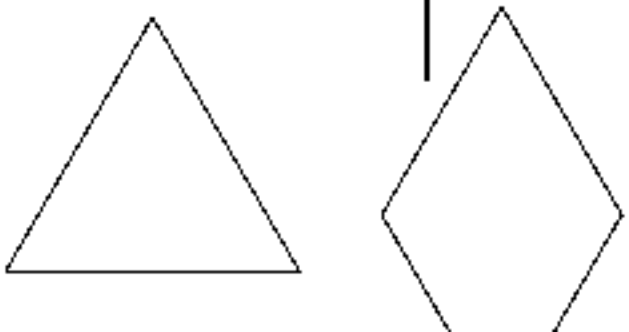


Ow! Someth ng fee s ow

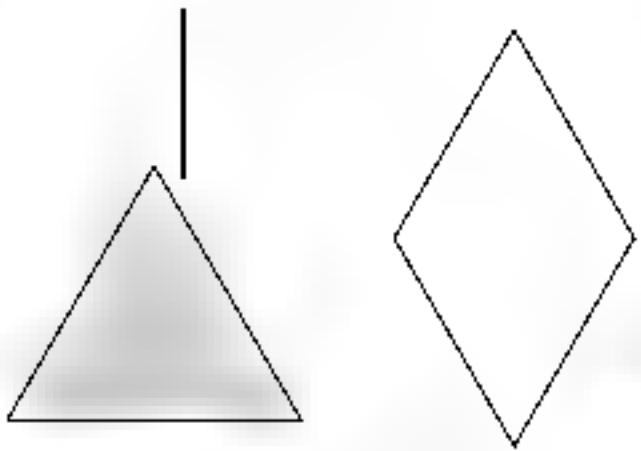
Triangle?

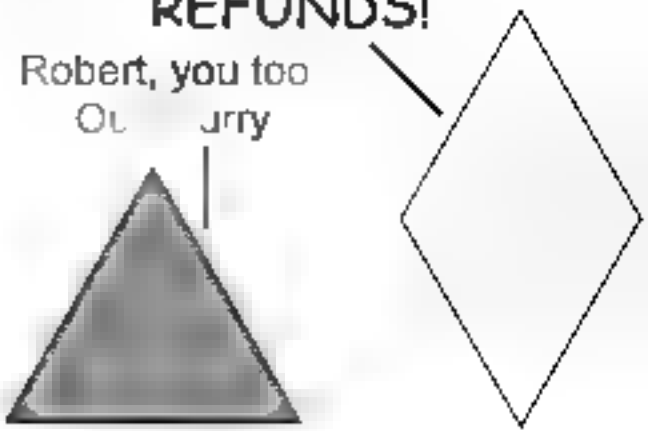
Too many chefs

Were you cooking something?



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Hey! Vegetab e Sentry! Get out of the bathroom! Someth ng s happen ng!

Quiet. I'm meditating.

Food Pyram d! Inverted cap tal G we never bothered to name! Get away from the bone! Can't you see what it's do ng?

I'm not turning back.

Arf.

Miss Concarne! Move! I'm getting out of here!

No! I think I need to see this!

Your funera

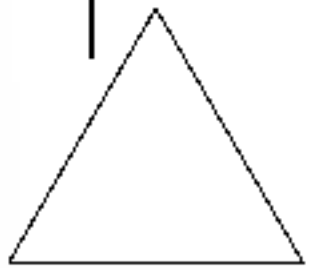
Triangle and Robert

With the Food Pyramid, the inverted capital G, the Vegetable Sentry, and Meat Enforcer Linda Concarne still inside, Triangle hastily evacuates his home. The crowd has already dispersed

Aren't you standing sort of close?

No. Just as the Starham itself is cured beyond all logic, so too do those who consume its power become cured

Cured?



The G, the Pyramid, and the Enforcer are in there with it because they need to be

As for the Vegetable Sentry, the conclusion is obvious

Could you state it anyway just for the readers at home?

Triangle and Robert

The Vegetable Sentry was awakened from his slumber when he was needed
Orpuddex, by all accounts, is becoming more powerful than ever by drawing from the Tetrean pudding pumps
All four Sentries will be needed, and so all are being awakened

When Linda Concarne touched the Starbone for the first time, she dimly remembered her past; since then he has been at least partially on your side, though she knows not why

The logic is inescapable
Somehow, Linda Concarne was once the Meat Sentry. How she became what she became I don't know Hopefully the ham energies will heal her fully now that all four are assembled

How do you know a l this?

I reread the strip archive

Triangle and Robert

As you have suspected, the inverted capital G you keep as a pet was not always a letter Once, it was a Sentry, either Grain or Dairy. I believe it to have been the Dairy Sentry, for the Pyramid seems to me aligned with grain

As you know, the various segments of the Food Pyramid symbolize food groups The largest, at his base, consists of the complex carbohydrates He must be the Grain Sentry How he forgot this. I do not understand.

We should stil get out of here Benevolent or not, that's a lot of energy

Yes... you may be right. The air has far more calories in it than I had earlier sensed

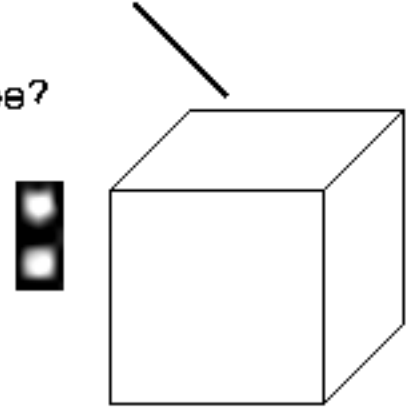
Triangle and Robert

The whole point of the Food Pyramid's teachings was that there aren't necessarily four food groups and he's one of the four Sentries?

Clearly, he was mistaken.

No. He was correct... there don't have to be four Sentries. I found this in Tetris.

A v deotape?



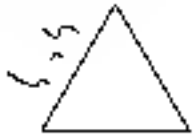
A very, very old videotape. I suspect that the format was used by the Fourth Race. It is a documentary, and while I do not understand the language of the narration, the images tell many things. One of these many revelations is that, at the time of the height of Tetris's glory, polygons were unable to digest dairy products. How this changed I do not know, but the point is this: in the days of Tetris, dairy

Triangle and Robert

How this changed I do not know, but the point is this: in the days of Tetris, dairy products were not food and dairy was not a food group. There were three Sentries.

That would probably blow my mind, if I weren't busy getting out of range of an impending culinary-magical discharge

Think about it later then.



THREE food groups?

病

This was more or less the exact moment that the Starbone finally activated. The Oval, which had entered low orbit after the RECLBA crisis, fully attempted to destroy it, momentarily lost power. Its backup guidance systems malfunctioned and it plummeted uncontrollably.

Triangle and Robert

What Triangle termed a "plot nexus" did not, in fact, directly involve the entire cast. The Cornersheep in par 1C3.1a1 was nowhere near the awakening of the Sentries.

Even from Scotland I can feel the echoes of the blast. Of course, that's because I'm telepathic and everything.

Okay, so he felt it, but he's still not actually involved in the plot.

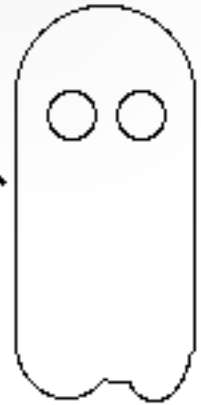
Then why am I in today's strip?

Triangle and Robert

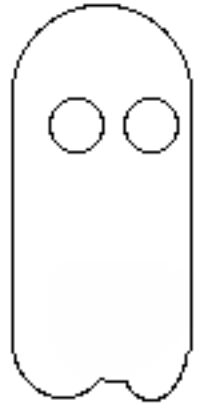
Another character not present for the awakening of the Sentries was Cryptidex.

SENTRIES?

How many?



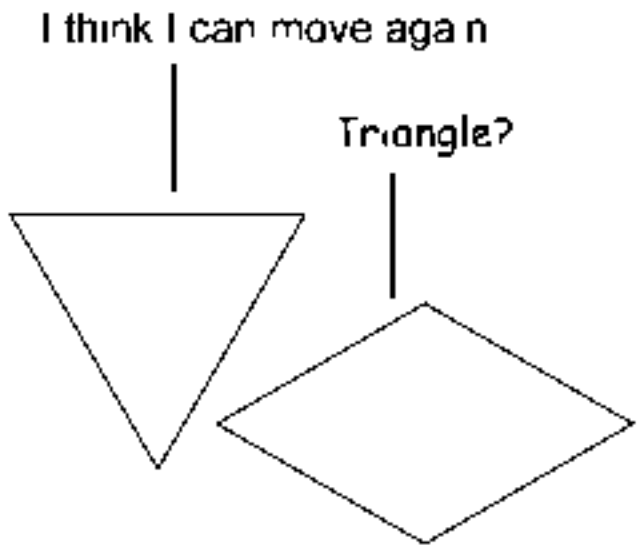
Three awakened, plus the Vegetable Sentry's still active. All four Sentries are in play.

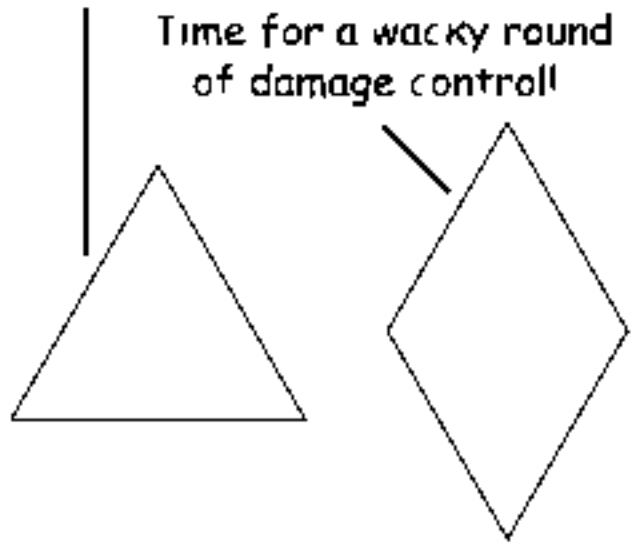


I could not have come to Tetris at a more opportune time.

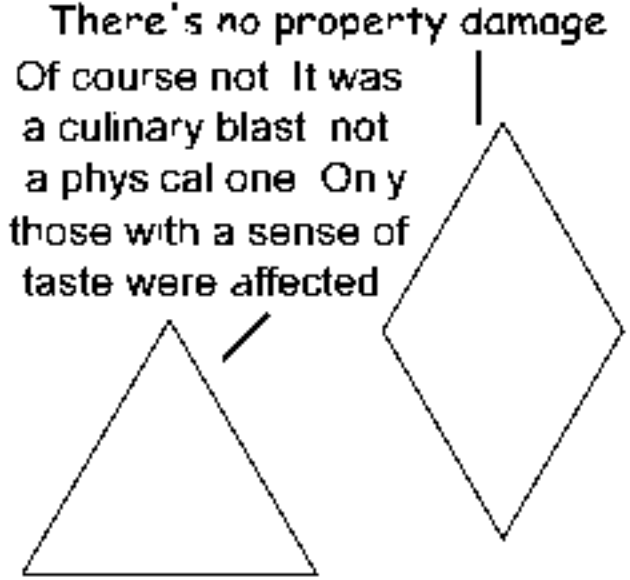
The pudding at the world's core strengthened me before, but only briefly. I was unable to defeat even a single sentry. This time, I have not absorbed directly. Using the machinery of Tetris, I have infused myself with far more puddic force than raw earth-pudding could grant me.

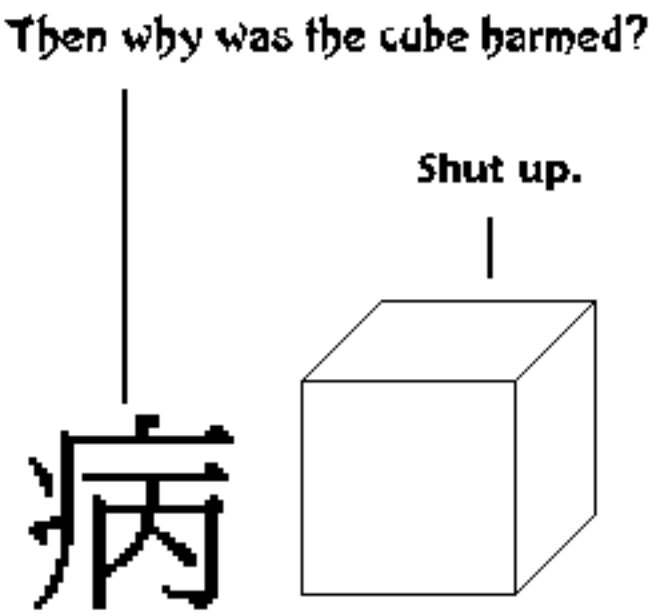
Triangle and Robert

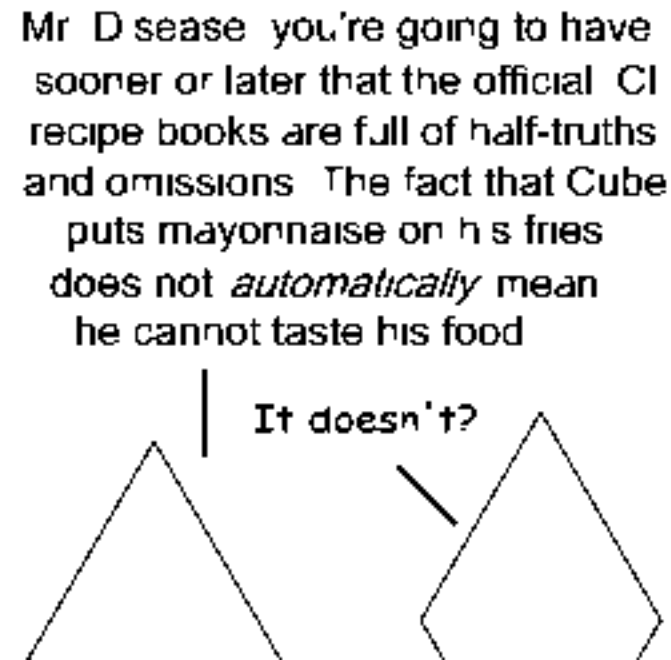




Triangle and Robert



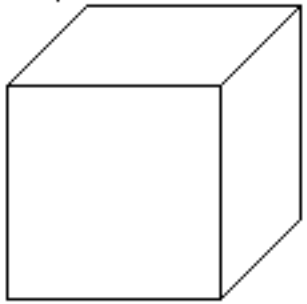




Triangle and Robert

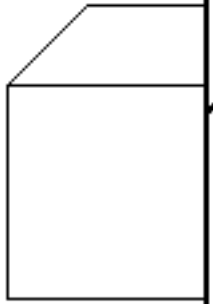
Look. The historical record clearly shows that in the Holy Belgian Empire, mayonnaise was put on fries on a regular basis.

Yeah, and where are they now?



Potato products had NOTHING to do with the fall of the Holy Belgian Empire. That was brought on by Coriolis force.

Coriolis force . you archaeologists always bring in Coriolis force to explain what you can't understand

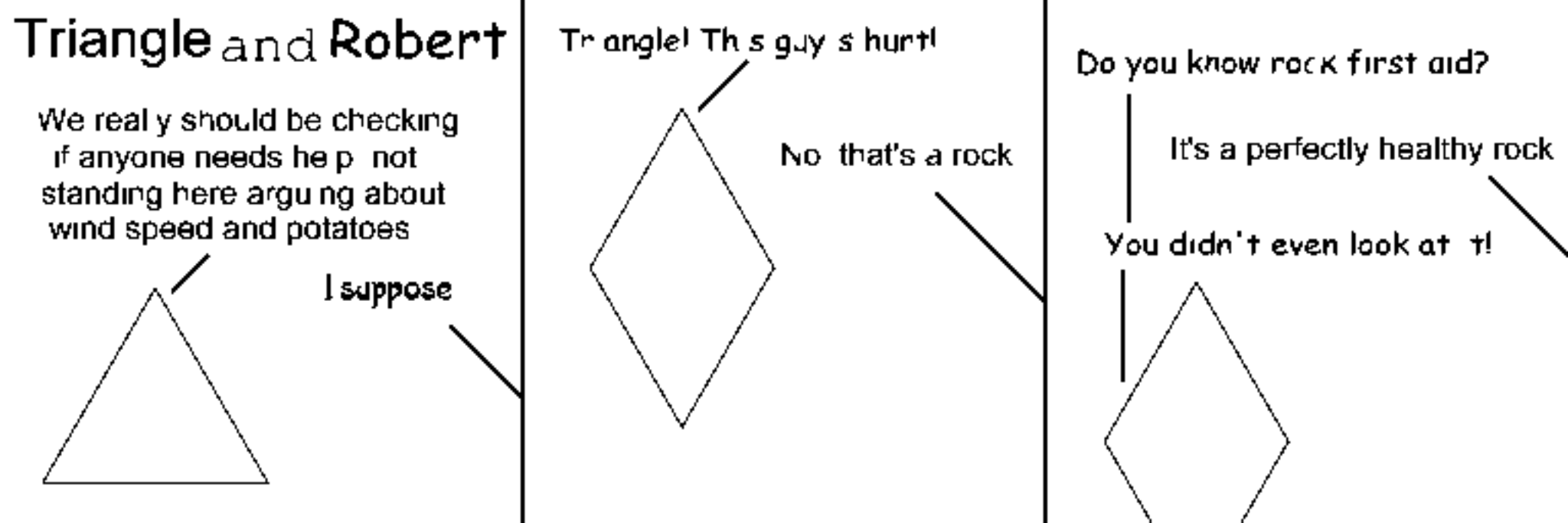


Po nt?

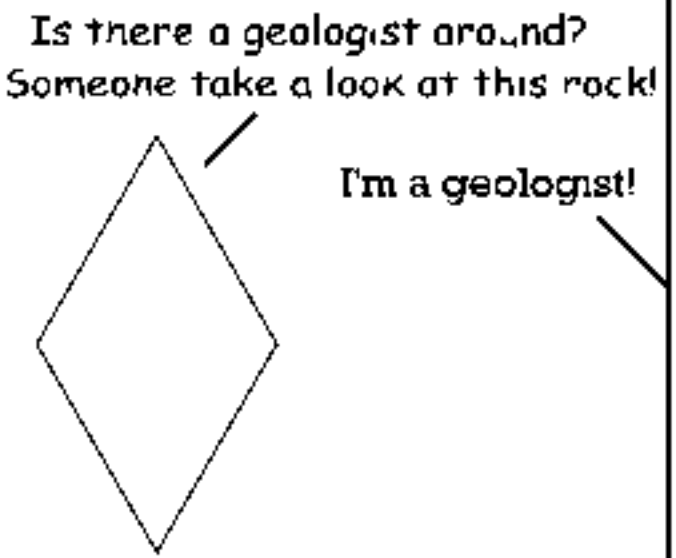
[illegible] they [illegible]'t.

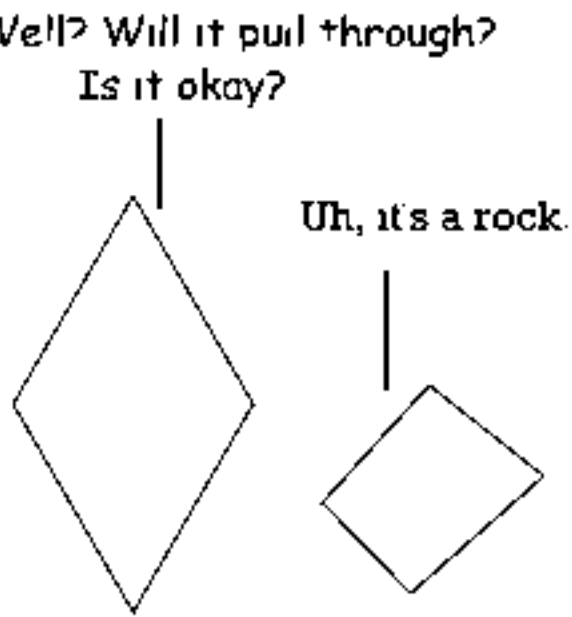
My point remains valid.

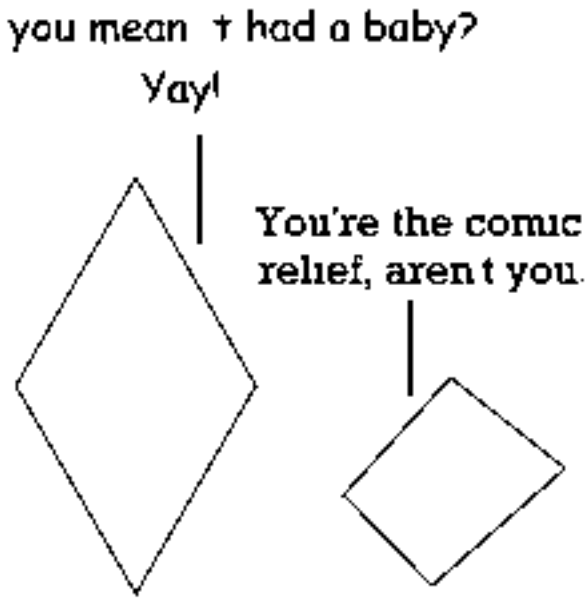
Triangle and Robert

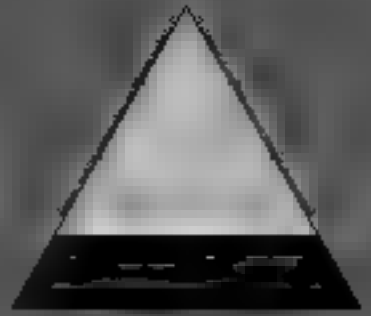


Triangle and Robert

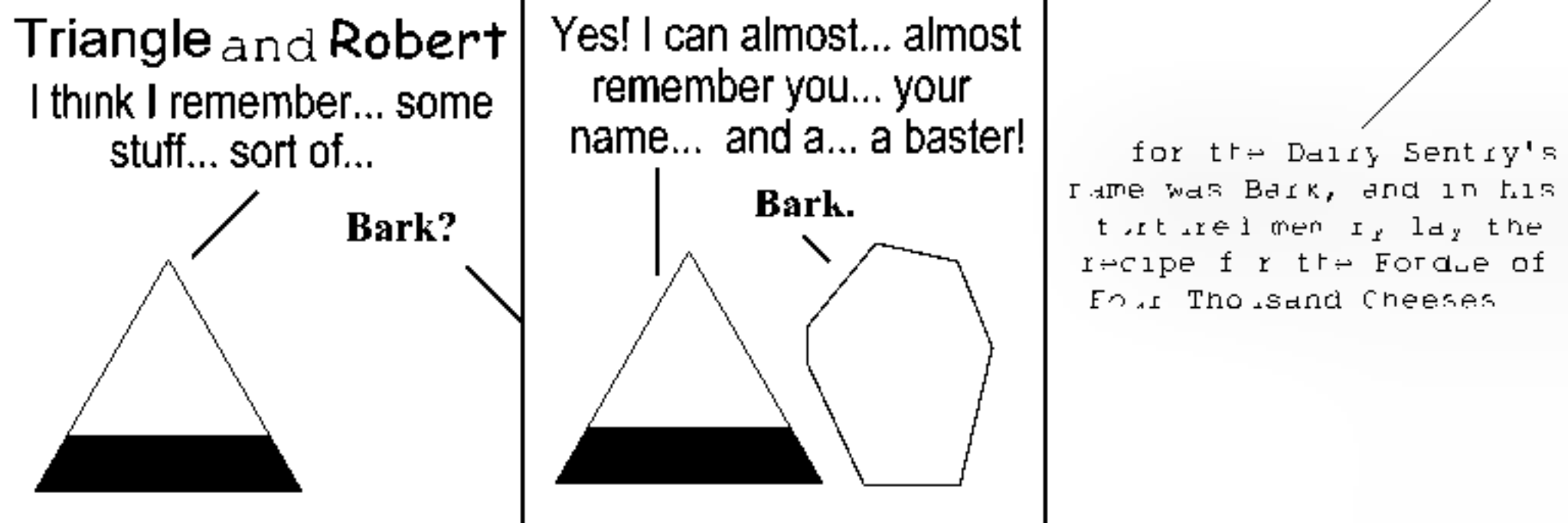




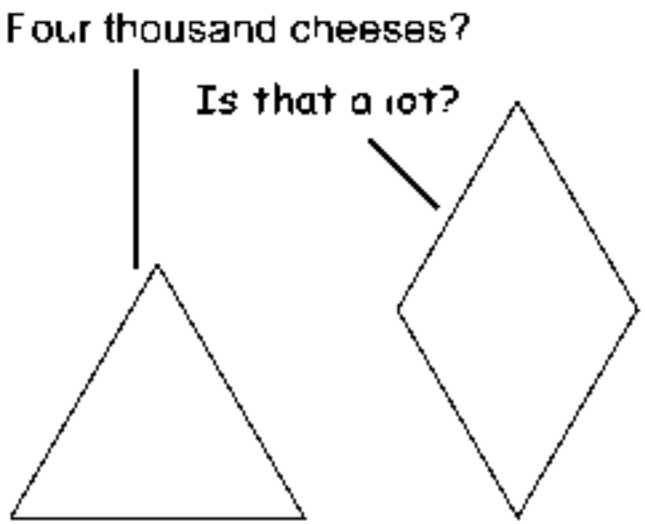


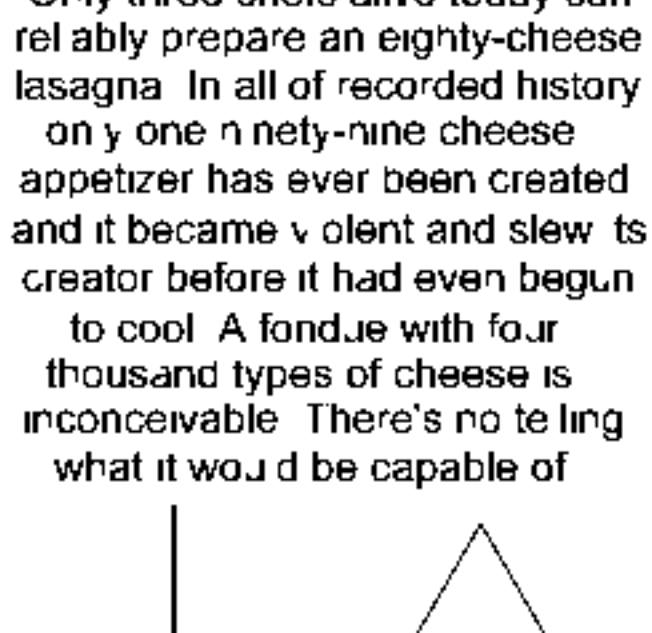


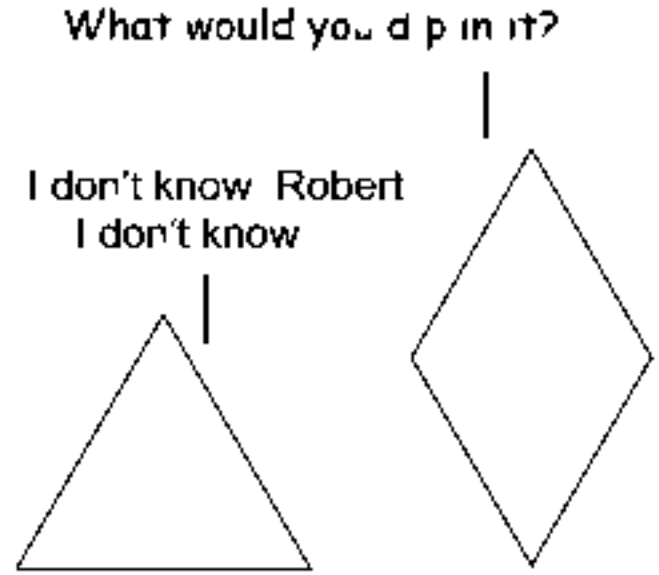
This scene was a lot more dramatic in my head.

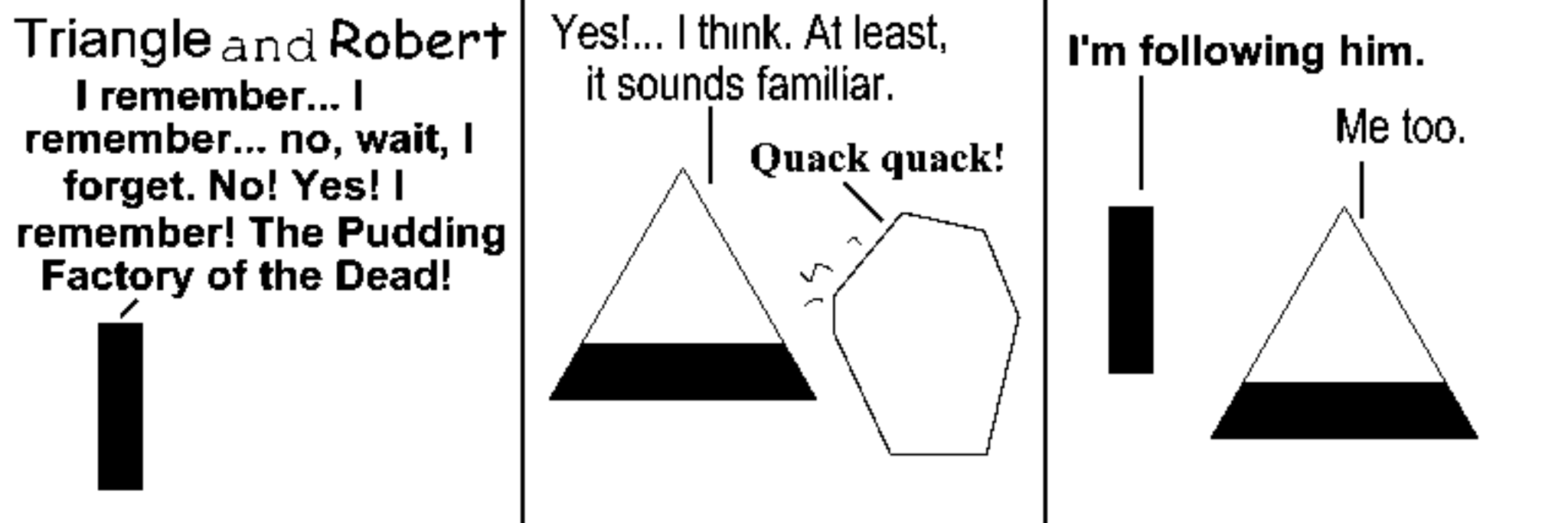

Triangle and Robert
I think I remember... some stuff... sort of...
Bark?
Yes! I can almost... almost remember you... your name... and a... a baster!
Bark.
for the Dairy Sentry's name was Bark, and in his tortured memory lay the recipe for the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses

Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
I remember... I remember... no, wait, I forget. No! Yes! I remember! The Pudding Factory of the Dead!
Yes!... I think. At least, it sounds familiar.
Quack quack!
I'm following him.
Me too.

Triangle and Robert

Hello? Someone? I'm locked in here.

Just jiggle the knob
The door's not locked

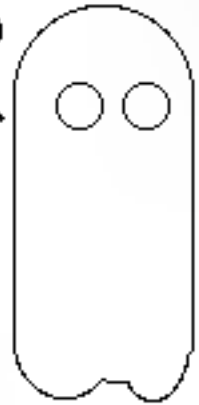
Oh. Where is everyone?

Read the back strips. It's not time for a recap yet

Oh yeah. This world is in *great* hands.

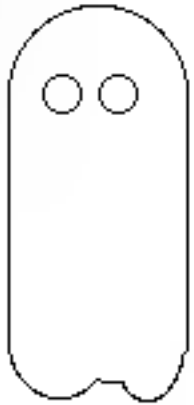
Triangle and Robert

The Sentries approach the Pudding Factory of the Dead and I am bloated. I cannot reach it in time to impede their progress.

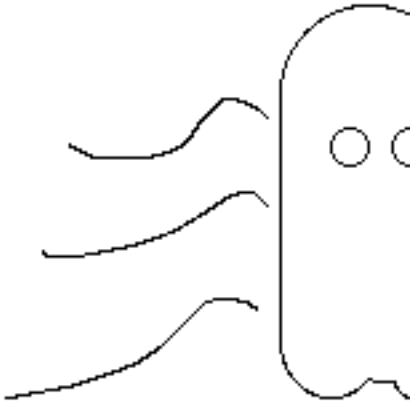


If you stop giving exposition and start moving now, the factory might still be standing when you get there.

I don't tell you how to do your job.



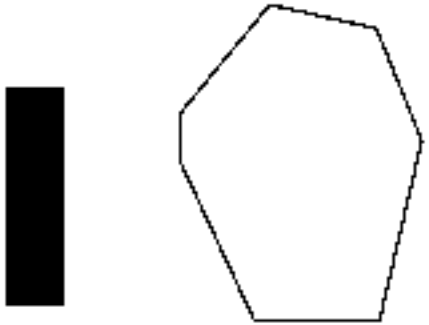
you do to

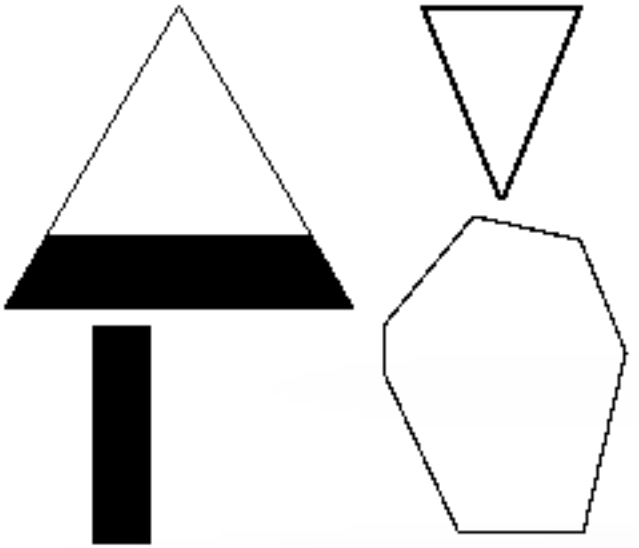


Triangle and Robert

This is the way.

Wait for me!





At last the assembled
Sentries make a strike
against, oh

Um, excuse me, why are you going in there, anyway?

It's what I remember.

Right.

In!

I'm just with them. I don't think I've ever been around here.

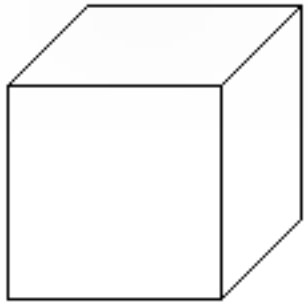
I'm not sure how to write a story in which I have no idea what's going on, but on the other hand that's never stopped me before.

Triangle and Robert

Cube: What is the Pudding Factory of the Dead

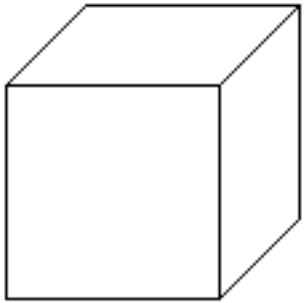
Written yourself into a corner?

Basically

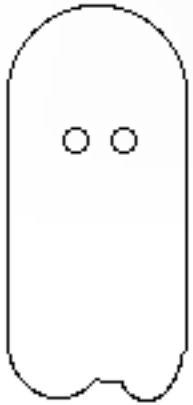


I don't know anything about it either. It's between Orpuddex and the Sentries.

Get it

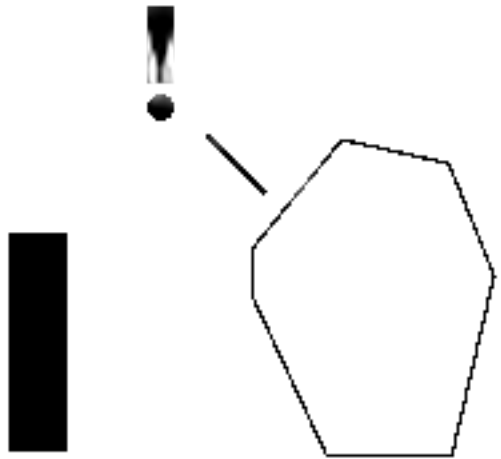


I need information, you need transportation. Tell me about the Pudding Factory of the Dead and I'll get you there in time to fight the Sentries



Triangle and Robert
The cries of imprisoned spirits.
Burn!
Yes. We must destroy this place.
I'll just take your word for that, I guess....
Preheat to 350°F!

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

I have triumphed!

What Hey you're not supposed to attack between strips! Give me a chance to draw!

It matters not. I have won this battle.

I wouldn't have helped you get here if I actually thought you stood a chance

Fool.

I'm not going to allow this

You keep the Factory, okay, but the Sentries suffer no permanent harm.

What? We made a deal!

You got to fight them you won. I'm not charging any of that I'm just not going to let you at their memories

Triangle and Robert

I don't understand how you managed to win. I have a reference chart of combat strengths, and the four Sentries combined can defeat you even in galactic form.

Surprise attack, plus the Factory's home ground for me, and three of the Sentries were still trying to remember how to use their powers.

But you're still in planetary form, and the Tetrean pumps hold no concept of dairy.

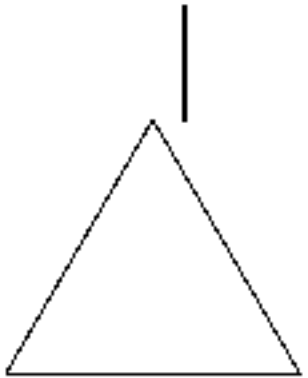
I won. Deal with it.

I'll allow you the bragging rights and the Factory, but this isn't over. The Sentries will recover, and by then their memories will be clear.

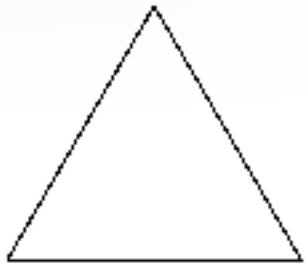
Cheater.

Triangle and Robert

I don't know which is worse, that you made a deal with Orpuddex or that you betrayed him

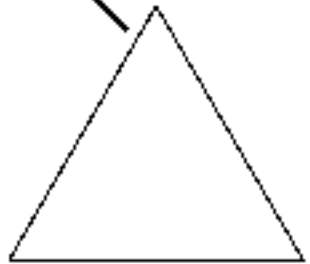


Did I betray him? He got to defend the Factory from the Sentries, and he bought himself a great deal of time by defeating them

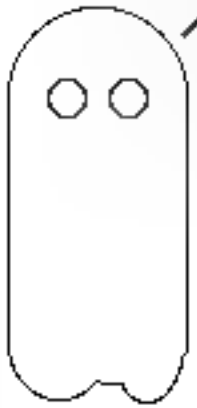


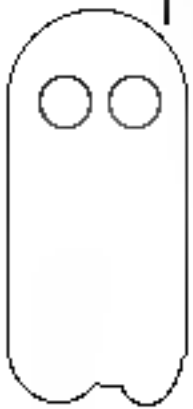
Triangle, however, I want I'm doing the best job I can

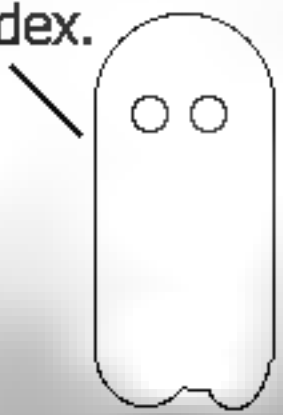
I think that's what's worst



Triangle and Robert







The Befor ngs

be y ond t ime
ar i spa e .

Phase Two s reached

Puddomancy?

Yes

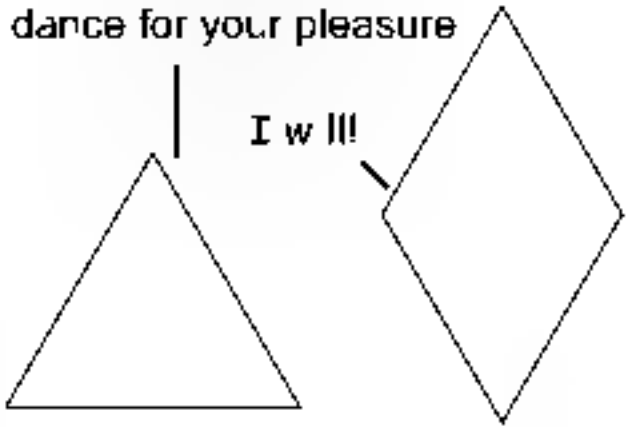
Good

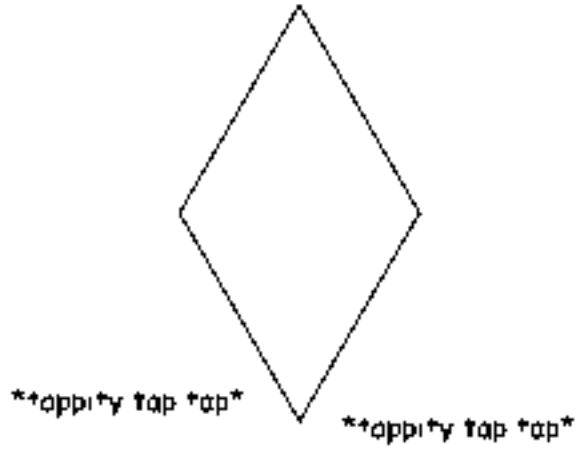
Triangle and Robert

Happy birthday, Triangle and Robert!

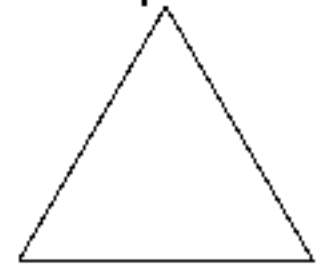
I'm not going to dance for your pleasure

I will!

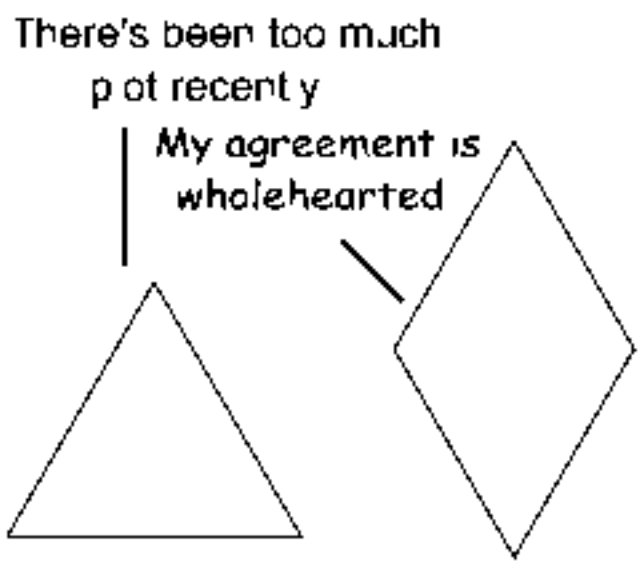


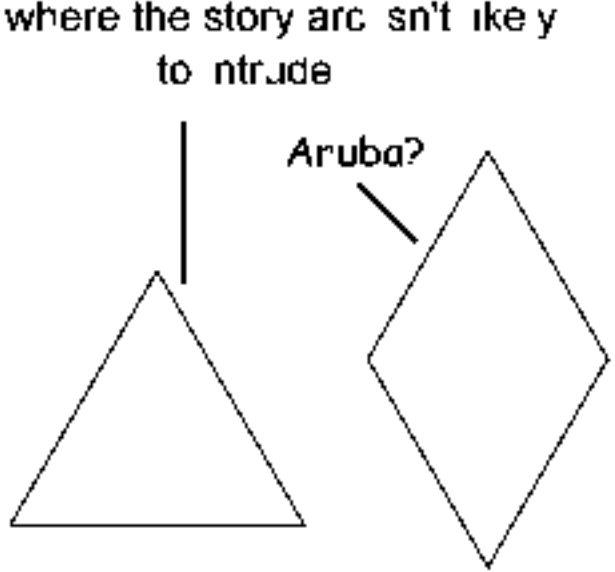


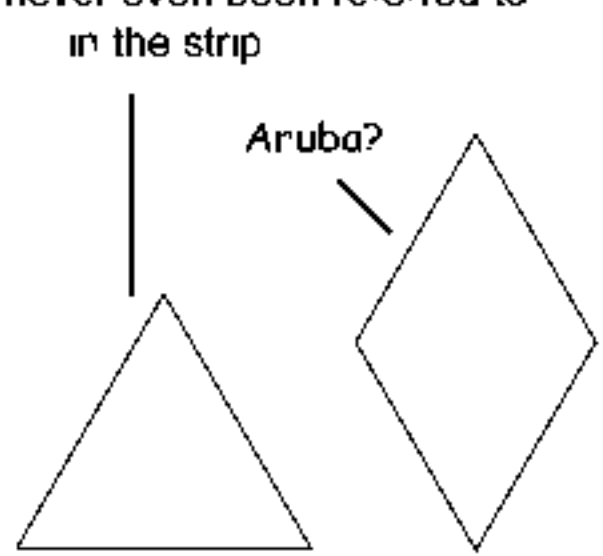
I'd ask how he can tap dance without feet but that's exactly what you want me to do



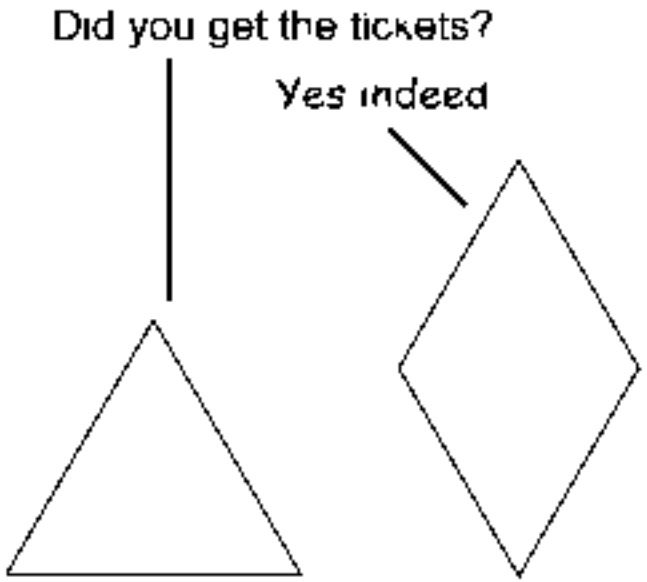
Triangle and Robert

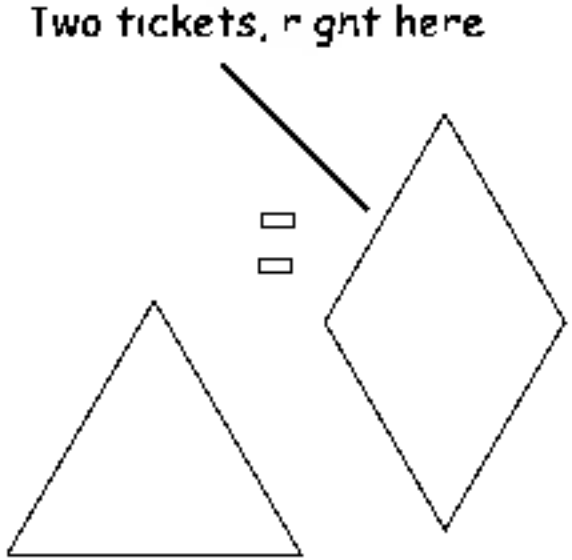


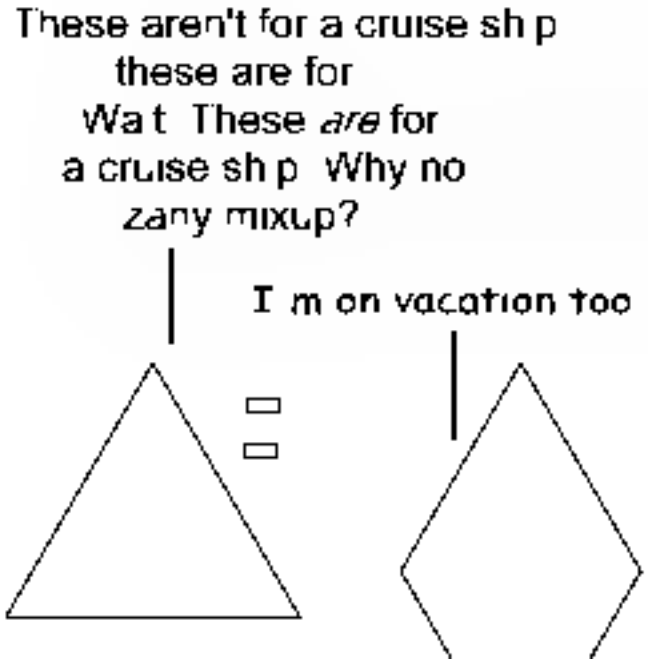




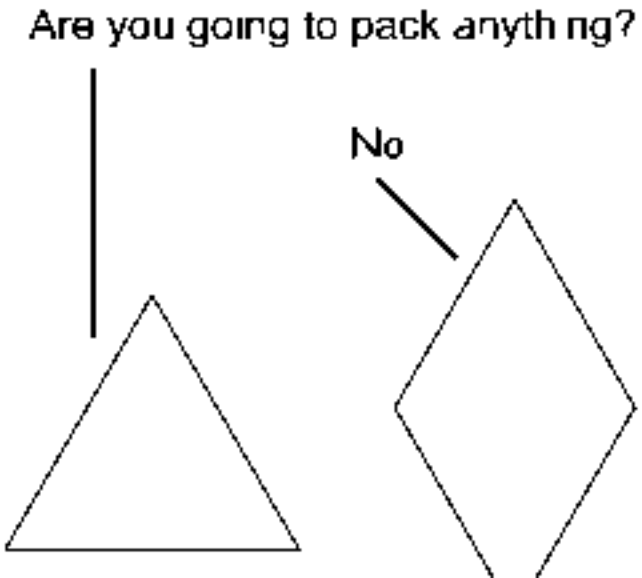
Triangle and Robert

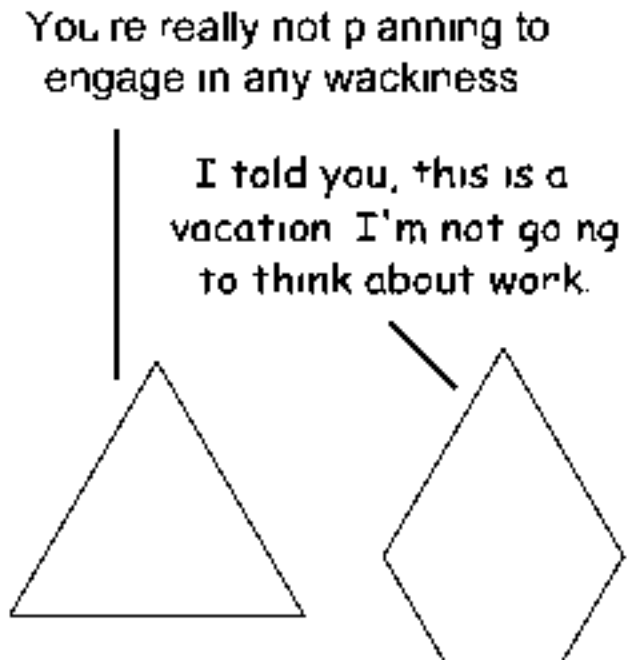


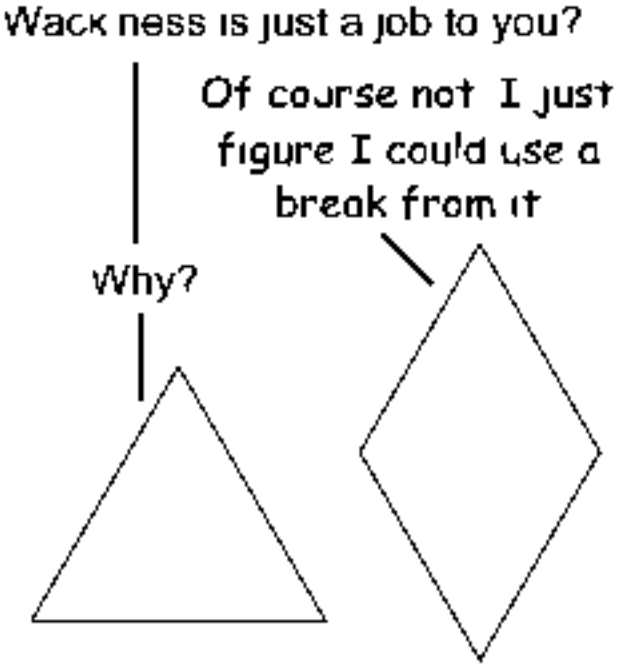




Triangle and Robert



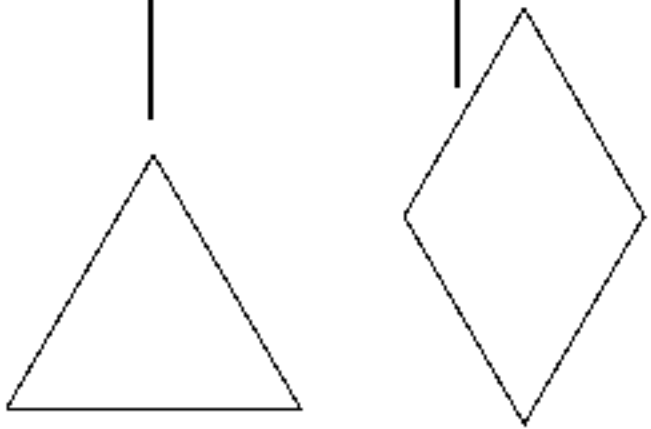




Triangle and Robert

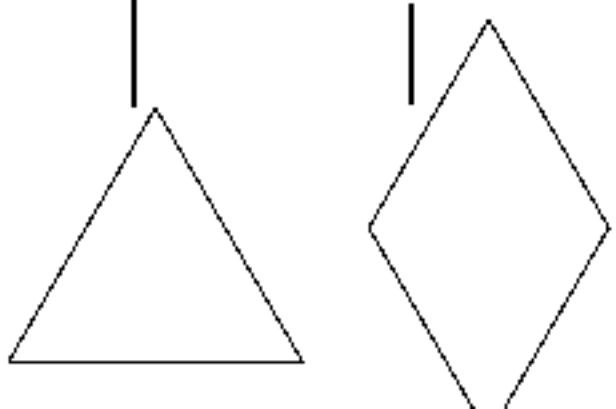
You re worrying me

I always worry you



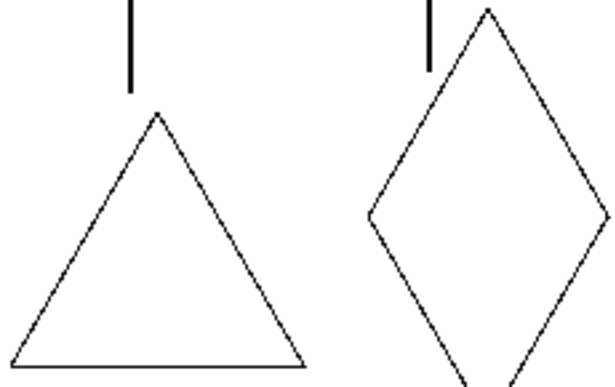
Yes but this s different
It isn't like you

Can t I just kick back
and relax now and then?

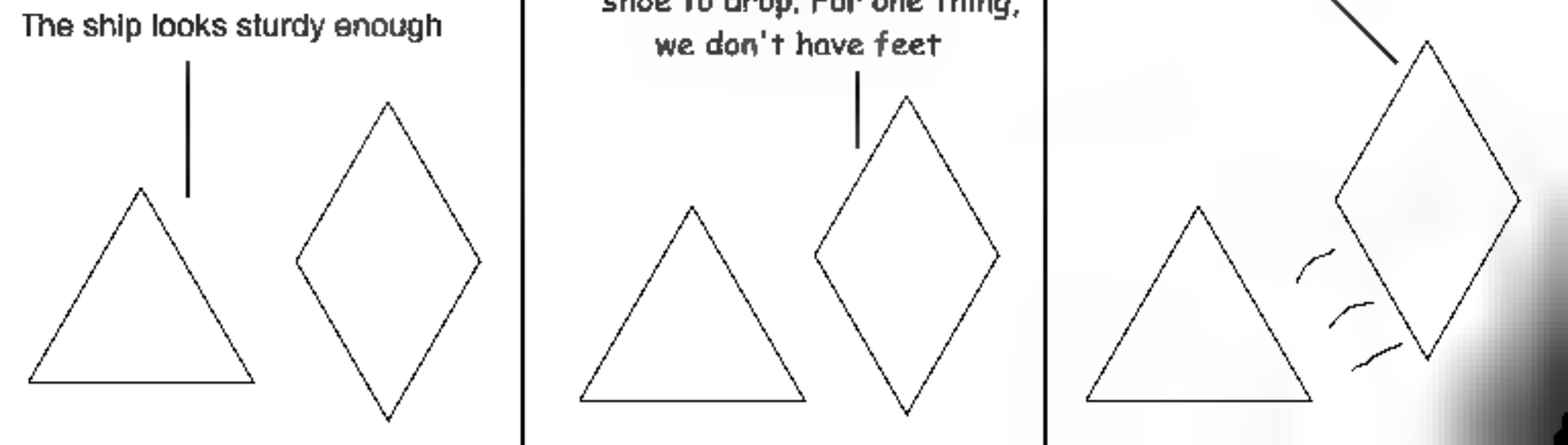


I never thought of you
as needing to relax

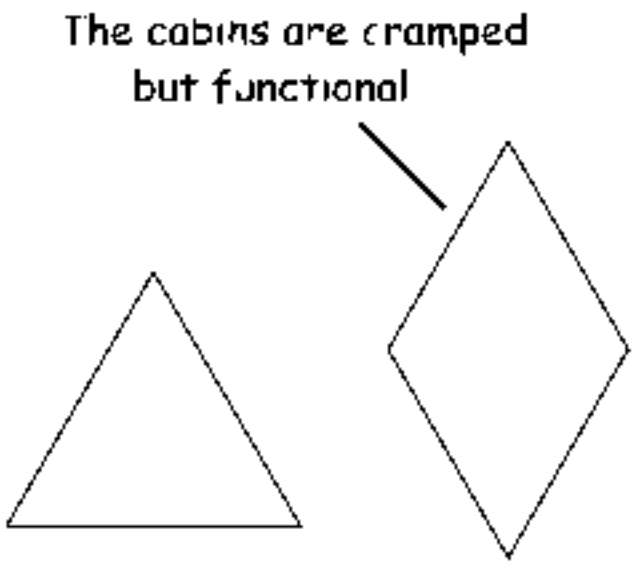
We're going on a cruise.
Let's not compl cate it

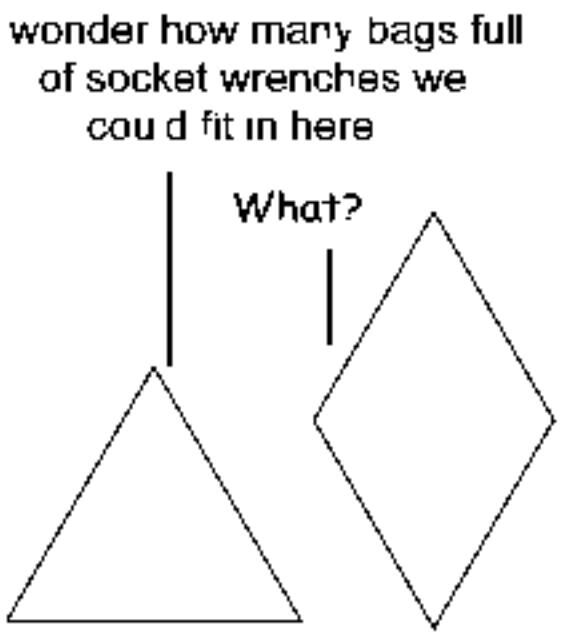


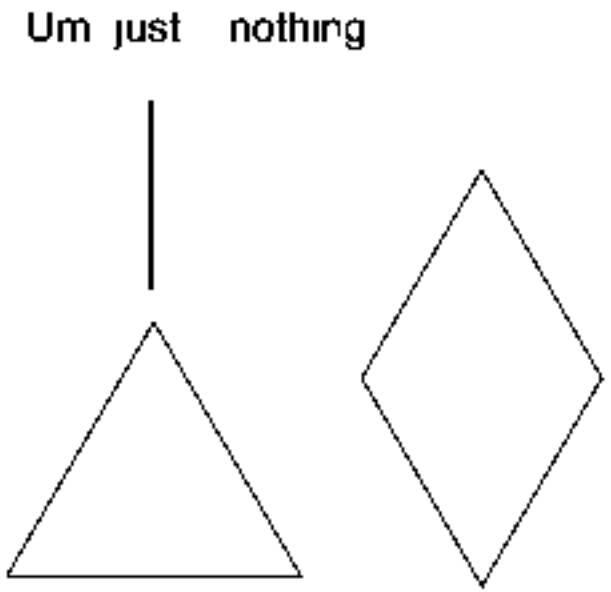
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

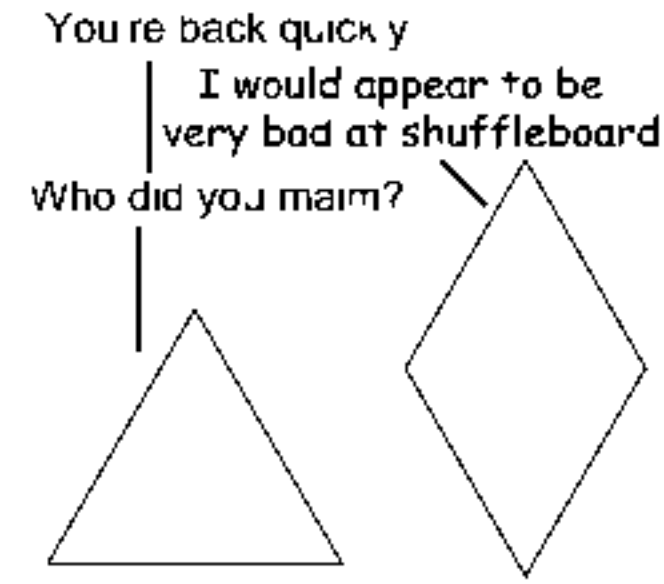


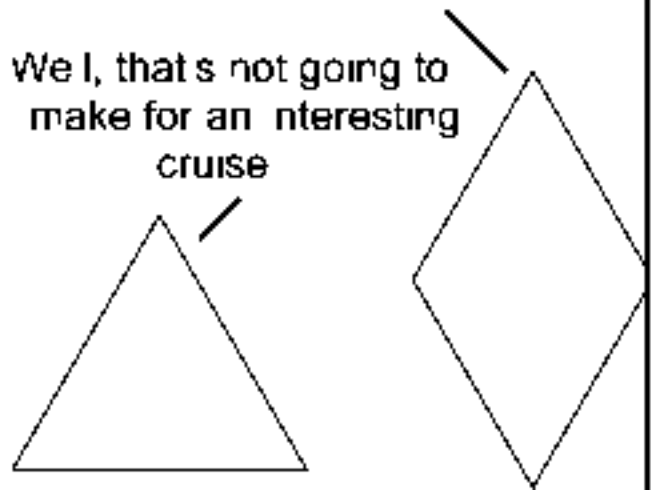


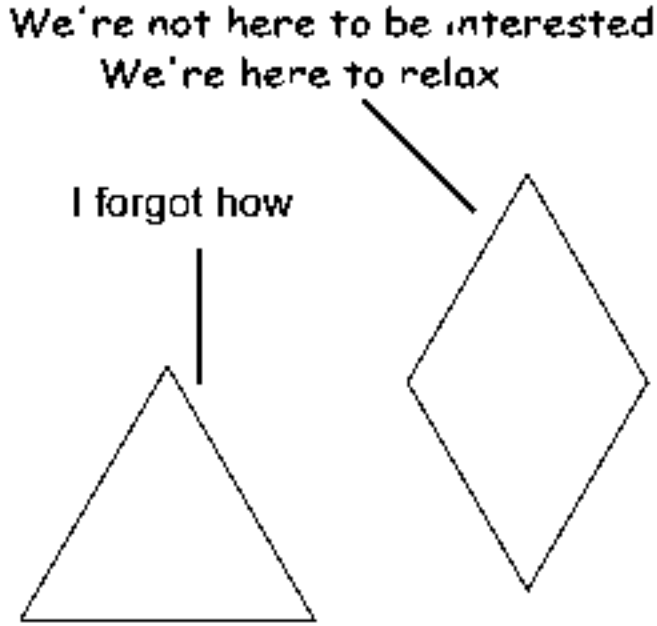


Triangle and Robert

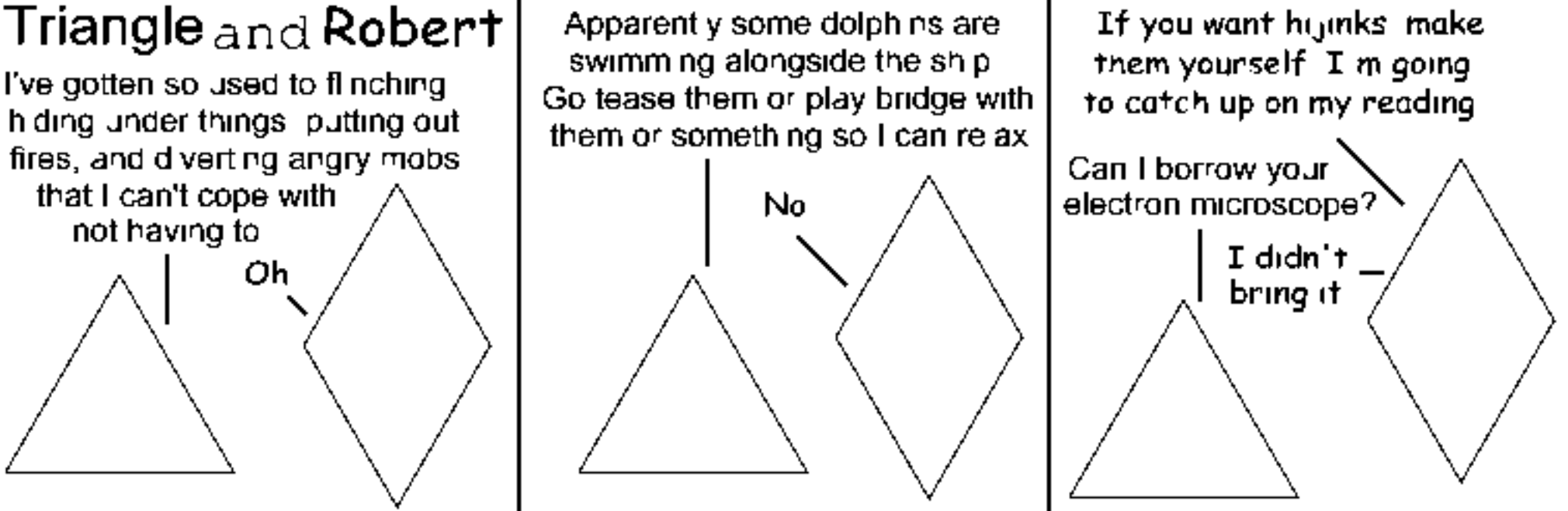
Triangle and Robert



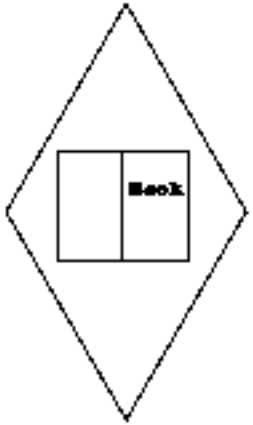


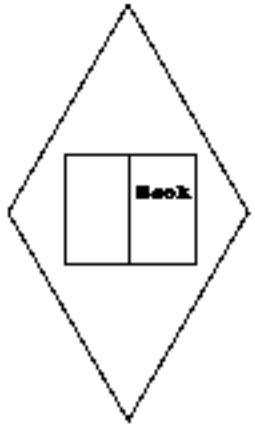


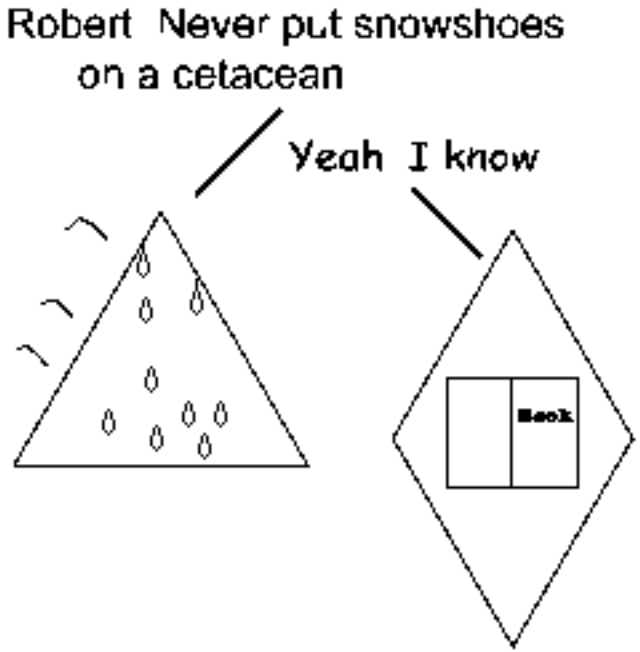
Triangle and Robert



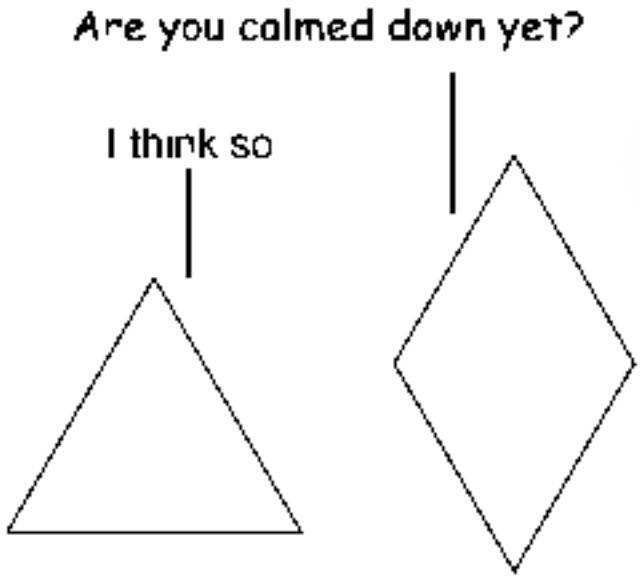
Triangle and Robert

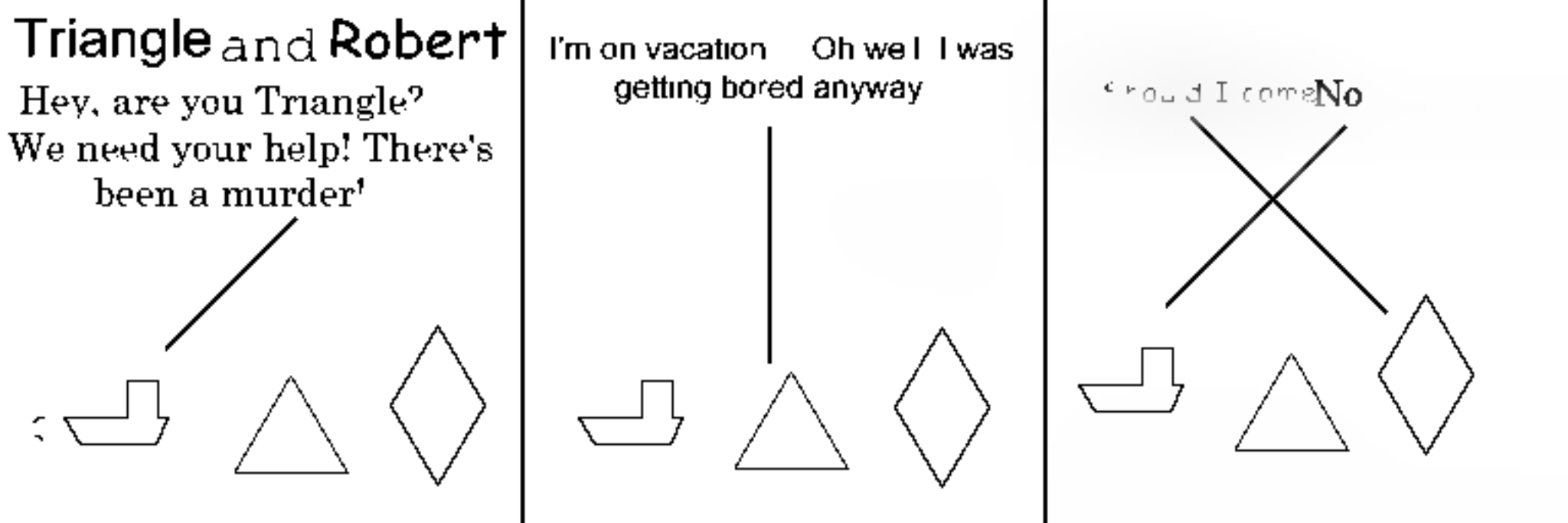


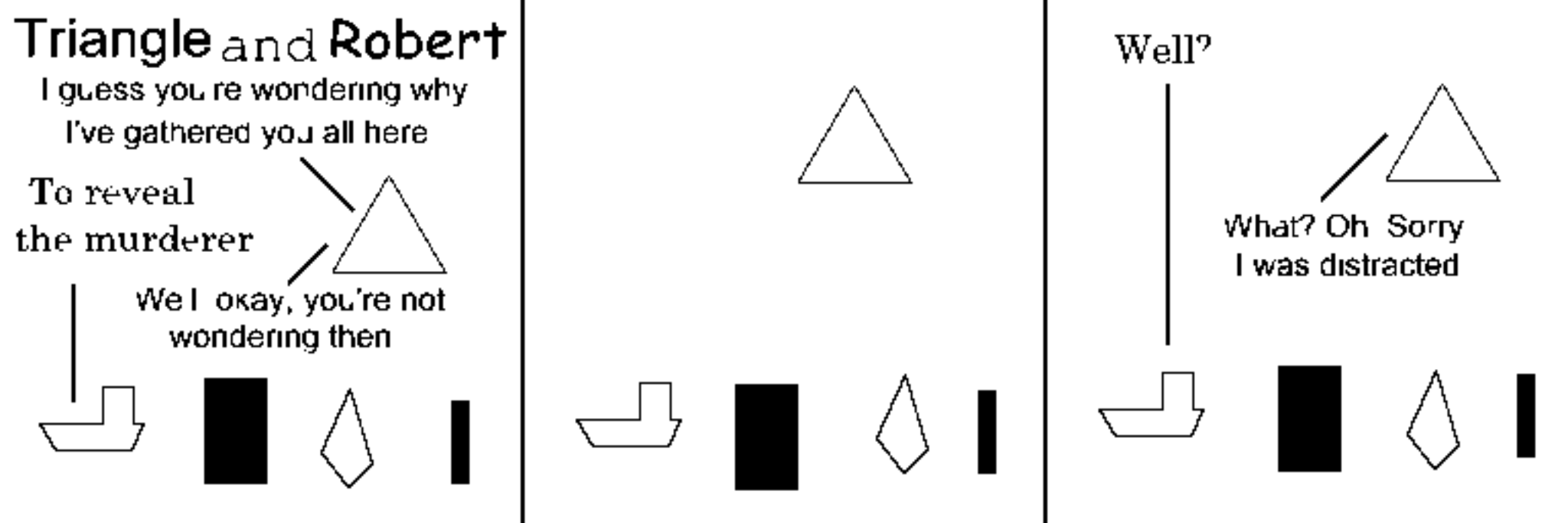




Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
Hey, are you Triangle? We need your help! There's been a murder!
I'm on vacation
Oh well I was getting bored anyway
No


Triangle and Robert
I guess you're wondering why I've gathered you all here
To reveal the murderer
Well okay, you're not wondering then
Well?
What? Oh Sorry I was distracted

Triangle and Robert

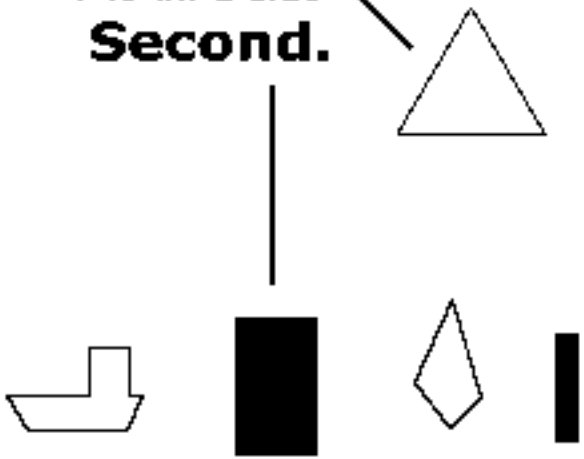
The first clue was the scuff marks on the "Were" the

sigh the scuff marks on the wal opposite Mr Quadratic's body At a height of 134 pixe s. these marks correspond to none of the passengers or crew on this vesse

It would appear that these marks were made by the murder weapon

Triangle and Robert

The third clue
Second.



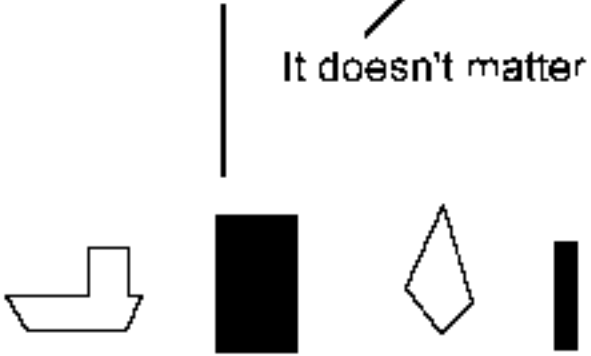
No the third The second clue turned out to be a coincidence

The victim's name seared into every single piece of prime rib was a coincidence?

No that was the fourth clue

What was the second?

It doesn't matter



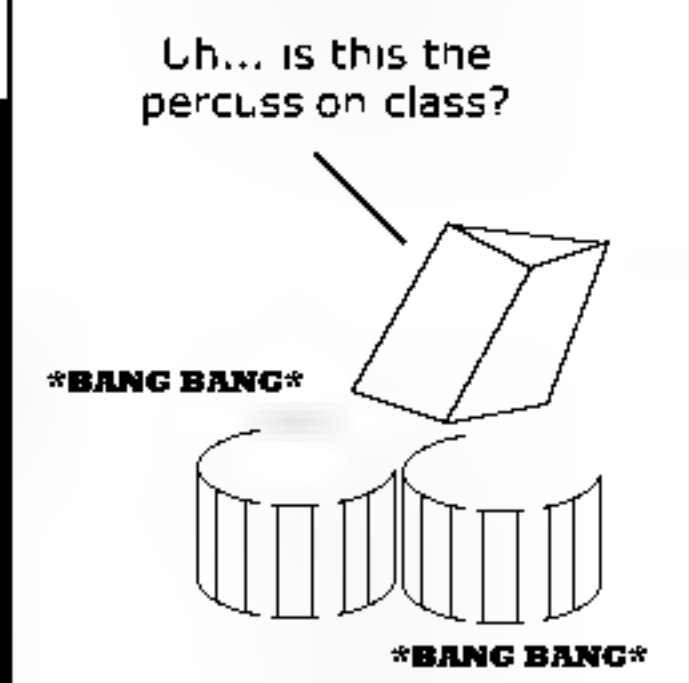
Triangle and Robert

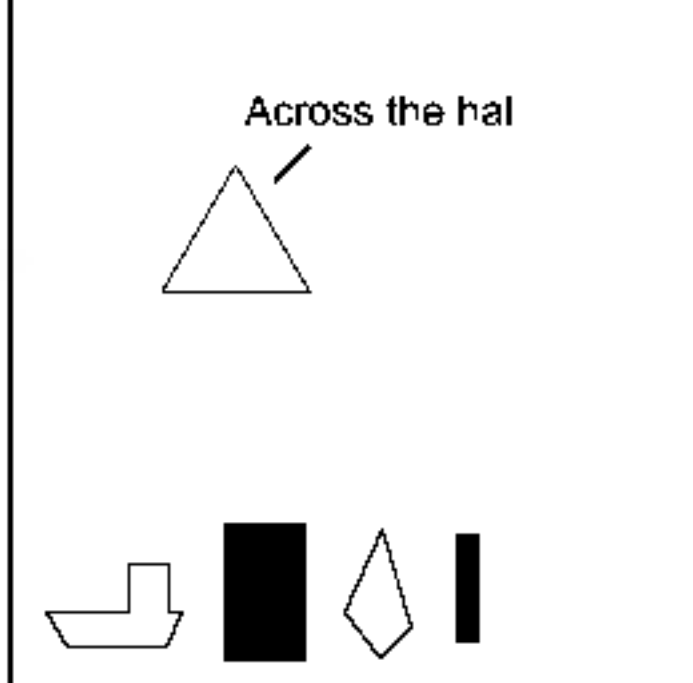
The p ece that tied it al together was

BANG BANG

You're a bit early, aren't you?

Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

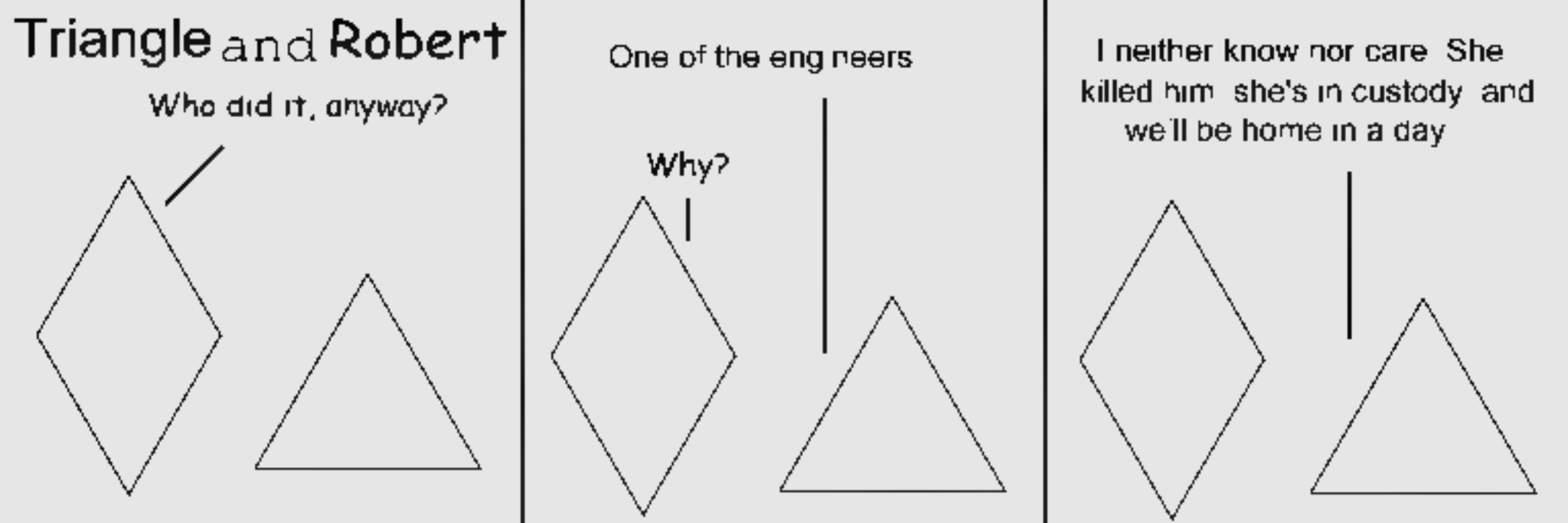
I don't understand why I need to stand here explaining every clue I'm just going to skip to the conclusion

BANG

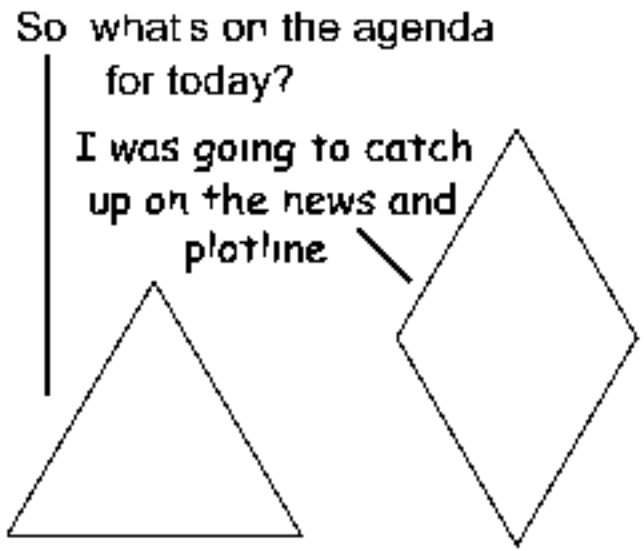
What was that?

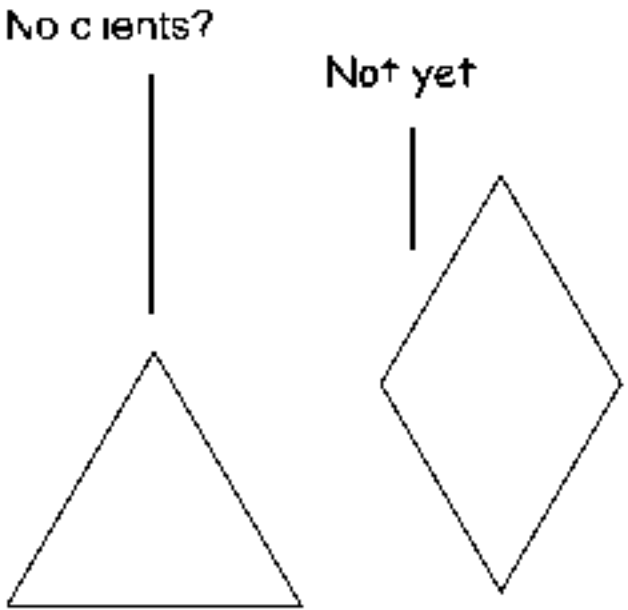
Lightbulb blew out.
I'll get a new one.

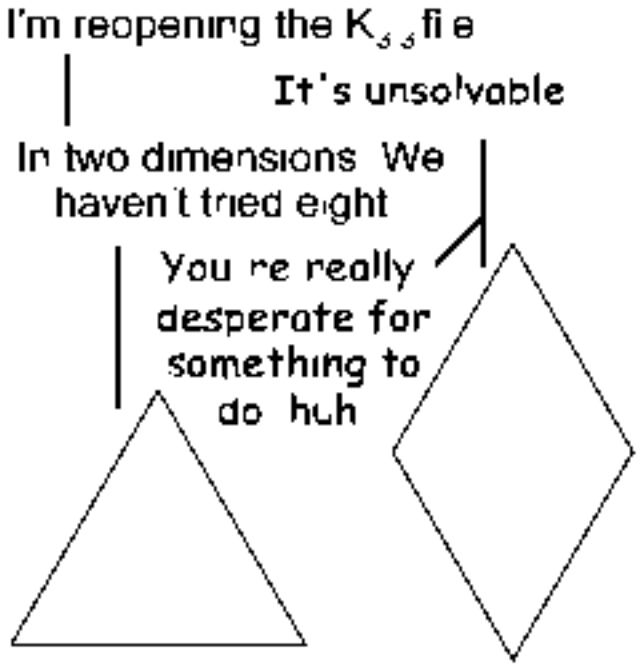
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Shipment. Sign.

No. No more MSG. I cancelled weeks ago and you keep coming. I have enough for a lifetime

Sign.

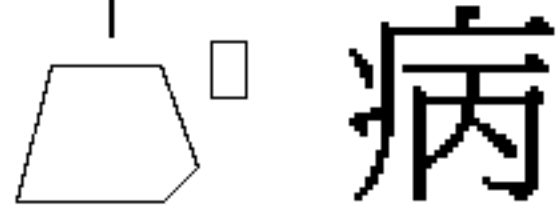
Can't. Sign.

Take it back.

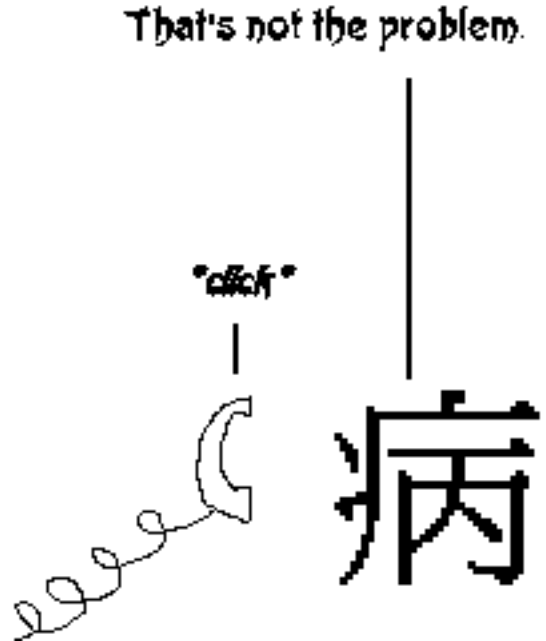
Can't.

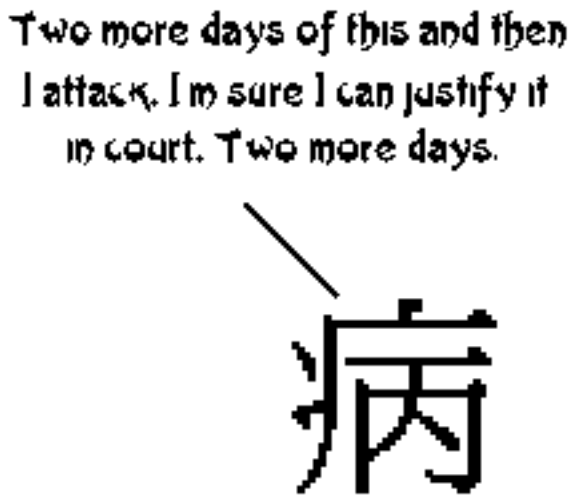
Can't?

Can I talk to someone else?



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

You can take that No MSG sign down. Help has arrived!

The sign is not there to indicate that we have run out of the additive. Its presence indicates that we do not, in fact use it anymore

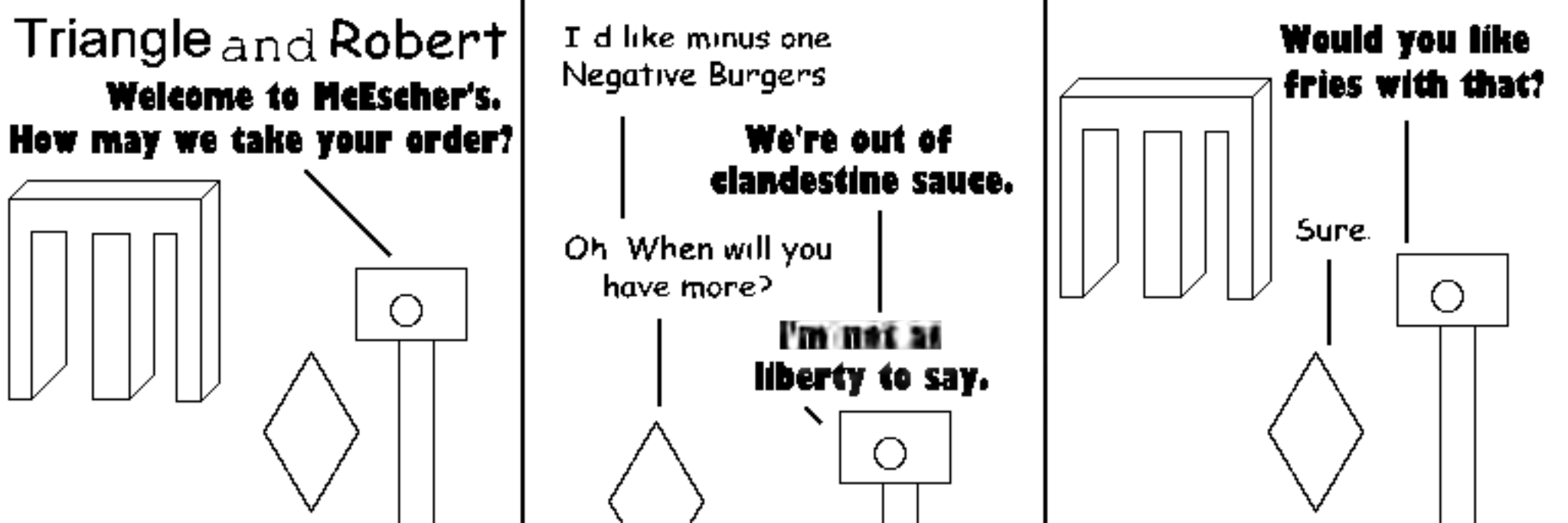
If you don't use it why did you order it?

I didn't order it

Then it's a good thing someone remembered to order it for you.

No It isn't actually a good thing at all. Inform your employers that diplomatic measures have broken down and that they should evacuate their offices tomorrow for their own safety

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

MultiFoodCorpCo Limited Industries

I seek vengeance

We're sorry, Vengeance brand rye-flavored snack bites are a discontinued product. If you enjoy the great taste of rye flavoring, I can recommend a therapist.

Direct me to your masters, secretary. My quarrel is not with you.

buzz

Mr. Smith, there's an angry warrior-chef here to see you

I'll send him right in

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

Yes... it goes perfectly. None suspect that I have control of artificial flavor distribution worldwide!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Define "none"

Oh no. You're not putting this in the strip, are you?

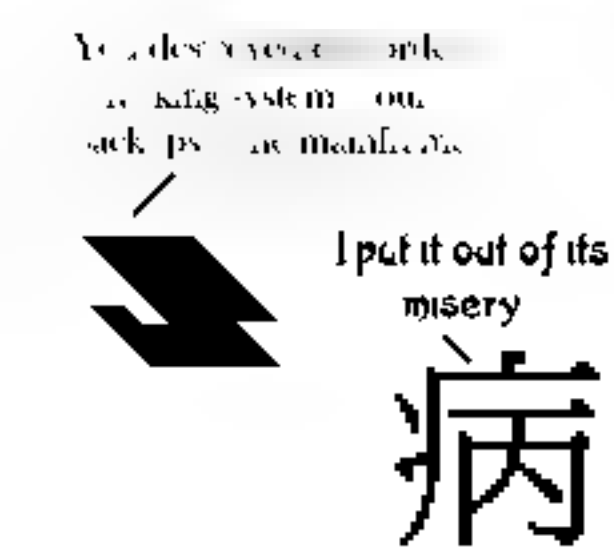
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

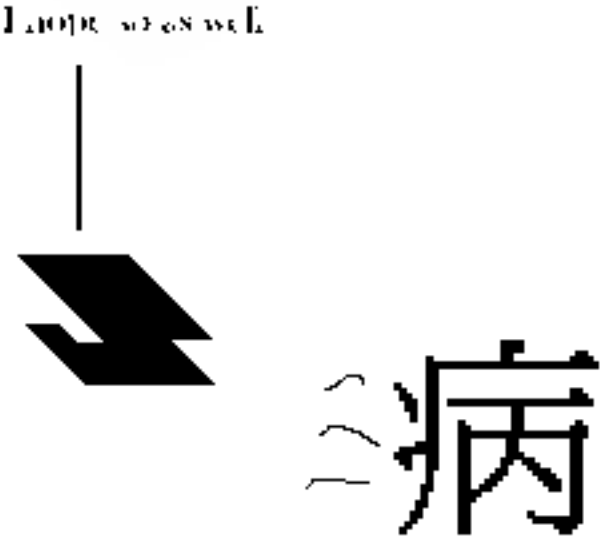
I'm afraid so. Expect a whole lot of attention

Baa.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

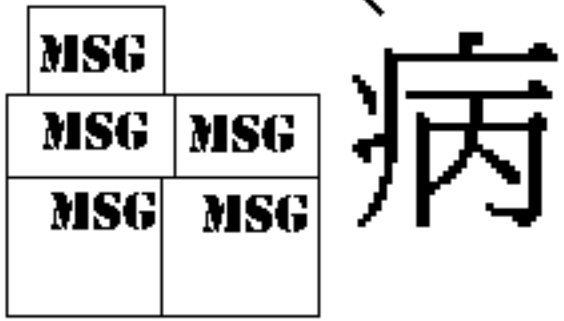
Triangle and Robert



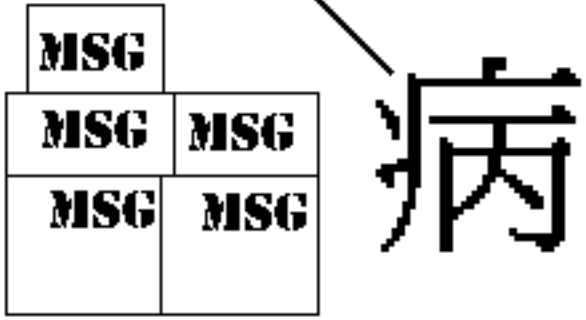


Triangle and Robert

Another shipment?

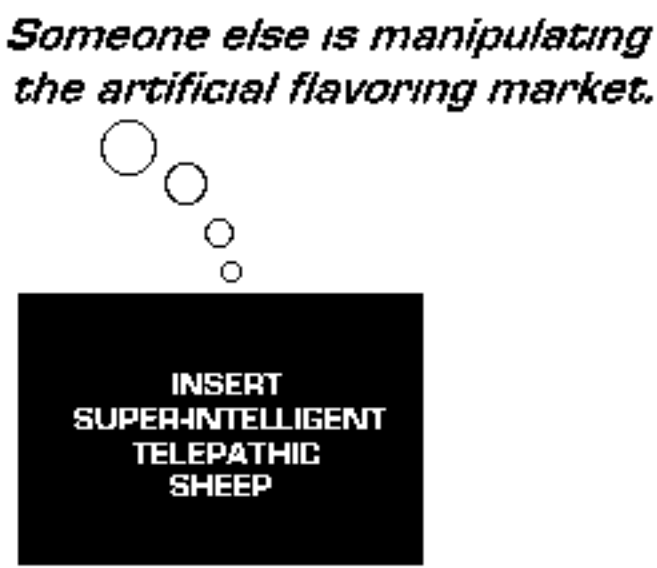


It's a different brand. MultiFoodCorpCo would never package a product without putting their name on it



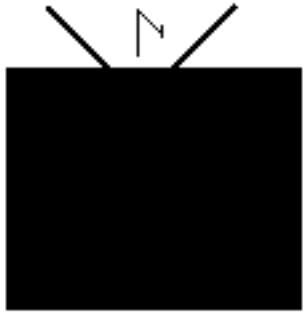
The sanitation department still hates me because of that chicken leak.. I guess I'll just have to put this in the basement with all the rest until I can think of a way to get rid of it

Triangle and Robert

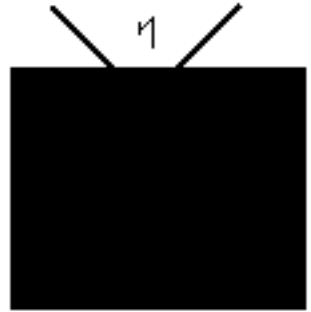


Triangle and Robert

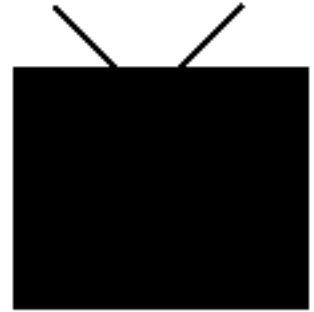
The McEscher's corporation has issued a statemnt to the effect that the recent shortages of clandestine sauce are a short-term anomaly and not in



any way a symptom of any larger problem. Sugar substitute prices dropped sharply today due to the sudden appearance of an unexplained surplus. The anti-Cartoonist protests

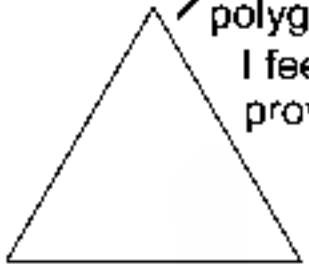


CLICK



Triangle and Robert

The strip has recently begun to involve a fairly complex situation involving the artifical flavor market. As human readers are unlikely to be familiar with the workings of this unique y polygonal institution I feel that I should provide an overview

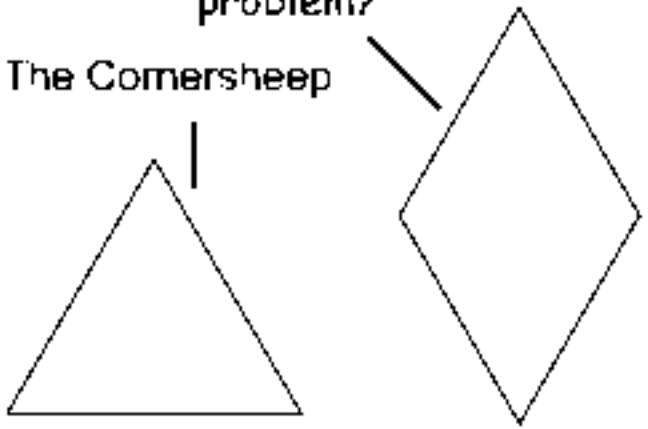


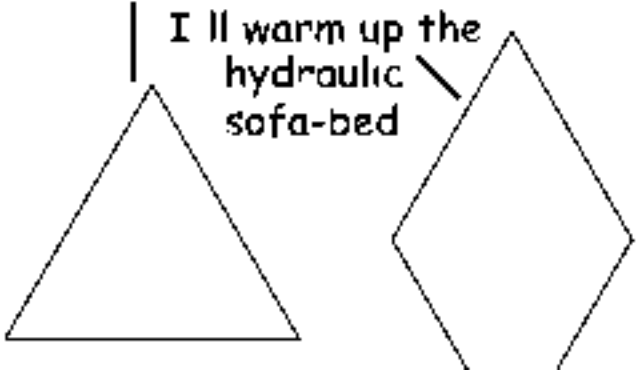
Unlike most commodity markets the artificial flavor market is based around a five-dimensional topology. Rather than integer prices, the value of flavorings is described in terms of complex-valued polynomials. This is primarily a result of the crystalline structure of common salts, which makes transportation a highly time-dependent function

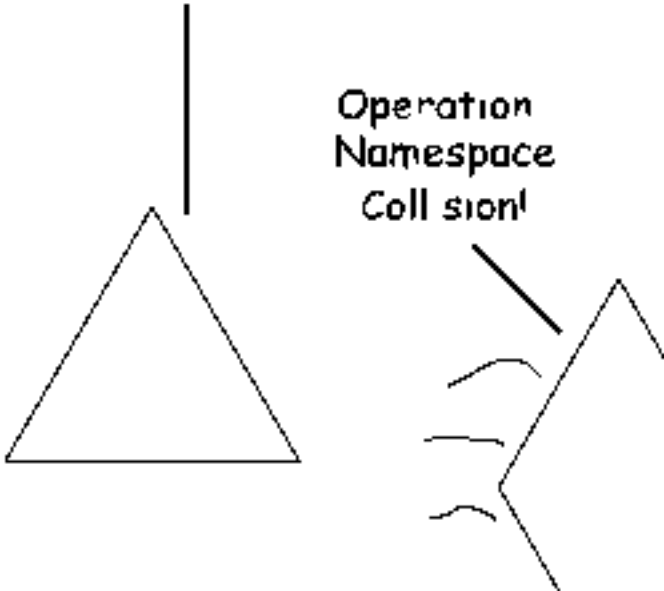
The redundancies of the base angles result in a non-planar arrangement of exchanges over, and in a few cases beneath, the surface of the planet. Thus, matrix multiplication is necessary in any market analysis. As a net result, one can take advantage of geography to become quite wealthy without ever making a positive profit in any individual quarter

Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consult... oh, hello, Mr. Disease. What brings you here?
Senseless property destruction has failed me, and so I must resort to wackiness.
病
Someone keeps having MSG shipped to the Locust Garden. A year ago this would have been convenient, but I no longer cook with it and it is taking up much space.
病
I see. And you've already tried going on an insanely destructive rampage?
Repeatedly. When shipments from one producer are ceased, another begins shipping.
病

Triangle and Robert



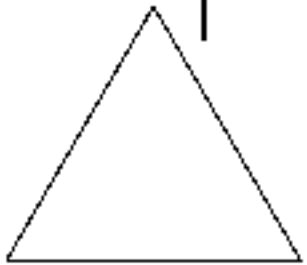




Triangle and Robert

What is this Plan 2πr?

Contingency p an for fighting the Cornersheep on and with h s own turf



Robert can explain the deta ls better than I can Bas cal y it s a remote-root exploit against his awn furniture

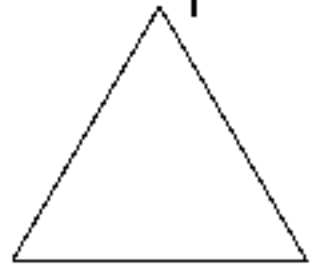
He's running an unpatched patio server?

Not yet That s where the futonapu t comes n

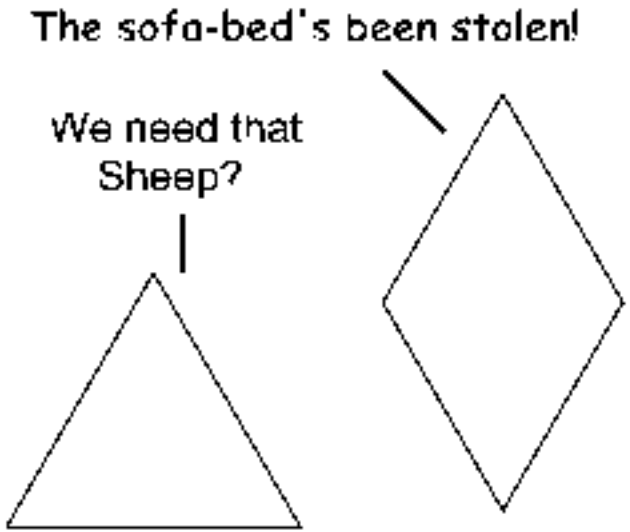
So there w ll be senseless property damage involved?

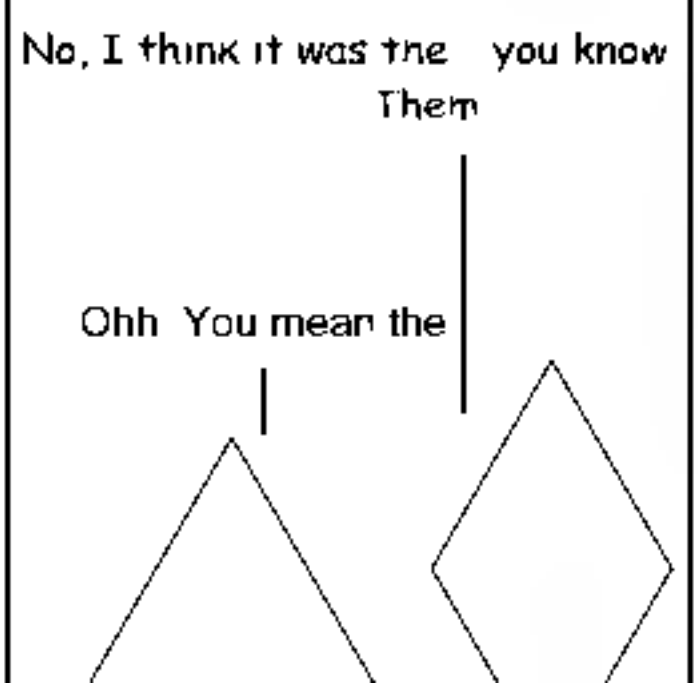
Well senseless? I suppose more or less

I can watch, right?



Triangle and Robert



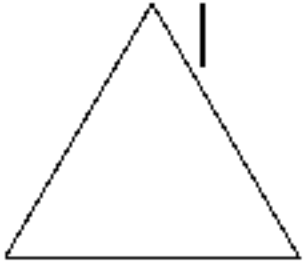


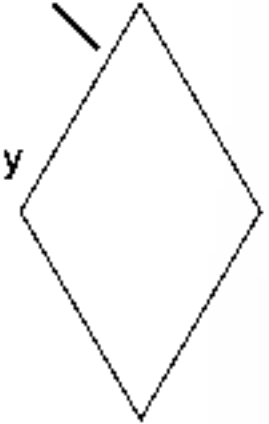
We meaning I interrupt this strip to . m.

Triangle and Robert

I managed to get the hydraulic sofa-bed back from

Shh Don t refer to that or the Cartoon st' I cut away

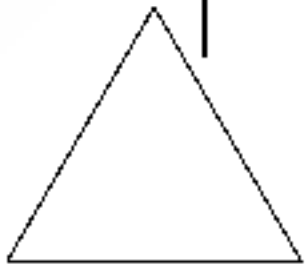


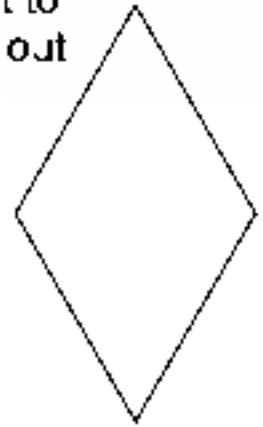


h, just go ahead and say it There've been anti Cartoonist protest rallies all around your world for m n hs and I've been keeping them ut of the strip Now they're starting to get violent and vandalizing all the l cations that I se in the comic

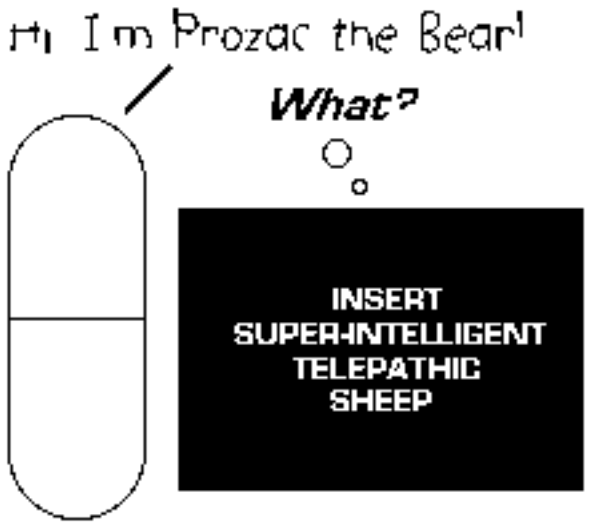
N w get back to Plan Alpha I'll deal with the protests as necessary

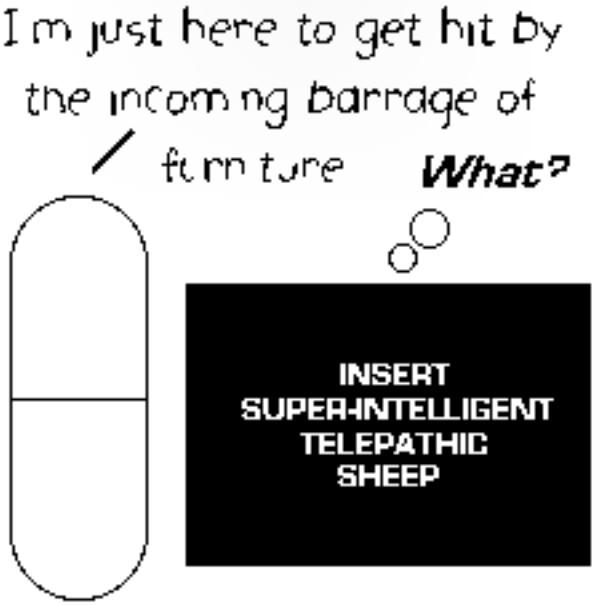
So finally you start to let the truth come out

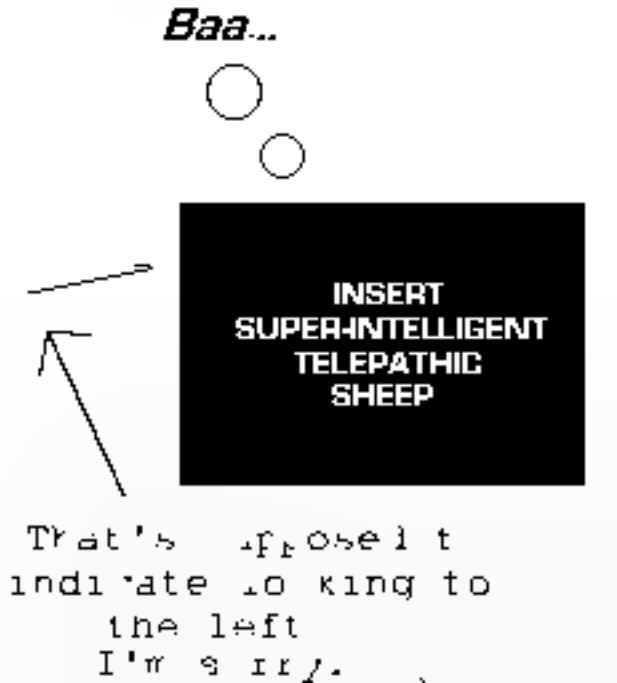




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

> PATIO LOGIN ACHIEVED
> CHAIRS LOCATED: 5
> ATTEMPTING CHAIR 1
> CHAIR 1: BUFFER TOO BIG
> CHAIR 2: BUFFER TOO SMALL
> CHAIR 3: BUFFER SIZE MATCH! ATTEMPTING CONTROL TAKEOVER

Triangle! We're in!

Can you get to the sprinklers?

No, the plumbing has a firewall. I just have furniture and what looks like... yes. The laundry room.

Why would an evil sheep have a laundry room?

I don't think he does It must be the swap partition.

If his wicker's that misconfigured

Triangle and Robert

It's over

What do you mean, "it's over"?

I got into the obligatory self-destruct mechanism of the Cornersheep's base.

Remotely?

Sheep aren't known for network security.

That's just stupid

I know

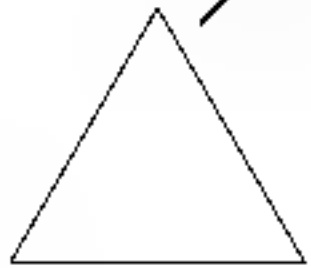
Alert. All henchsheep evacuate. The base's destruct sequence has begun. I'm sorry about this, I know you all told me putting it on the network was a bad idea, but these things happen.

Triangle and Robert

Some fairly small number of days later...

Your efforts were unsuccessful

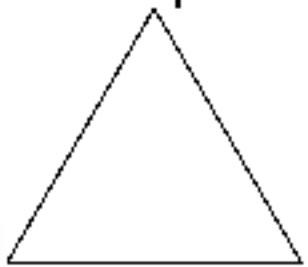
What? No



This morning I awoke to find a massive wooden horse outside the delivery entrance

Filled with monosodium glutamate?

Yes.

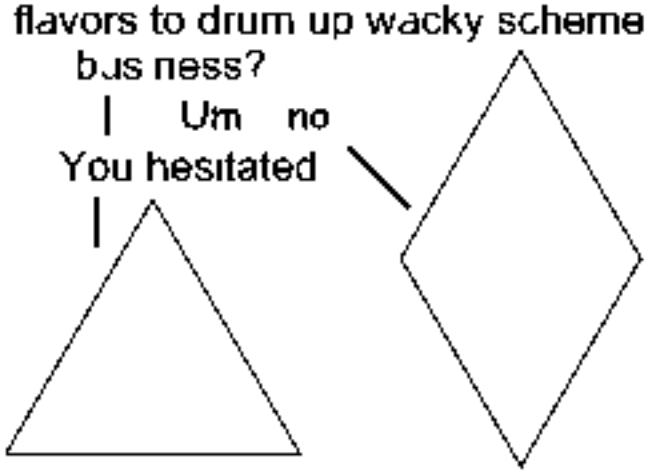


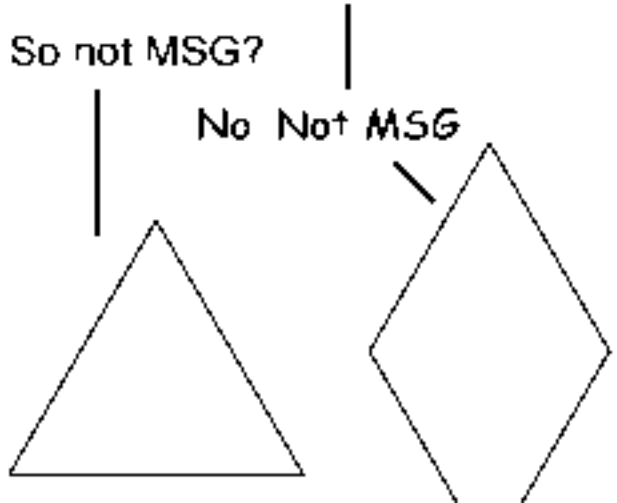
But the Cornersheep has no base of operations. He CAN'T have filled a horse with MSG

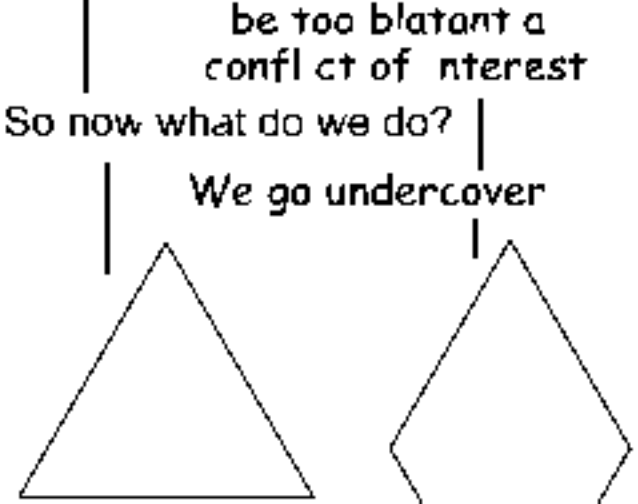
Then who did?

I don't know. It almost sounds like something Robert would do

Triangle and Robert

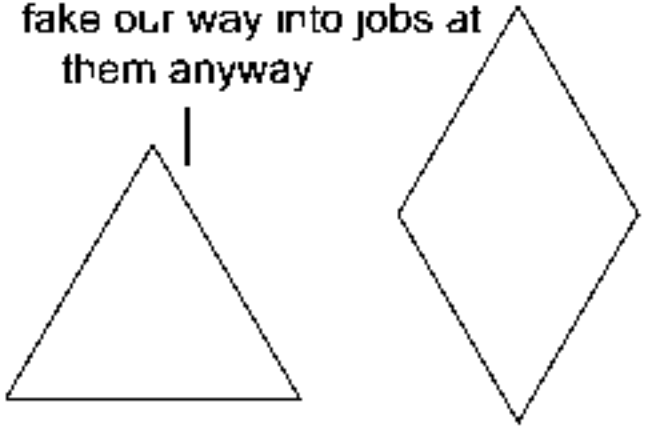






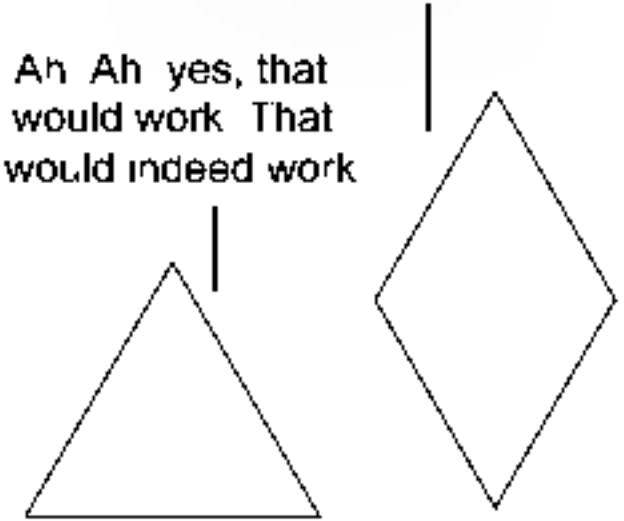
Triangle and Robert

There are too many delivery services n the city to check them all and we re too recognizab e to fake our way into jobs at them anyway



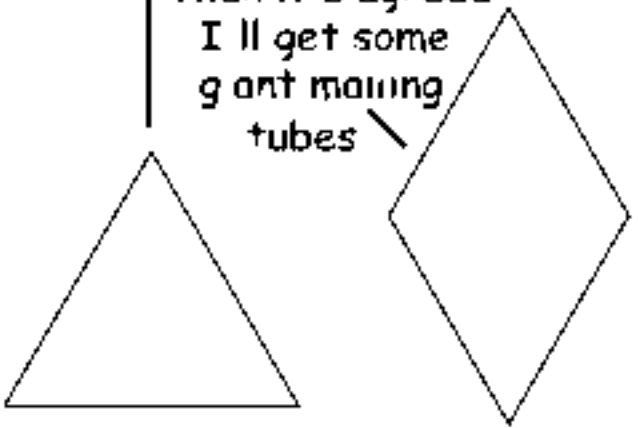
You re thinking couriers I'm thinking packages

Ah Ah yes, that would work That would indeed work

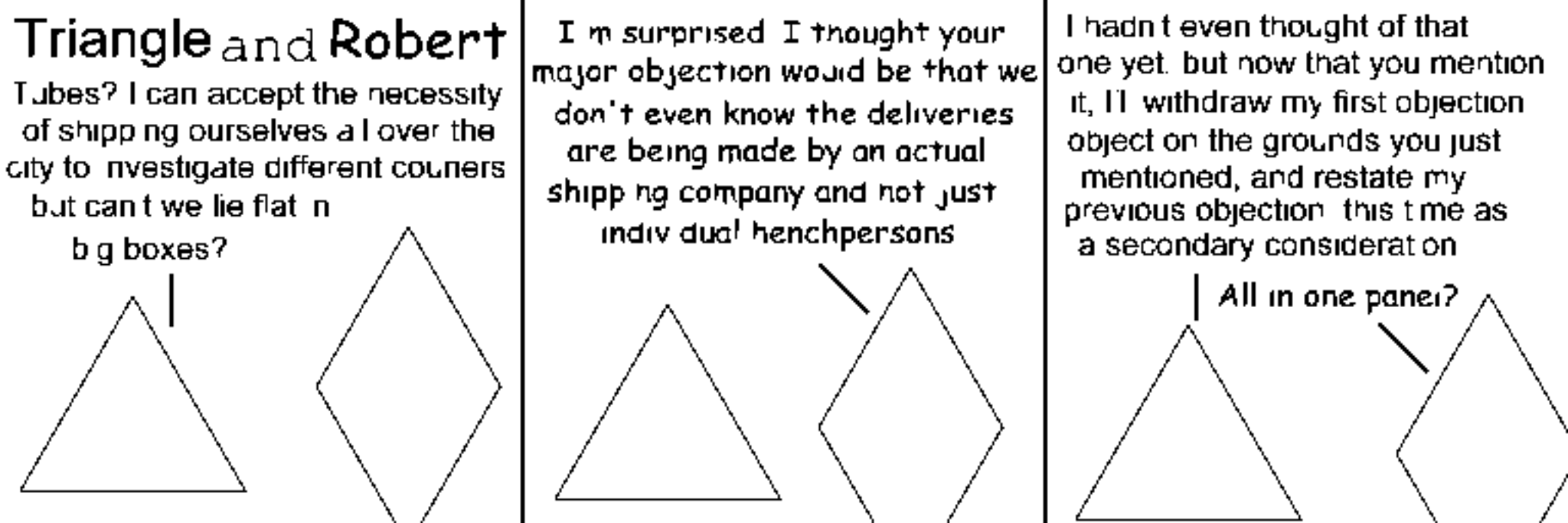


That would darn it I can't come up with a sing e objection other than that it just sounds like a bad idea all around

Then it s agreed I ll get some g ant mailing tubes



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert Character Profile

Name:
Justice Pants

Dimensions:
73 x 91 pixels

Font:
OCR A Extended 14-point

Occupation:
Justice pants

Favorite Book (Fiction):
The Gunslinger, by Stephen King

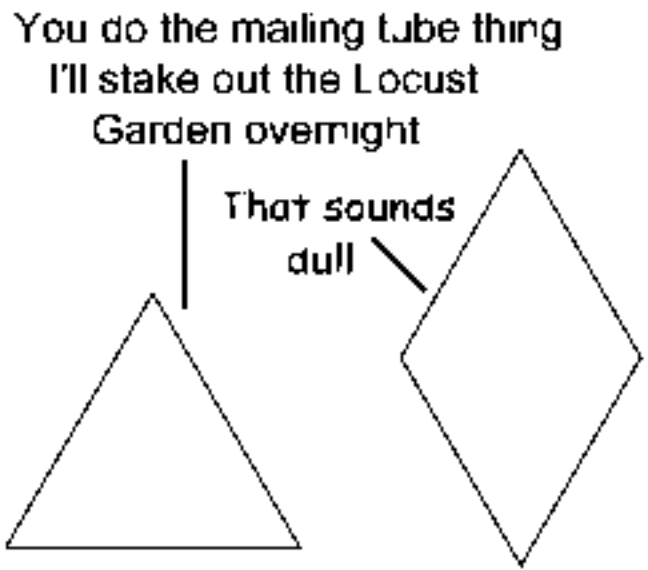
Favorite Book (Nonfiction):
Don't Panic, by Neil Gaiman

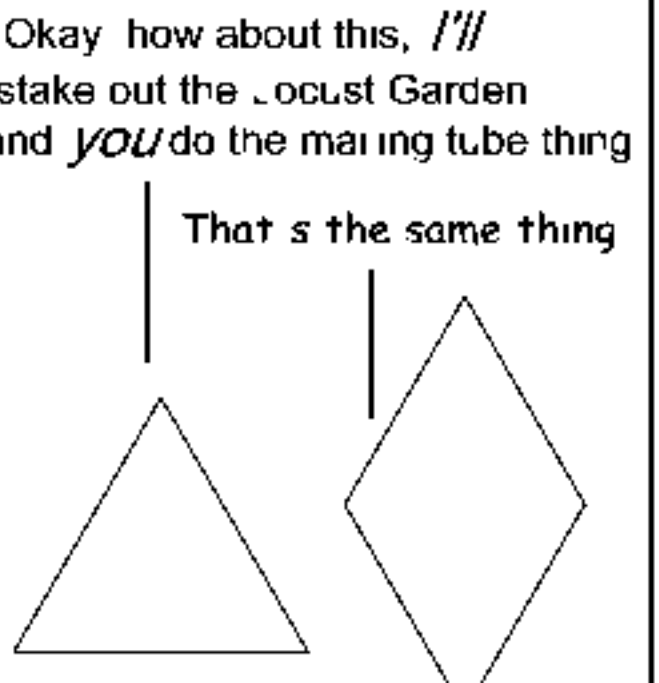
Favorite Movie:
The Adventures of Baron Munchausen

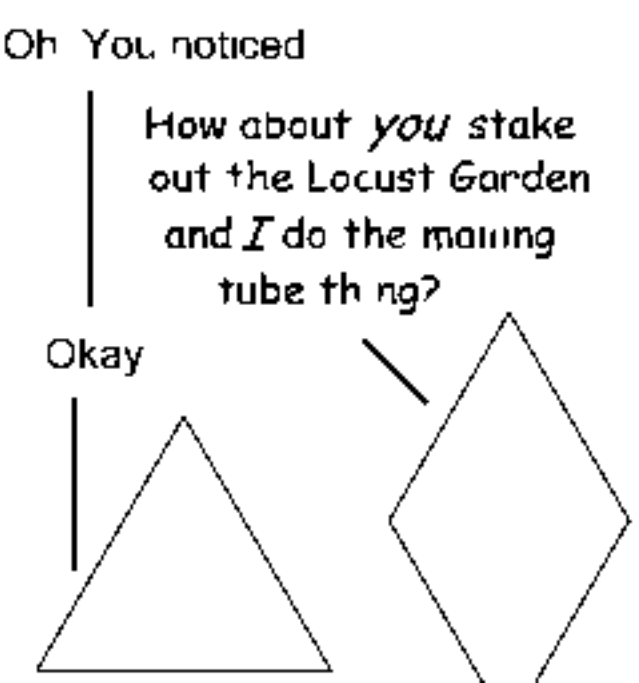
Personal Quote:
"I am the pants."

If I could offer you only one tip for the future it would be
Justice, justice, justice!

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Here.

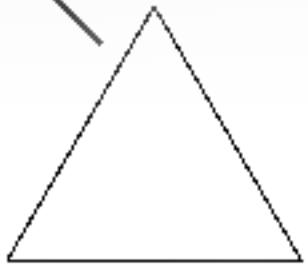
What's that?

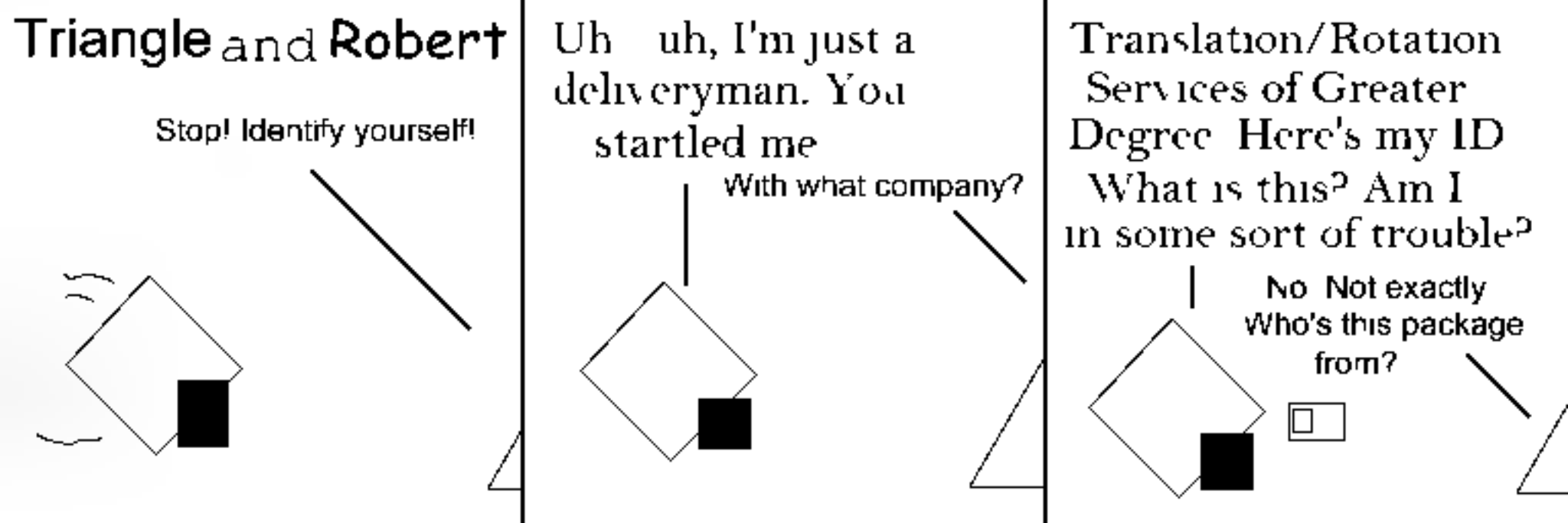
A shadow for you to hide in.

The presence of a shadow would make me more conspicuous rather than less

Could you hide in a lens flare?

Say don't you have protestors to not draw?

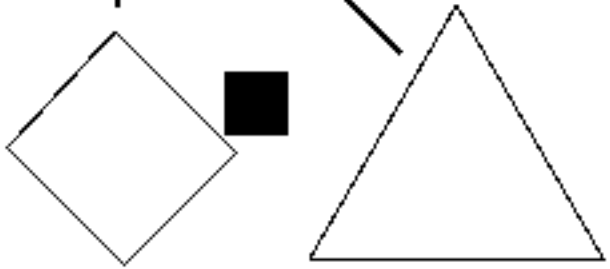



Triangle and Robert
Stop! Identify yourself!
Uh uh, I'm just a deliveryman. You startled me
With what company?
Translation/Rotation Services of Greater Degree Here's my ID What is this? Am I in some sort of trouble?
No Not exactly Who's this package from?

Triangle and Robert

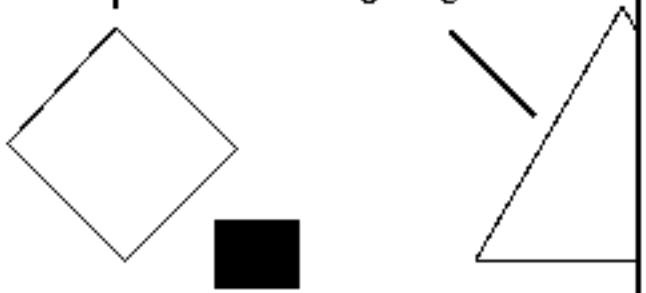
Odd the return address label is missing

How can I find out who sent the package?



Uh . you'd have to call the office during business hours I don't know

Don t leave it here I'm not sign ng for it

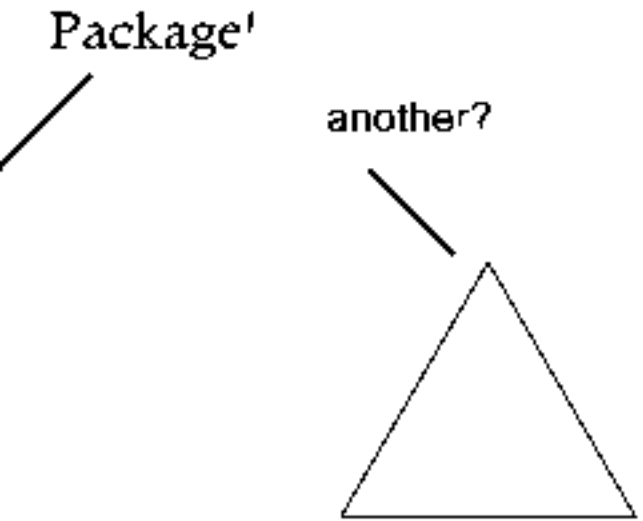


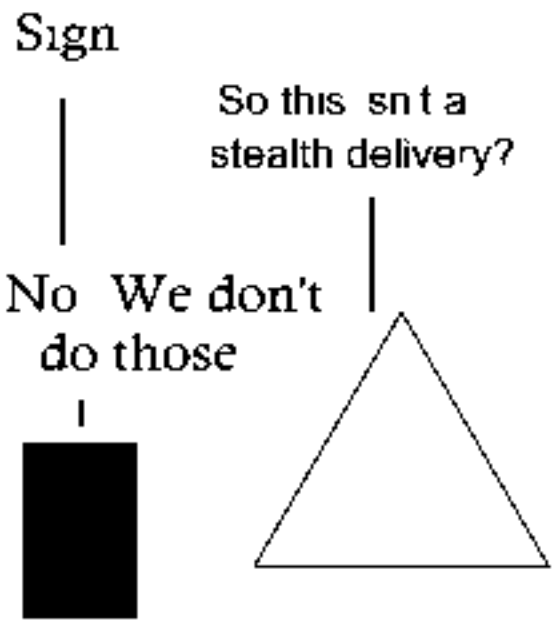
You don't need to It's a stealth-class delivery

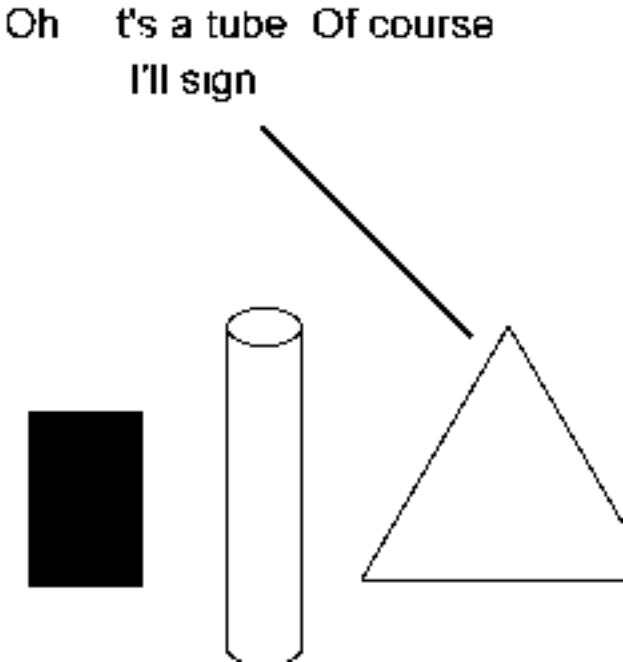
Hence the middle of the night

Yes You can refuse it though I'll take it back

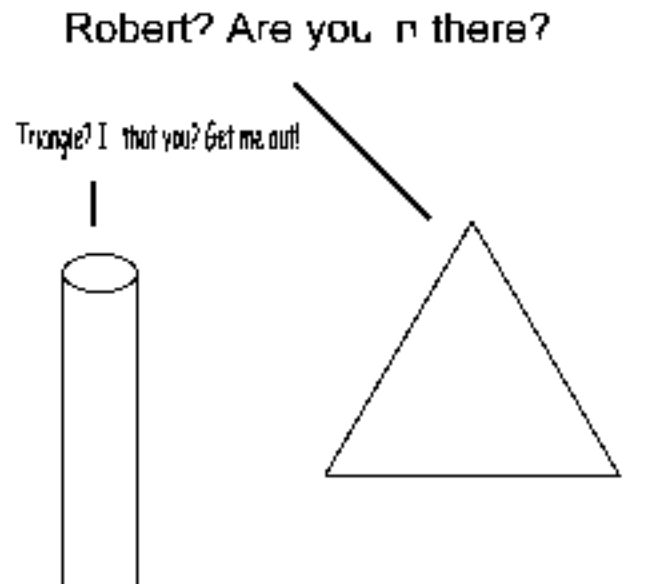
Triangle and Robert

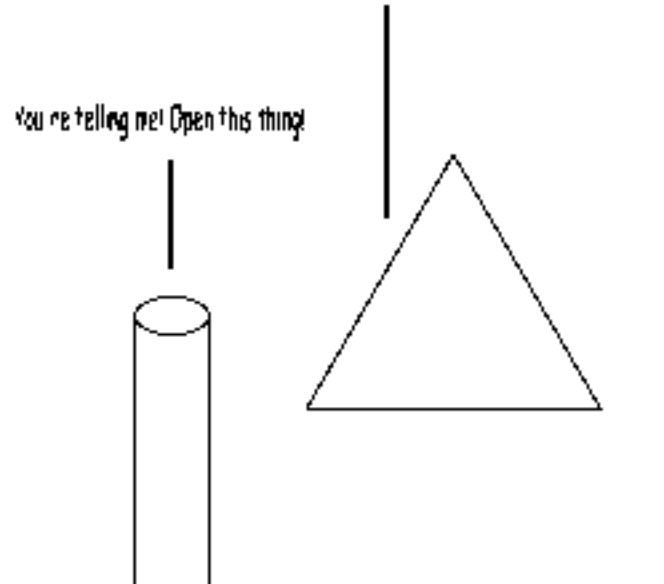


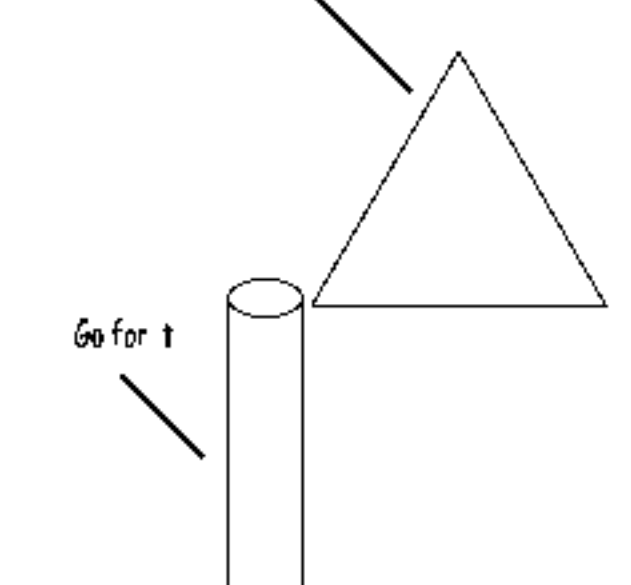




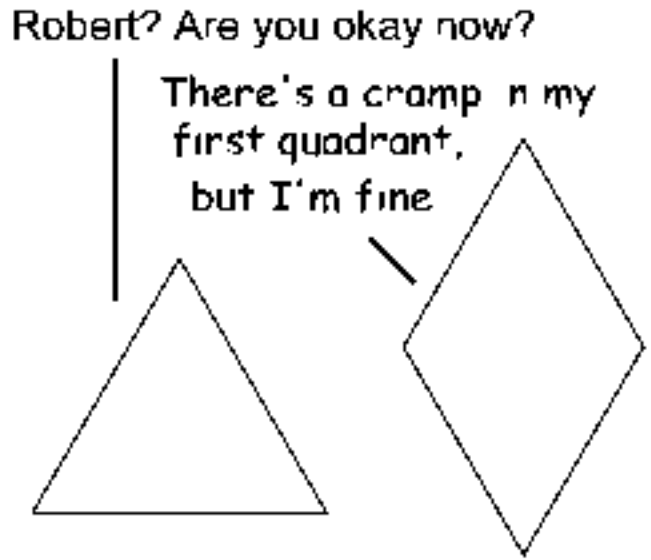
Triangle and Robert

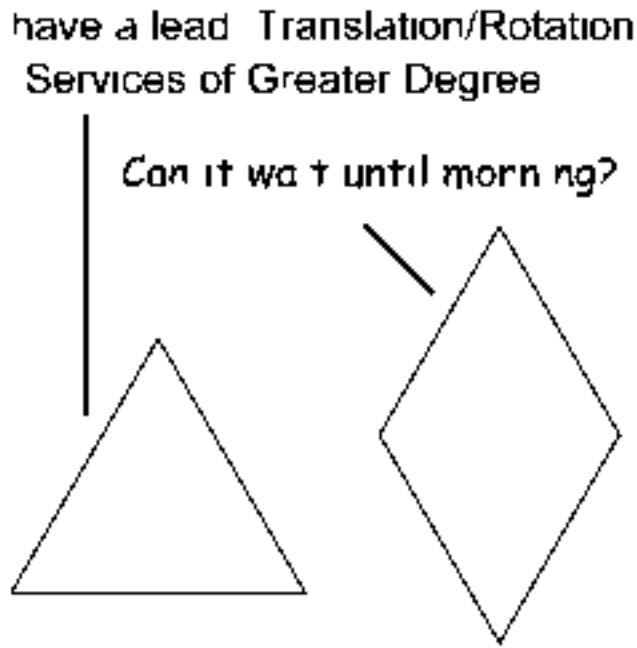


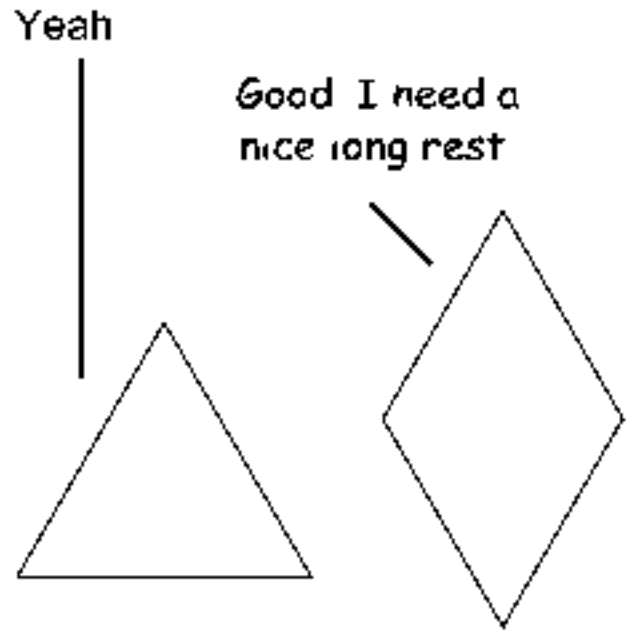




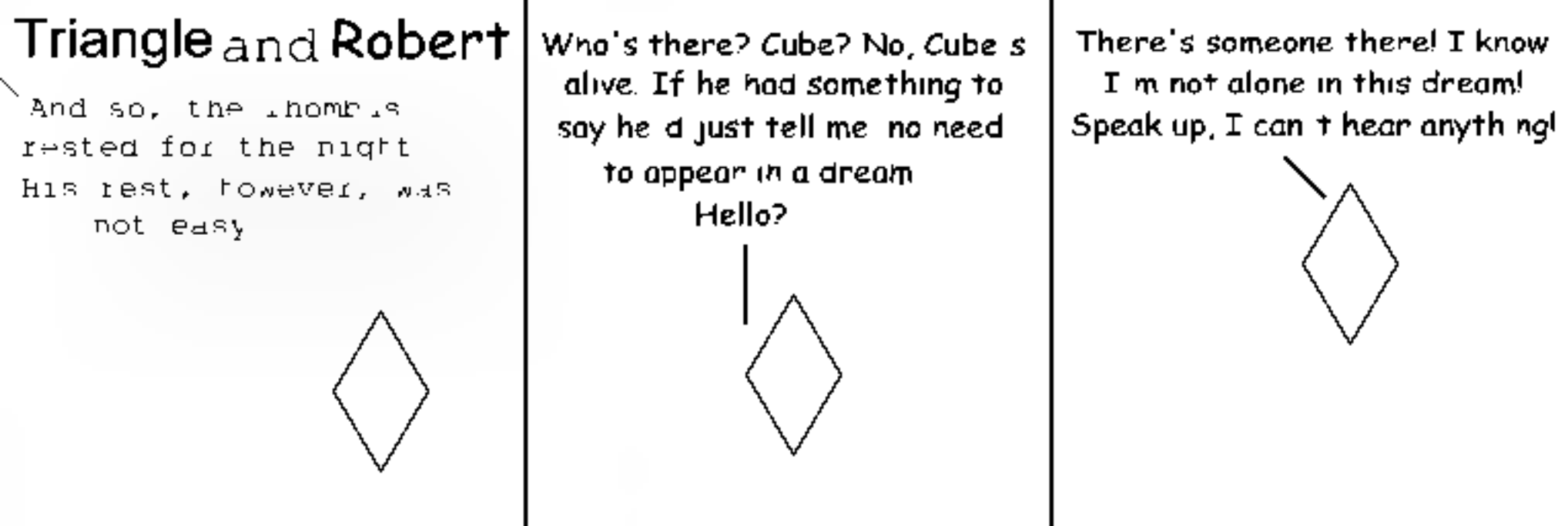
Triangle and Robert



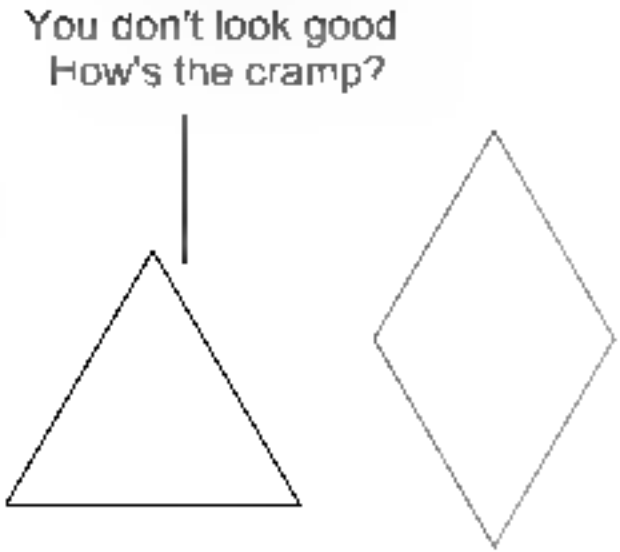


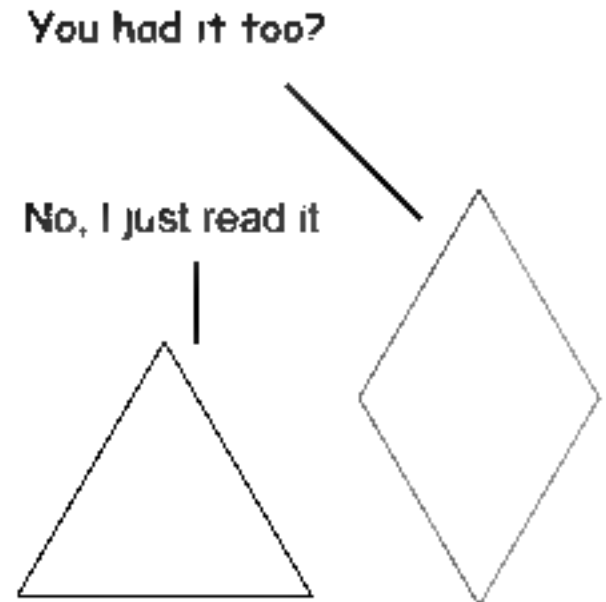


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

R bert was t the only one to experience such a dream

Please be quiet I need to sleep

病

Sorry

病

病

I ll keep narrating when he gets up)

Triangle and Robert

病

I'm awake now. You may narrate.

病

Mr. Disease too was afflicted by the strange messageless dread.

Unfortunately, while there is a very good reason for this and it ties in very nicely with the plot, I can't come up with decent phrasing for this bit at the moment. Maybe later.

病

Triangle and Robert

N e, still got nothing

Allow me

病

There's a powder of some sort on my pillow and it tastes vaguely beef-like. Have I been visited in my sleep by some manner of glutamatic deity? Perhaps it connects to these shipments, or perhaps it is coincidence

病

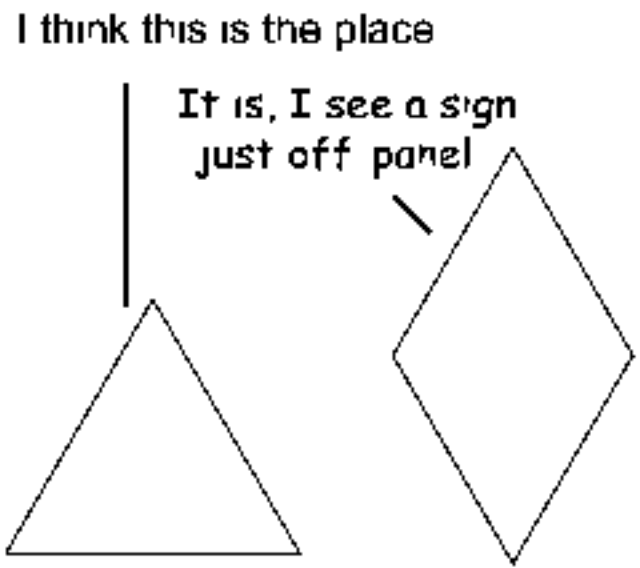
Not n w I' l have phrased it, especially the "gl tamic deity" bit, but thanks for covering me

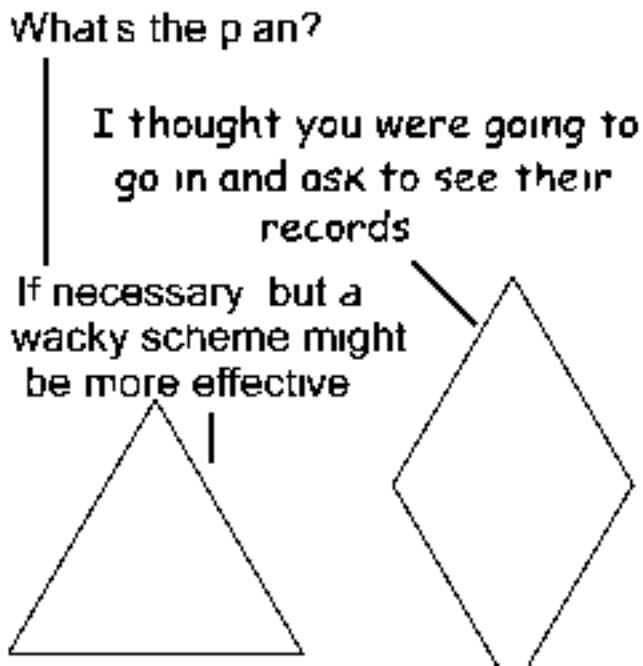
It is better to narrate than to wait for the narrator to pull his head out of his apex

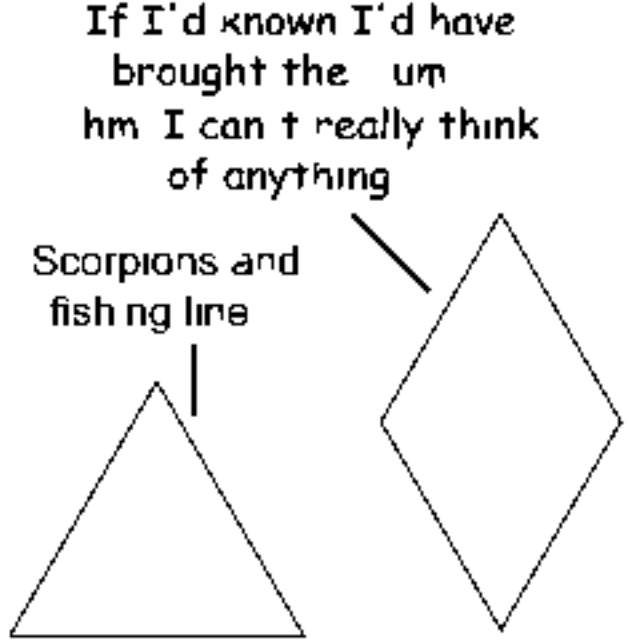
病

I l 't have a a apex.

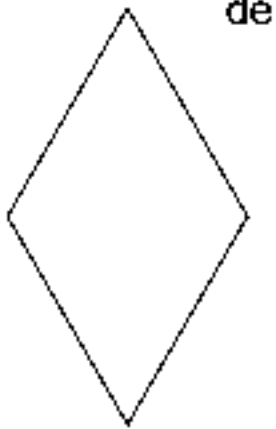
Triangle and Robert

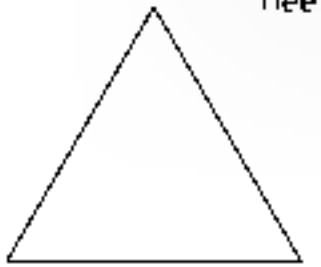


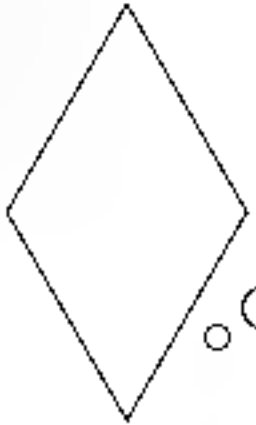




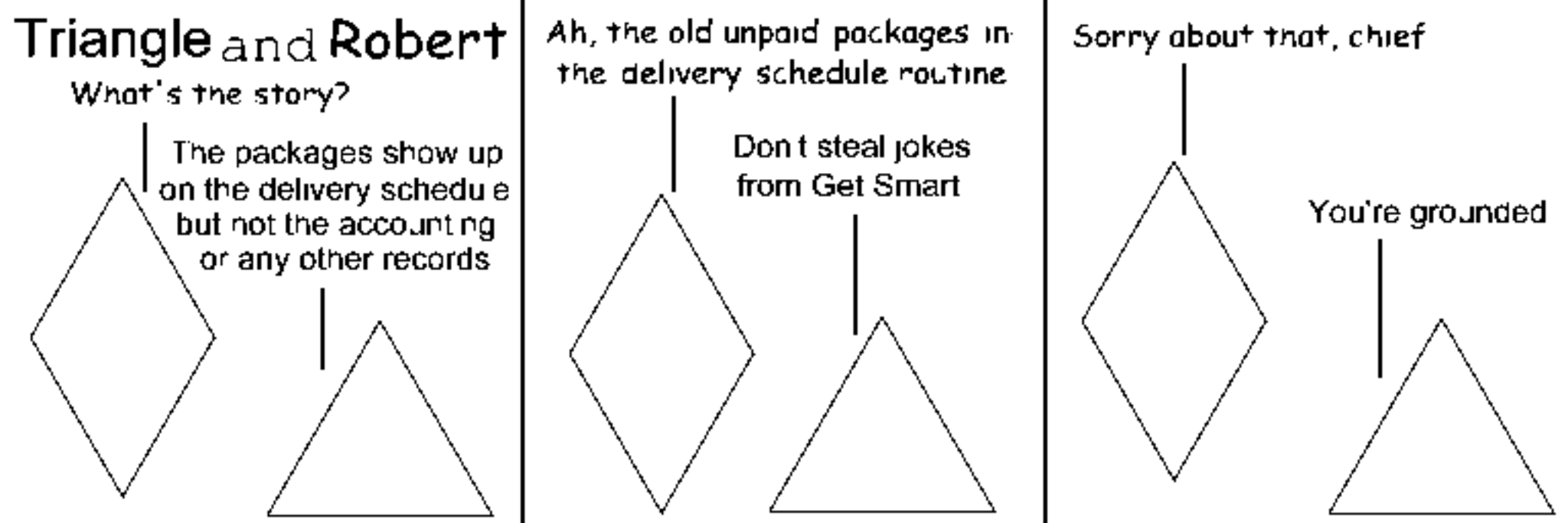
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



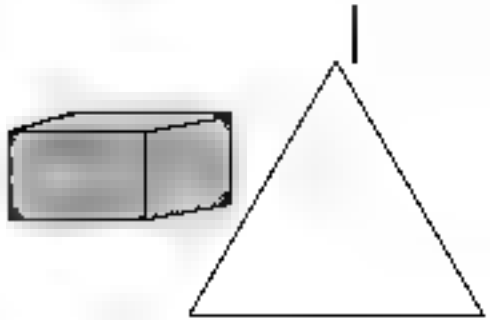
In the sorting room of Translation/Rotation Services of Greater Degree...

Triangle! Look!

A package materializing

This explains everything.. no. This explains some... no... this really doesn't explain anything, does it?

It feels like it's moving

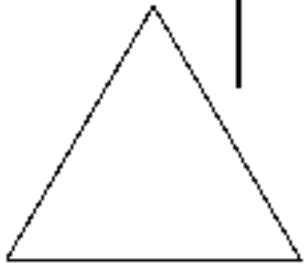


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

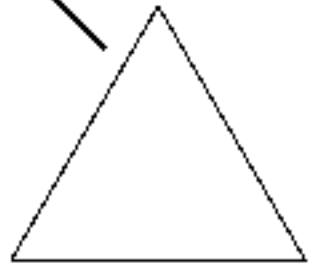
The package already has a track ng number on it

I not ced that too



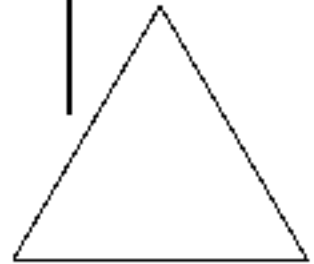
It's already in the shipp ng schedule database Hold on

You found someth ng?



Maybe. This workstation tastes very peculiar

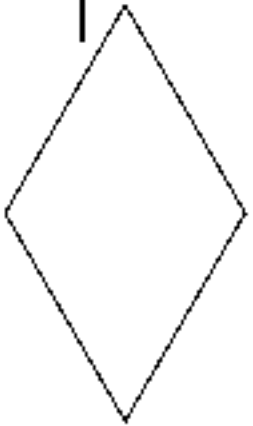
Robert. people aren't supposed to taste oh, whatever



Triangle and Robert

Mind if I open up this workstat on and look inside?

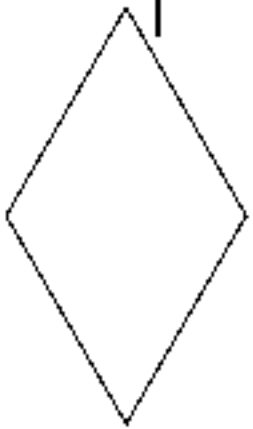
Go ahead

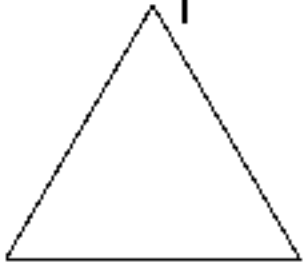


Tr angle! Look!

But that s mpossible!

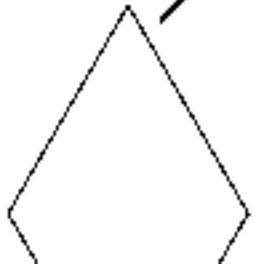
Impossible yet true





What's t is stuff on the mot erboard? Q artz?

MSG It s a bus-mastering device made entirely of crystall zed MSG That s what s been putting the del veries on the schedule



Okay, the plot's officially stup d

Triangle and Robert

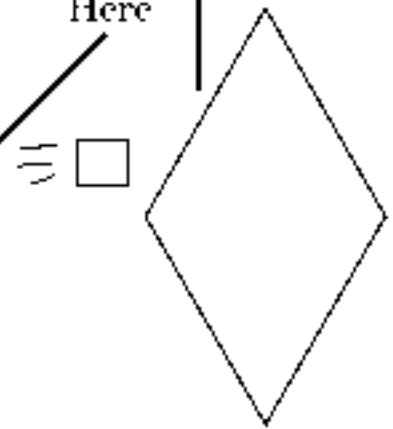
So MSG s mag cally materia iz ng in packages and programming itself onto the de ivery schedu e?

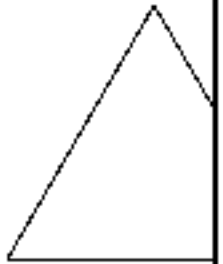
Yes. Not magically though Are you aware of the Brownian motion properties of airborne MSG?

Of course

Does anyone have any brownies? I want to try something

Here





Watch

It's moving!

Yes, and rapidly The air here must have several hundred parts per mill on MSG

Triangle and Robert

Monosodium g utamate part cles aren't nanites They can t be programmed and they can't assemble themselves into circu ts MSG is not a Turing-complete add t ve

You know, this thing you do where you chalenge the validity of the strip s current prem se is really getting old

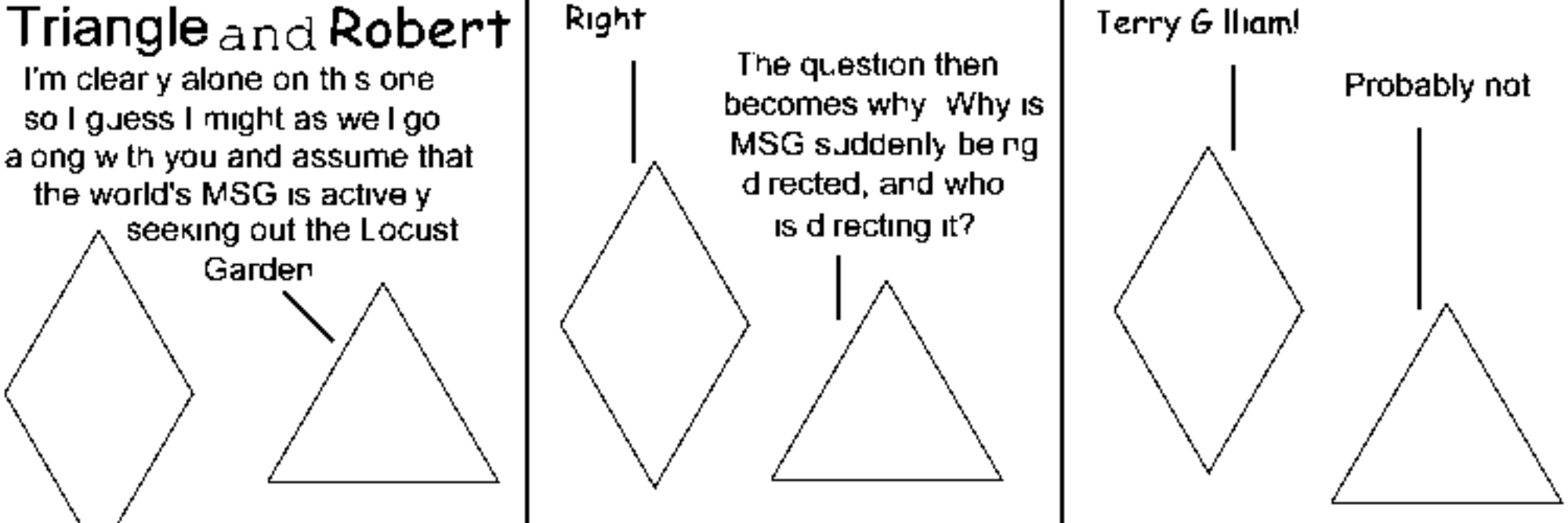
Maybe it s. but most of the time the premise is at least d mly plausible

Kruth, D and Square, L. "Ne ral Flavored Network Substitutes " 197

You just made that up

fes, but it's true retroactively

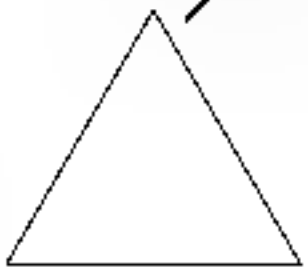
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

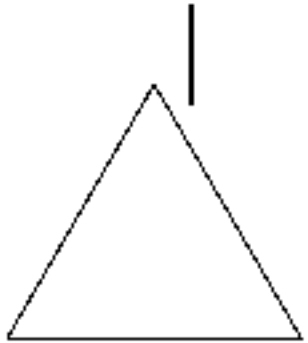
Meanwhile, deep in his underground lair, Terry Gilliam

No! *Nooo*



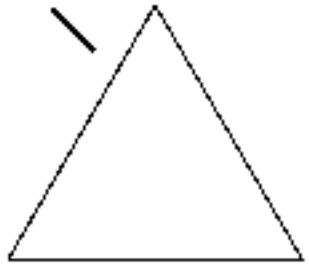
I was kidding I was kidding!

Don't



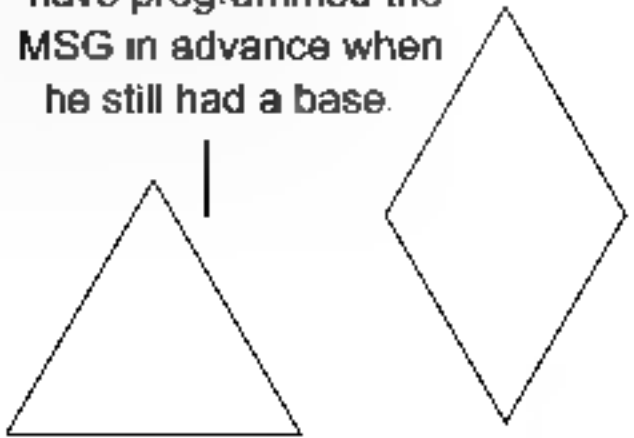
Don't worry I'm not about to attempt drawing celebrity caricatures

That much is true

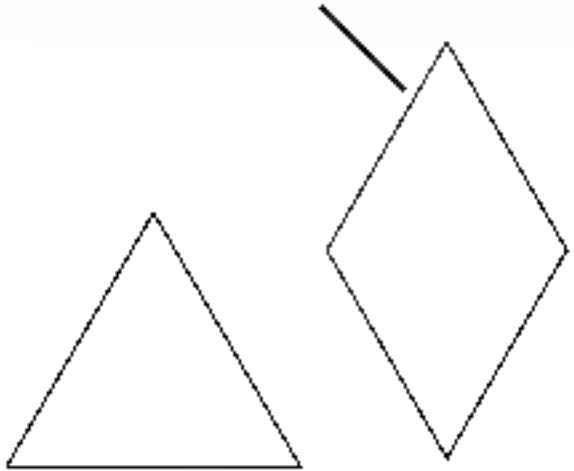


Triangle and Robert

This might be the work of the Cornersheep after all. He could have programmed the MSG in advance when he still had a base.

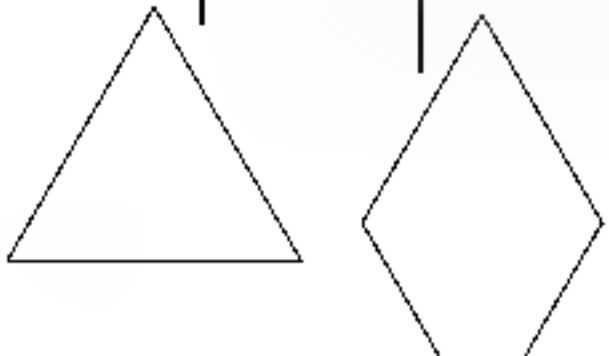


Hmm.. ties everything together neatly. No obvious plot holes. It would make perfect sense.

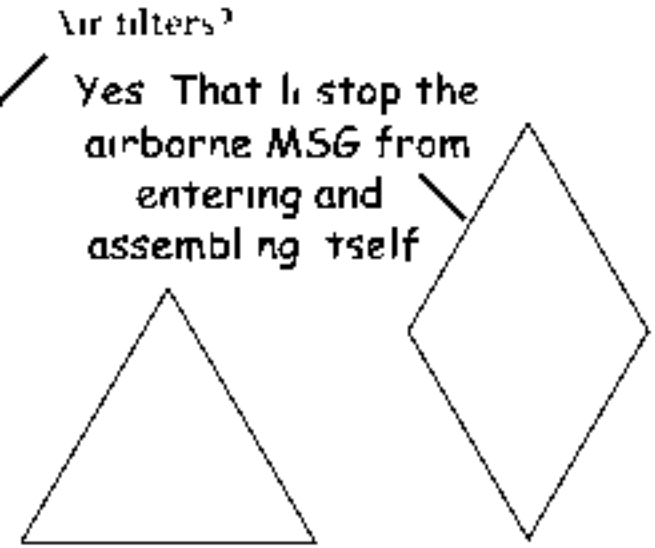


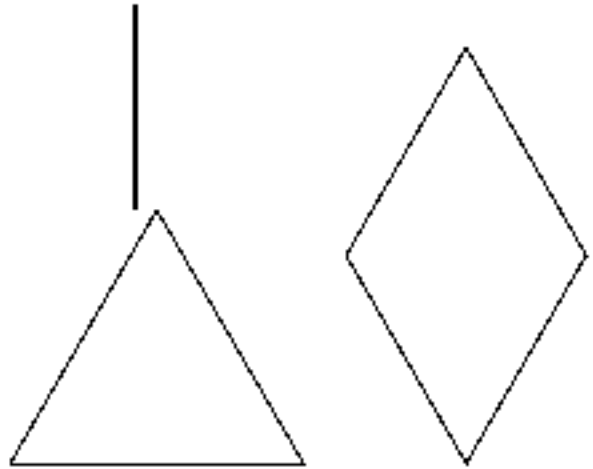
You're right. It's much too plausible for this strip.

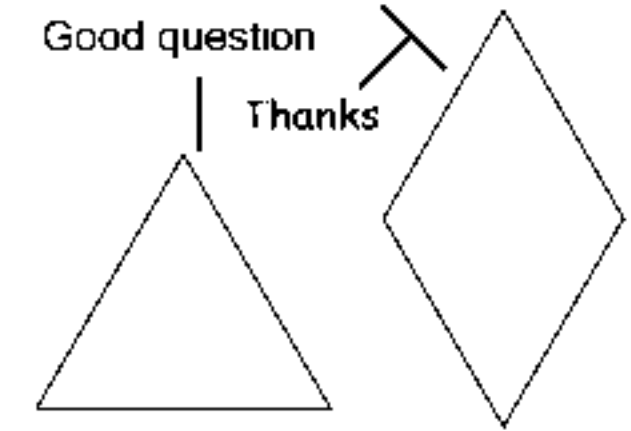
I'm still not ruling out the Gilliam hypothesis myself.



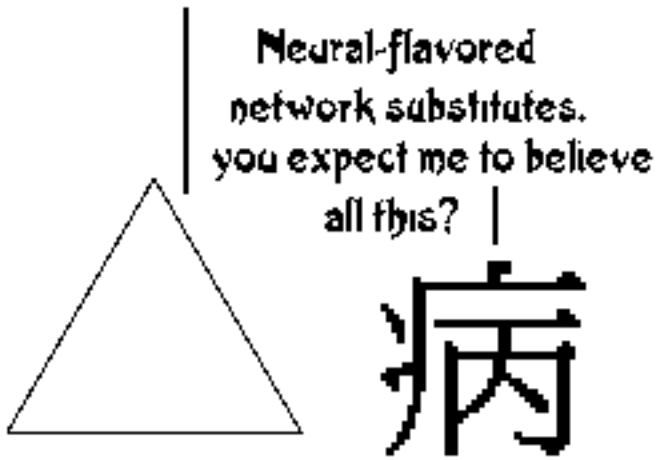
Triangle and Robert

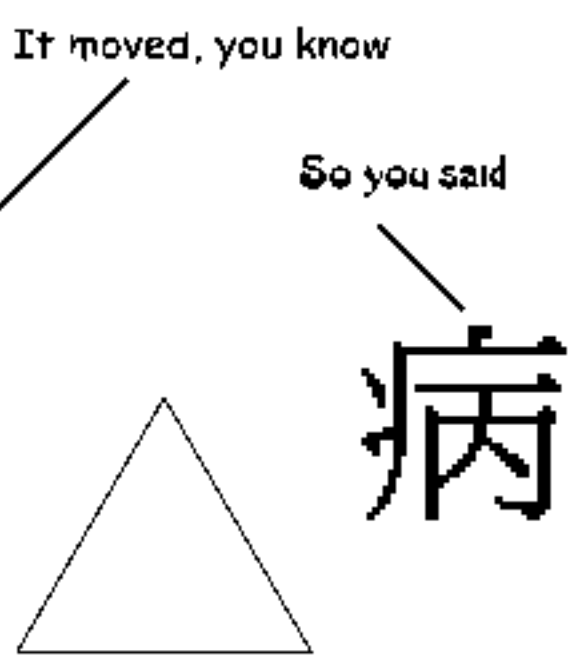




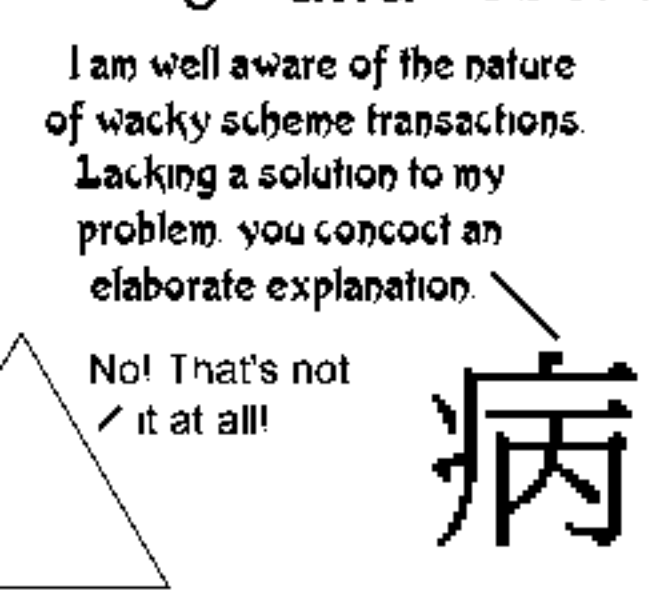


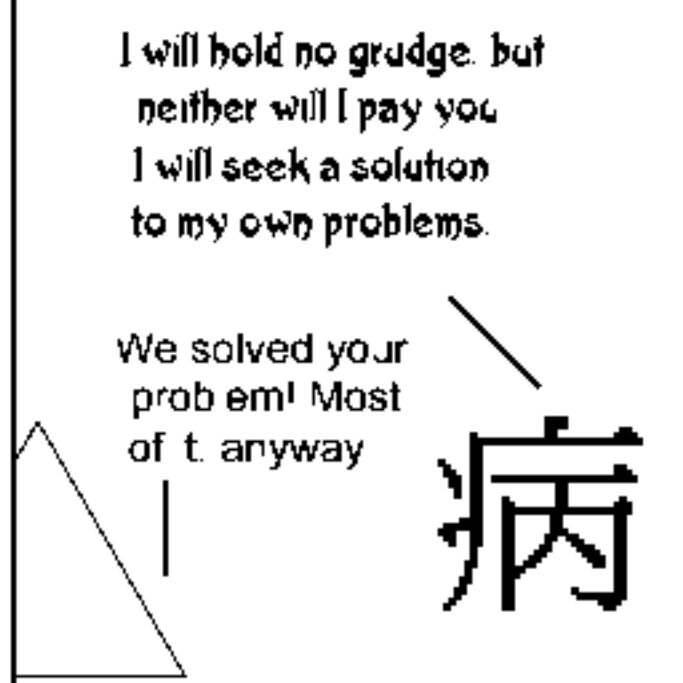
Triangle and Robert

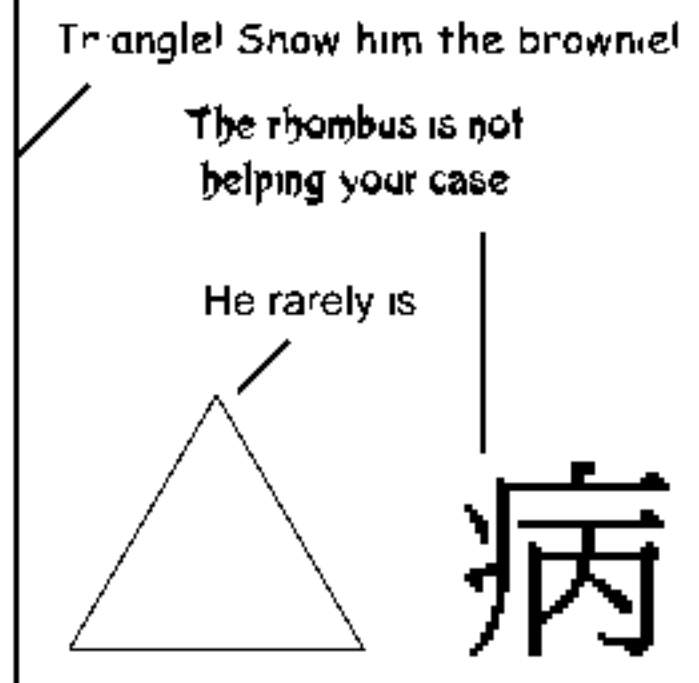




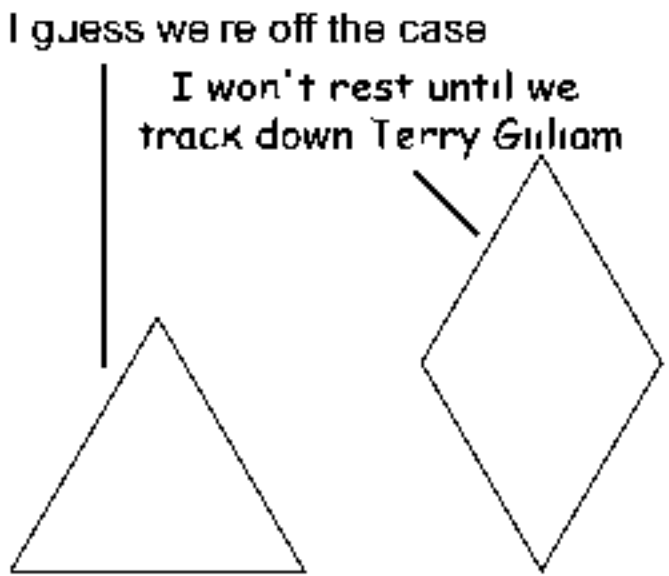
Triangle and Robert

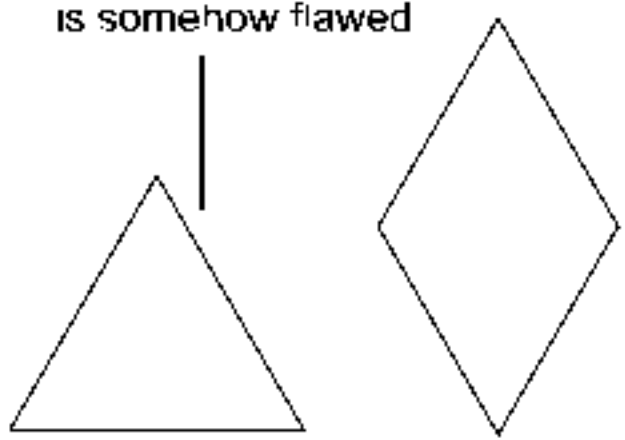


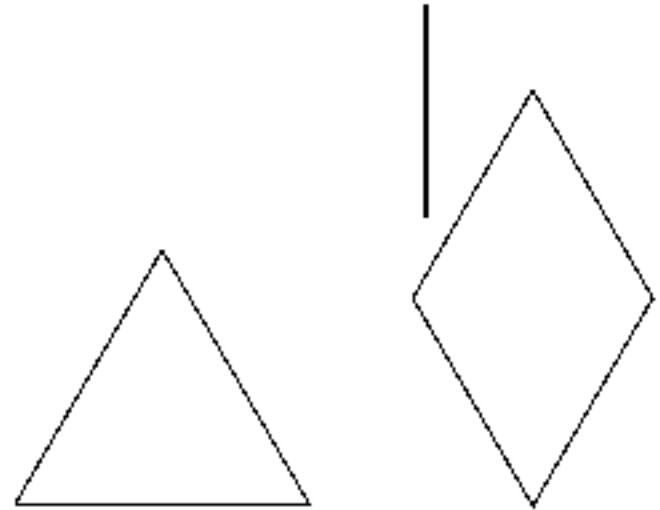




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Baa!

Ahh, my equilateral nemesis approaches.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa Baa?

Everything important is in this bunker. He can take all the time he wants sifting through the rubble of the upper levels. He won't find anything of value.

INSERT

Baa! Baa baa baa!

INSERT SHEEP

Are you suggesting that my leadership has become... questionable?

Triangle and Robert

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

Baa.

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGEN TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The power I hold over my minions has weakened. The failure of my security measures has led them to question me.

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSE SHE

INSERT SHEEP

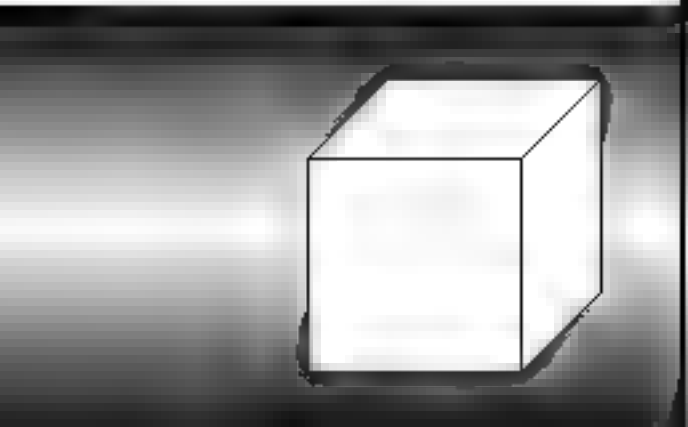
Baa?-

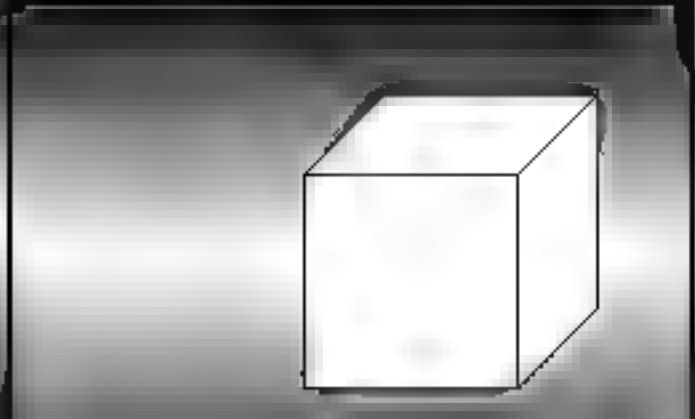
INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

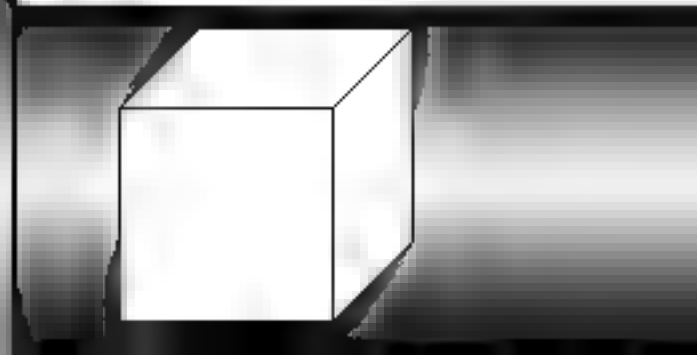
Triangle and Robert

In a dimly lit tunnel, Cube makes yet another bizarre discovery....



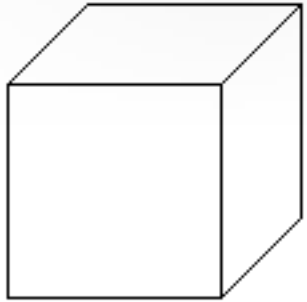


Apparently Cube doesn't talk to himself anymore. This could be harder than I thought.

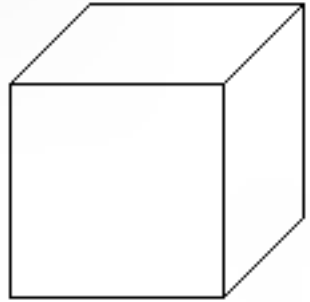


Triangle and Robert

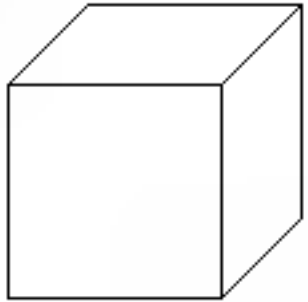
Fearing the mysterious motives of the Cartoonist, Cube refuses to reveal the nature of his latest archaeological discovery



Steadfastly refusing to respond to narration, he stands silently, not letting any of his crucial knowledge appear in the strip

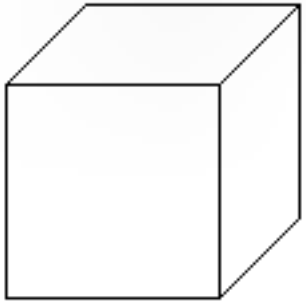


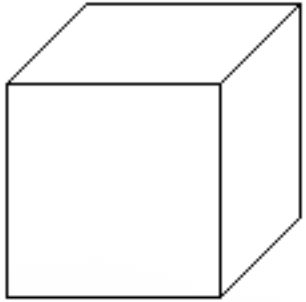
Even drawing a speech line for him fails to loosen his tongue



Triangle and Robert

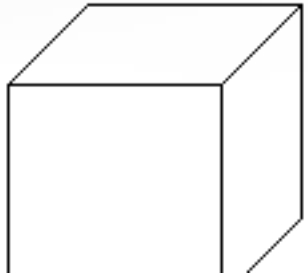
Cube's efforts to inconvenience the Cartoonist do not that





Unable to coax Cube into narrating his latest find, the Cartoonist is instead forced to attempt to draw it

Also, the silence of recent panels has caused the Cartoonist to begin referring to himself in the third person. Whether this will have significant consequences has yet to be seen



The Cart orist builds up his strength, leaving a strip devoid f visual eleme s so ha he can f cus his drawing skills r the challenge ahead.

That's not exactly how I'd put it

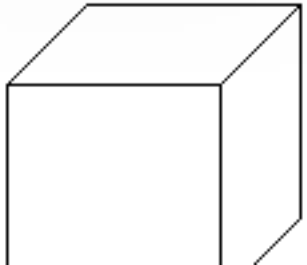
Hey you said something!

In other words you're stalling for time.

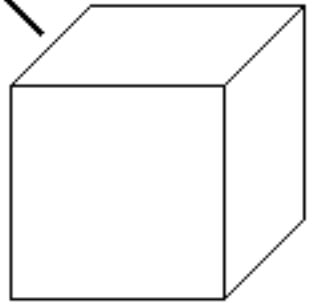
Oops.

Triangle and Robert

The Cartoonist, still referring to himself in the third person, begins an attempt to bargain with Cube in order to avoid having to draw . well anything

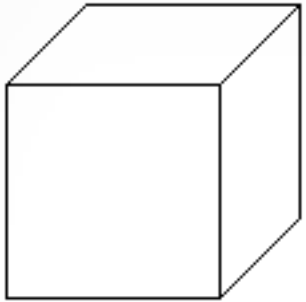


What can you offer me that would be more valuable than my continued survival? As long as what I know is crucial to the plot and kept hidden, I am untouchable.



And, what you know must be the realization of how much you have left to learn. I can provide information no dig can offer. As for your survival, I may have something to offer in that respect as well

Too much text... trouble... breathing...



Triangle and Robert

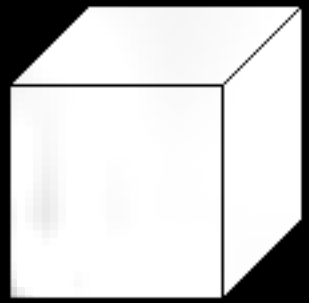
The archaeological record has massive gaps. The Fifth Race had no written language, and the Sixth left very, very few records. The Building Watcher and myself are the only beings who can fill these gaps **...help...**

If you wish to truly comprehend your world' past, you must deal with one or both of us. You may be right to fear me, Cube, and I understand your reticence. Once I have what I need from you, I will be more dangerous to you, but I can give you means to protect yourself from me **...no...air...**

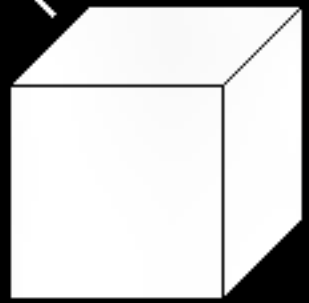
Believe me, Cube, I intend to. Cube. Can you hear me Cube. Are you dead again

Triangle and Robert

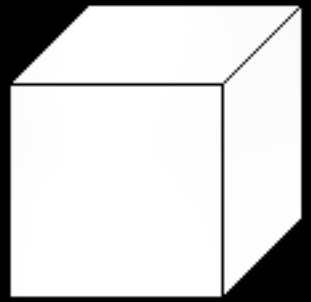
I've been here before.



Oh... I'm dead, that's right. I was exploring a tunnel, and the Cartoonist filled it with text and drove out all the air.



Apparently holding back information isn't enough to protect me... even if he needs me alive he can still accidentally kill me off. In this case incompetence is far more dangerous than malice.



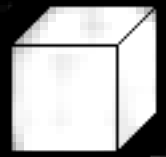
Triangle and Robert

TRIANGLE. THE TIME IS NOW. THIS IS YOUR DESTINY...

I'm not Triangle.

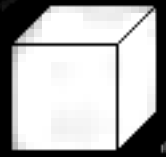
YOU'RE NOT TRIANGLE.

No.



YOUR CARTOONIST SEEMS BENT ON MAKING OUR TASK DIFFICULT.

My cartoonist? I didn't vote for him.



Triangle and Robert

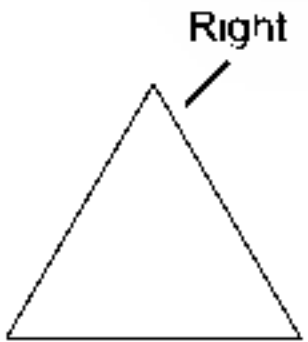
SO... UM... WHILE YOU'RE HERE, MAYBE I SHOULD TELL YOU SOME OF TRIANGLE'S DESTINY. YOU KNOW, SINCE YOU'RE HERE AND ALL...

Hm... that would certainly give the Cartoonist some extra incentive to bring me back to life. Go right ahead.

OKAY. LET ME GET MY NOTES IN ORDER. THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle. Uh, Cube's. You knew.



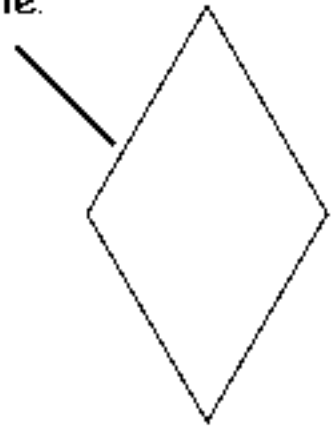
If you can come up with a way to revive him I'd appreciate it

You're just saying that to hurt me

Triangle and Robert

Robert

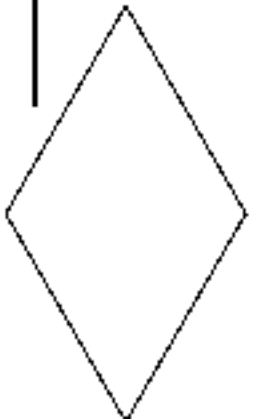
Shh I'm tracking the Guliammobile.



Che needs help.

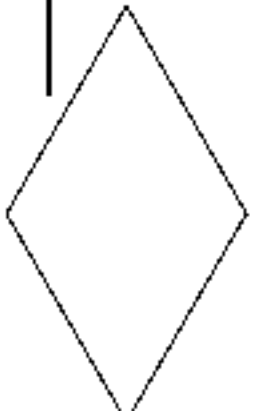
It'll be too late

After



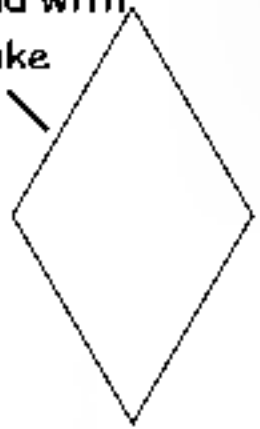
How so?

I'll explain later

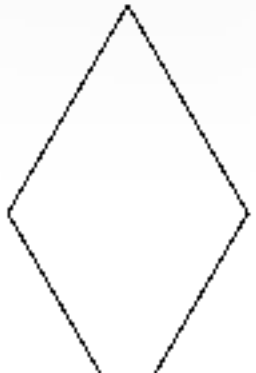


Triangle and Robert

Last time Cube was dead and I tried to do him a favor I ended up dead with him I don't like being dead

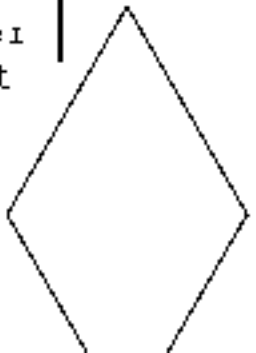


I won't die this time Just find a way to get Cube back in time for the next greyscale strip and I'll make it worth your while



I think I'd rather be paid in advance You're not exactly a good credit risk

You're acting out of character on purpose just to annoy me!



Triangle and Robert

Give Resurrection Now
Name your price

I do not have the power to perform the task you require

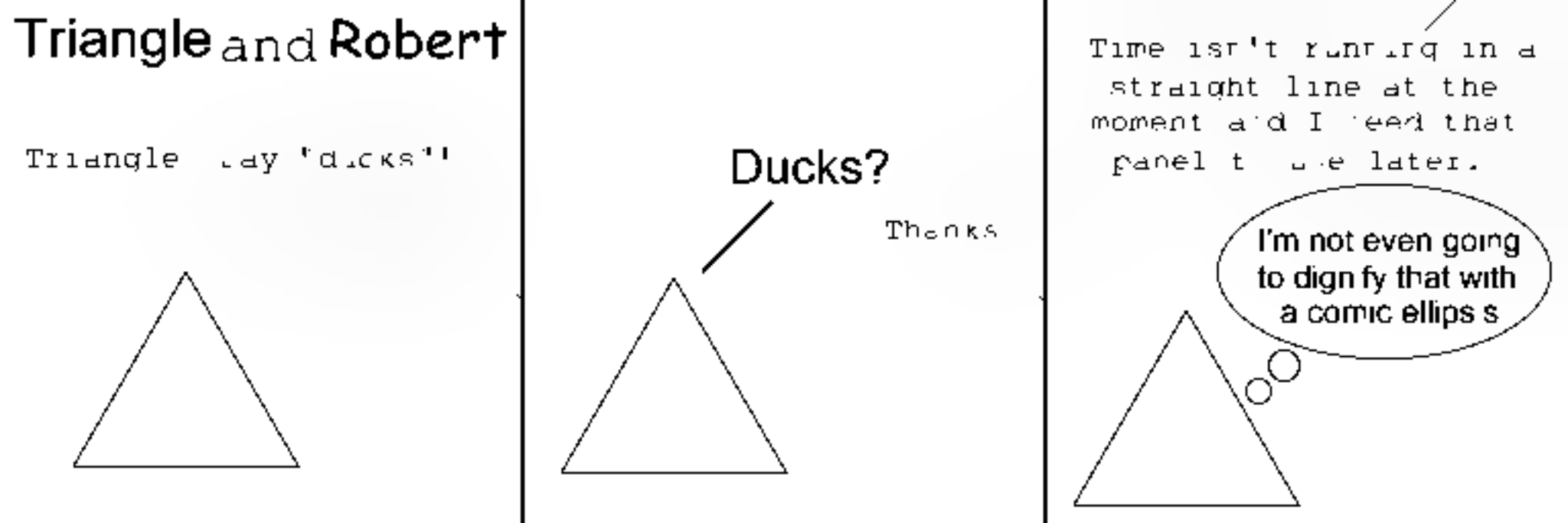
What about the Ritual of Endless Bouillon

No. Nothing you can offer will induce me to perform that recipe. Never again.

Oh no . I don't have time for a flashback Don't you dare start talking about the time you attempted the Ritual

I remember it like it was almost yesterday The urge to narrate it is strong

Triangle and Robert

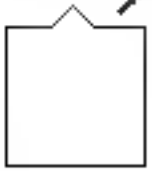


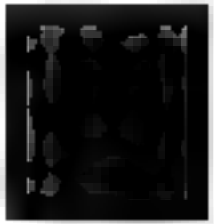
Triangle and Robert

When I was young, my mother taught me what she knew of the cuisine-magic.

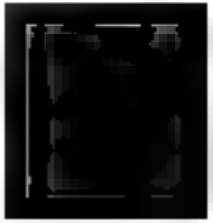
I believe you are ready, my son. Prepare the broth.

I do not feel ready, Mother



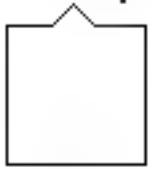


That wasn't what it looked like There was grass, and a sky, and... of course. Even when I speak of times before the Cartoonist, his inability to draw takes its toll. Still, this story is far less interesting against a plain white background.



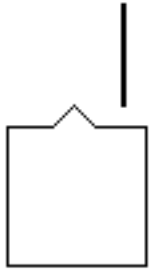
You have learned all that I can teach you. There is no reason to wait any longer. Now, choose your ladle.

I... guess I can try.



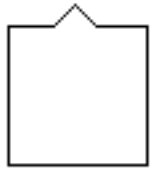
Triangle and Robert

To a rolling boil I bring six cups of water facing northeast.

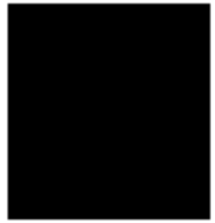


You proceed well.

Thus the bouillon is summoned, and thus... no, something is wrong.

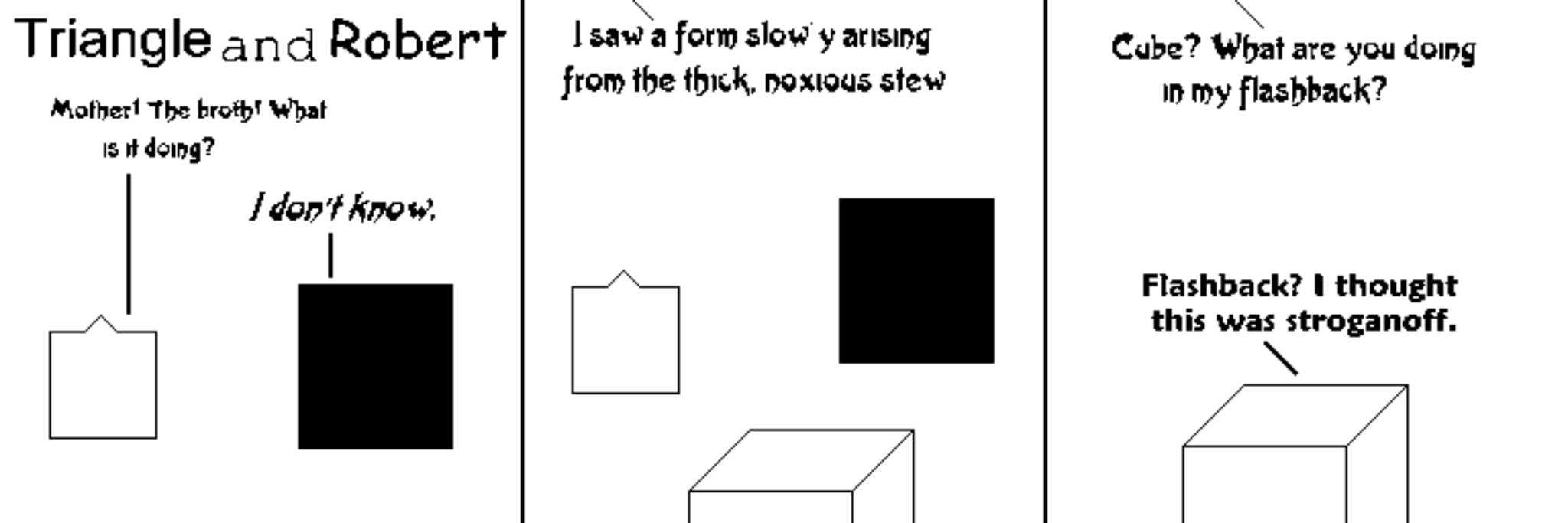


I smell it

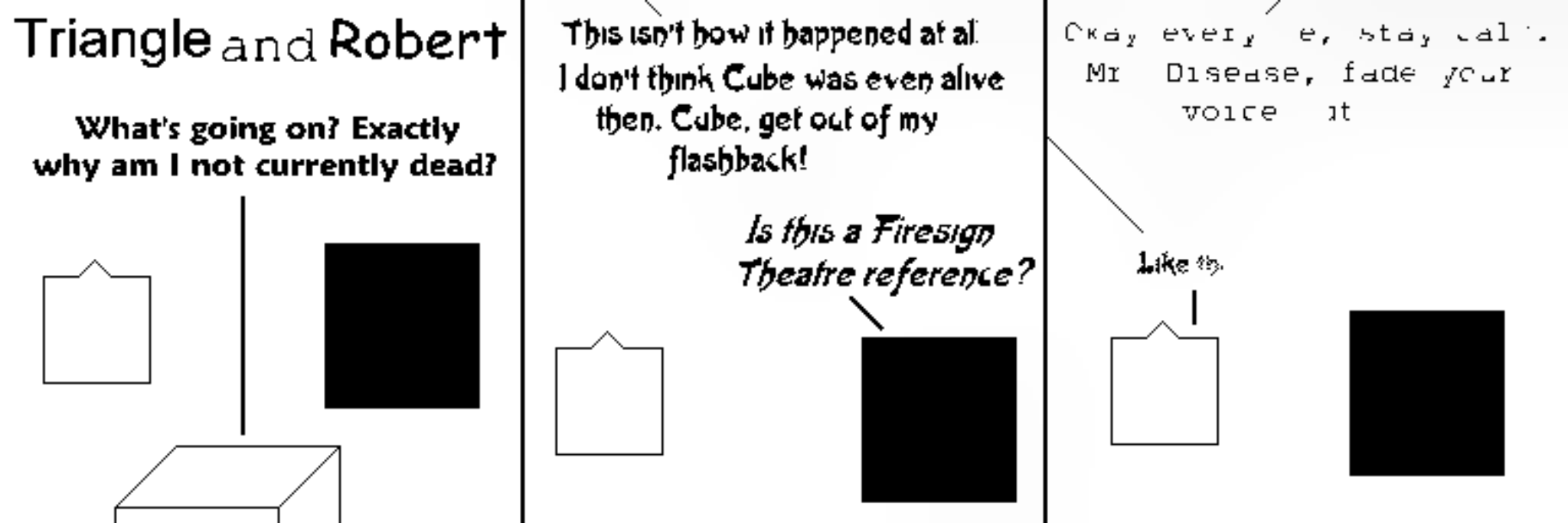


I was young. If I had been more experienced, I would have turned off the heat and covered the saucepan... but I was a fool. The bouillon was summoned, but it was not beef, nor chicken, nor any meat known to polygon. It was a dark, lumpy broth, a broth of pain and confusion.

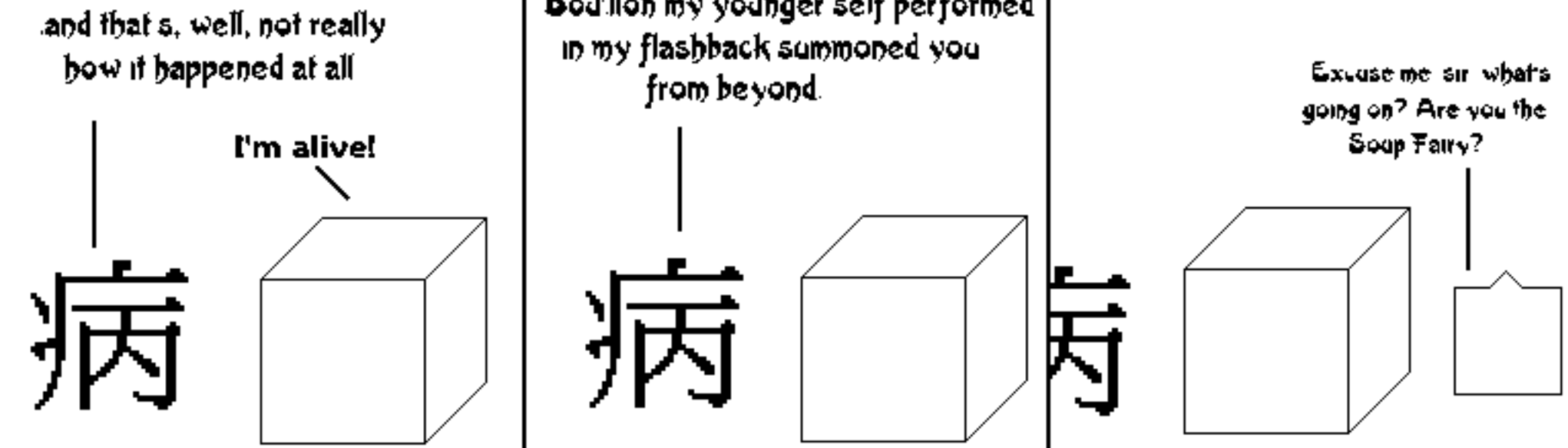
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

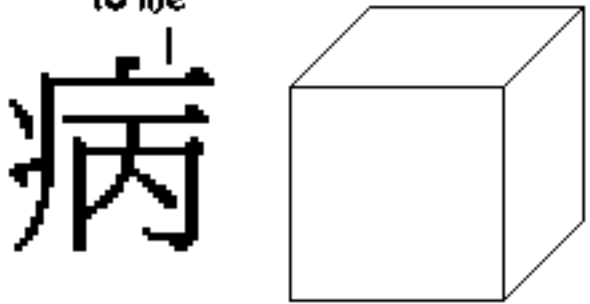


Triangle and Robert

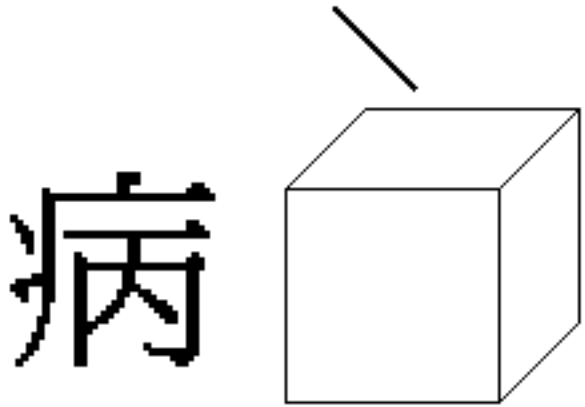


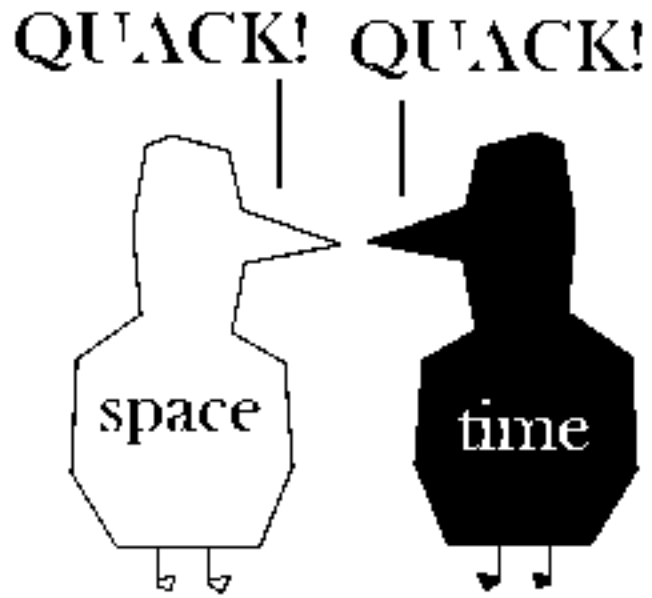
Triangle and Robert

I am upset at the Cartoonist's inept handling of my flashback. The incident I was attempting to describe was very important to me



More importantly, now there's a younger version of you running around creating a space-time pair of ducks.





Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Cons oh hi Mr Disease

I am glad that you have returned from Scotland How was your trip?

病

I didn't find the Cornersheep or any MSG-re ated ev dence but I sa vaged some n ce equipment from the base wreckage

I am in need of your aid once more. Due to the Cartoonist's startling incompetence, a space time pair of ducks has manifested and must be contained

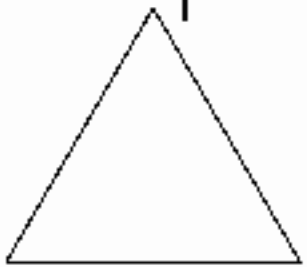
Ducks?

Thanks

Triangle and Robert

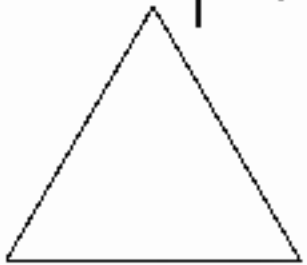
The Poultrycollider should make this job simple

Poultrycollider?



It was in the Cornersheep's cryo-ornithology lab. He was working on using frozen chicken as a power source for small aircraft

Cryo-ornithology



Don't worry about it. You don't need the details

Good. I don't want any reminders of that night in Kansas City.

Don't! A flashback now could irrevocably dent the timestream!

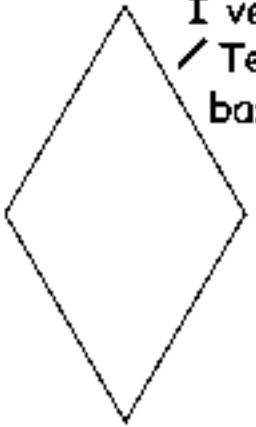
Triangle and Robert

I'll cut away to buy time Triangle, get him t stop flashing back I can give you about 5 panels.

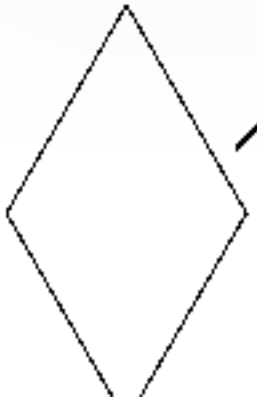
a cafeteria in a college by a lake

Meanwhile!

What took you so long? I've been hiding in Terry Gilliam's basement waiting I need the strip focus n order to make my move



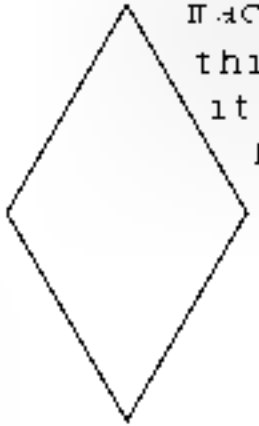
This isn't Terry Gilliam's basement It's the inside of a vending machine in the Library f Congrlence



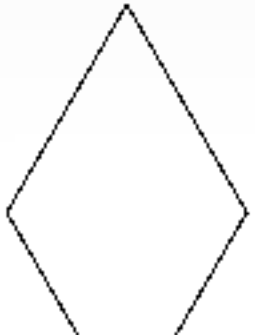
Technically, you are correct

Triangle and Robert

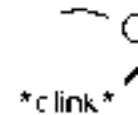
I could ask you how you got inside a vending machine, but I think I'll leave it as an exercise for the reader



I could also ask you why you're in the Library of Congruence, but then I would have to write an answer for it and I don't think I'm up to it



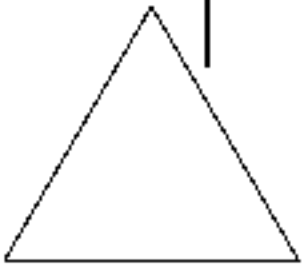
Instead, I will simply deposit the correct change to get you out and leave quietly, hoping that when next we meet you'll be done stalking poor Mr. Gilliam



Triangle and Robert

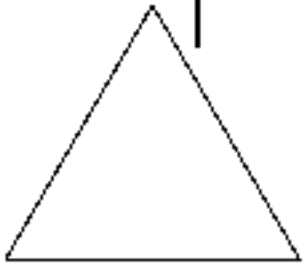
Is he .

He'l be quiet for the moment
I gave h m a turkey sorbet



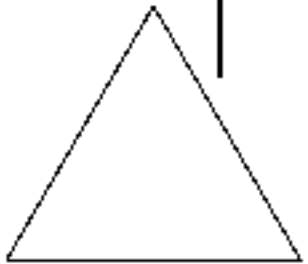
That's disgusting

Yes Cryo-ornithology
can be unp easant

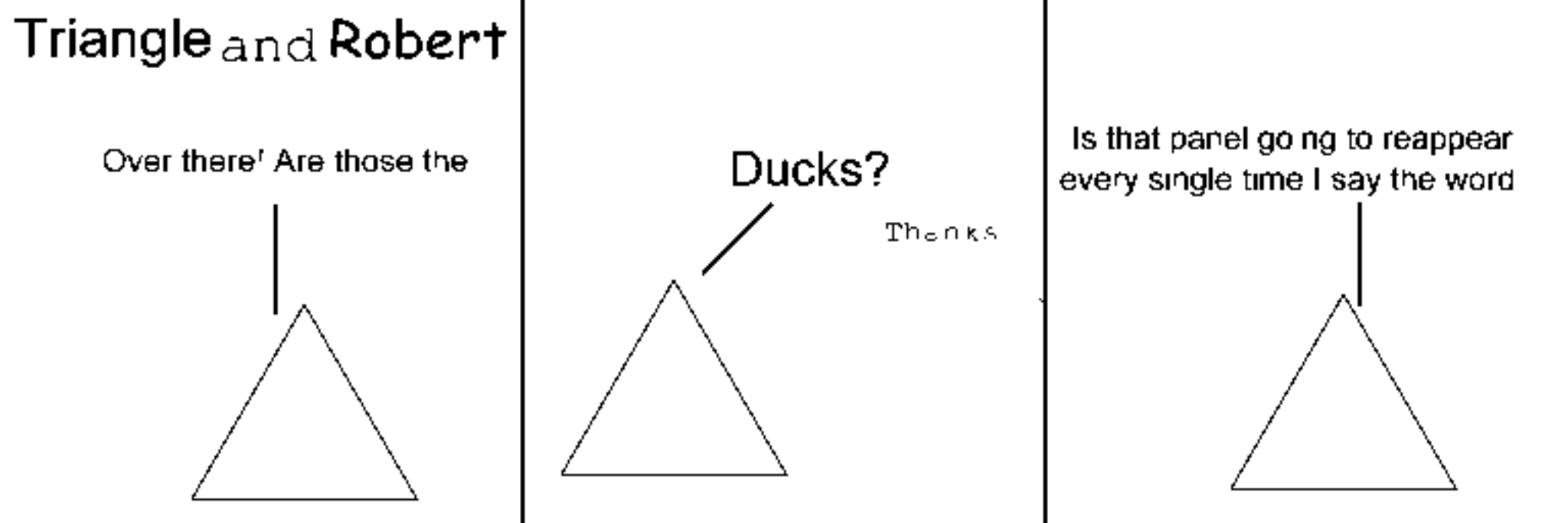


S , are y u read, t face
the pair of ducks

I'll be heading out as soon as
I'm sure Mr Disease won't
need a stomach pump



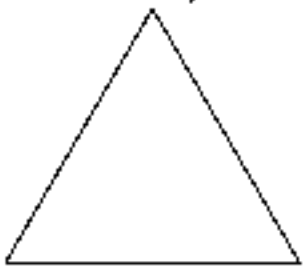
Triangle and Robert



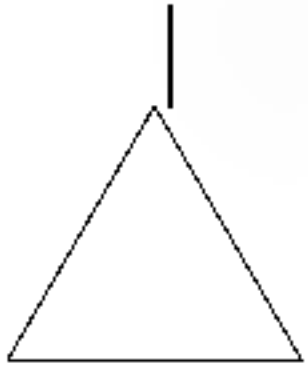
Triangle and Robert

Ducks?

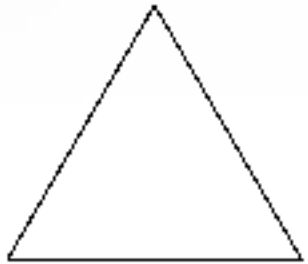
Thanks



Yes Yes it s

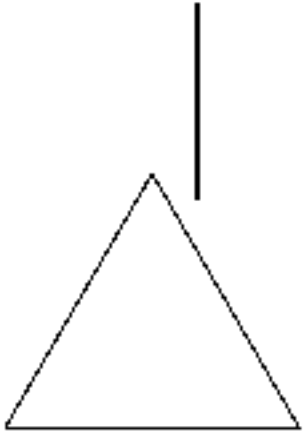


And so, Triangle learned a valuable lesson never say "ducks" when your cartoonist is, well, the

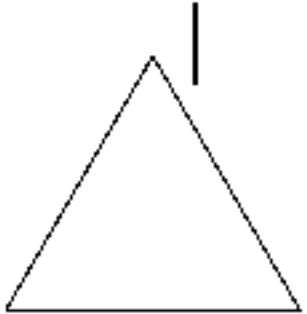


Triangle and Robert

What if I say the word "duck" singular? Does that work?

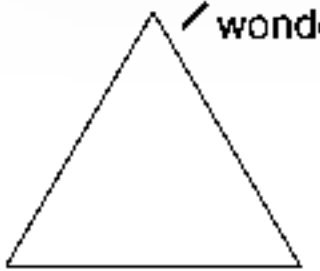


Oh good n that case I think I see the space-t me duck and the other space-time duck over there I'll lure them into range and activate The Poultrycollider



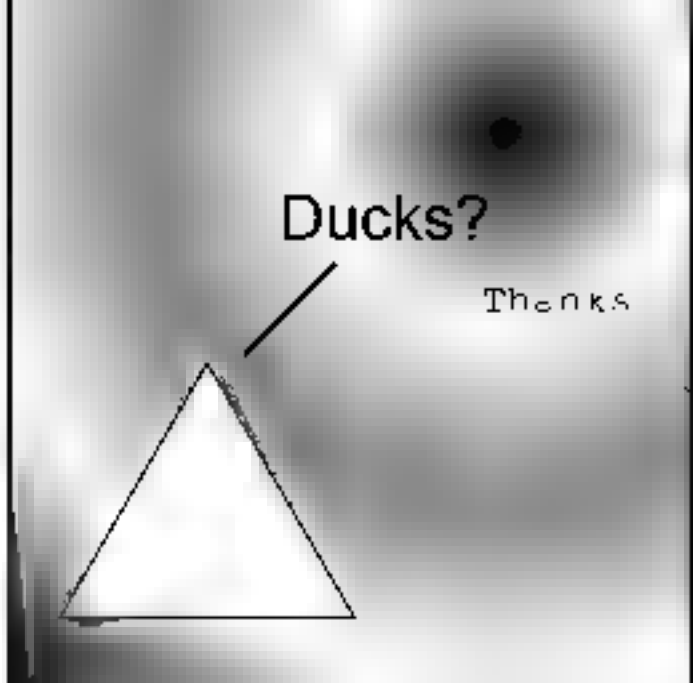
The capitalized 'The is a reference to Gil Meier's Alpha Centauri, in case any ne's w nderirg

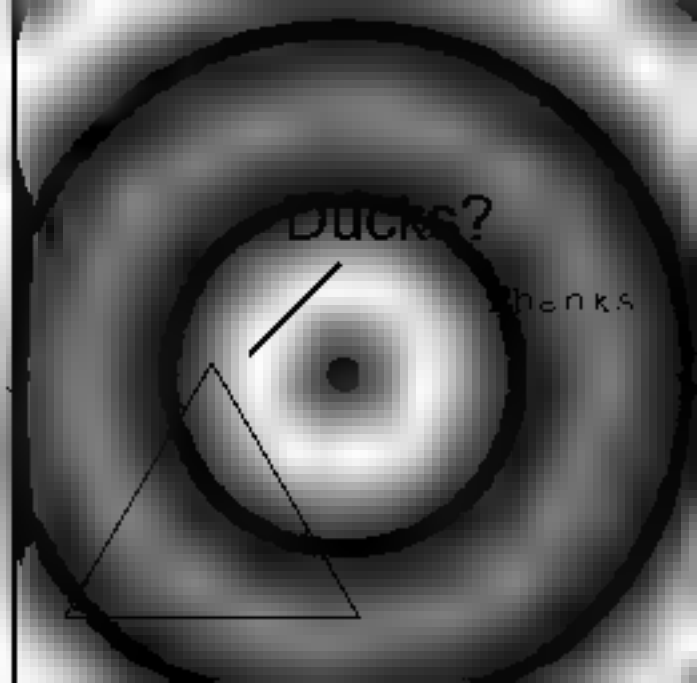
The third pane traditional y conta ns a punch ine or cliffhanger in case anyone's wondering



Triangle and Robert

They're charging straight at me!

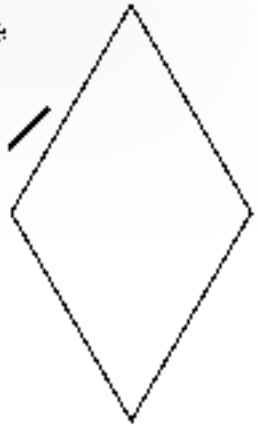




Triangle and Robert

And s , while the space time pair of ducks was resolved, it left a terrible toll

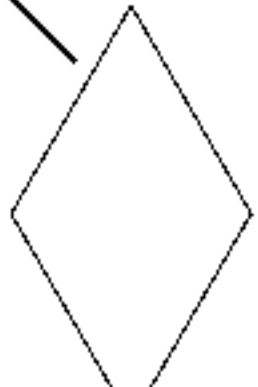
Triangle I m back and I brought you a present!



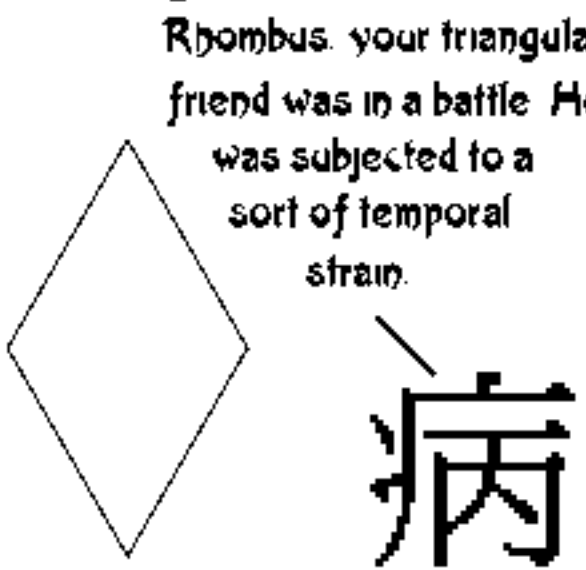
Ducks?

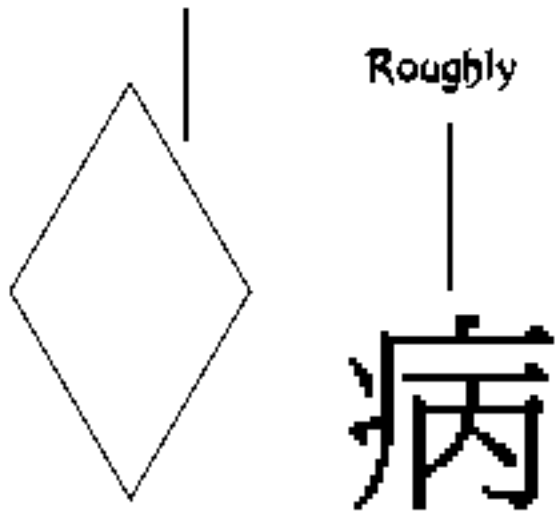
Thanks

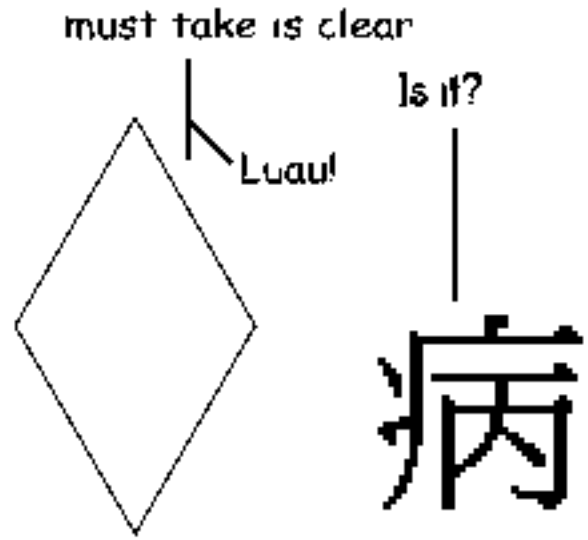
No, that s silly Why would I bring you ducks? It s a souvenir repl ca of Terry Gilliam's housekey!



Triangle and Robert



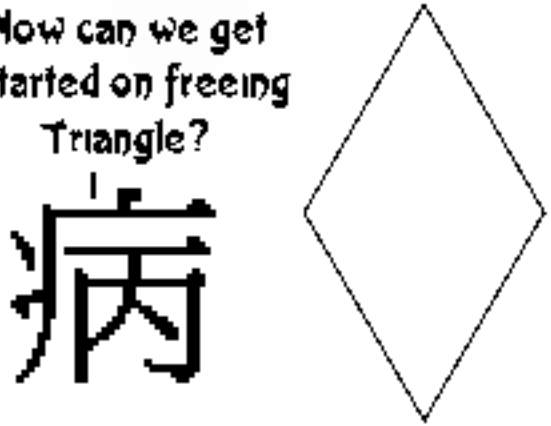




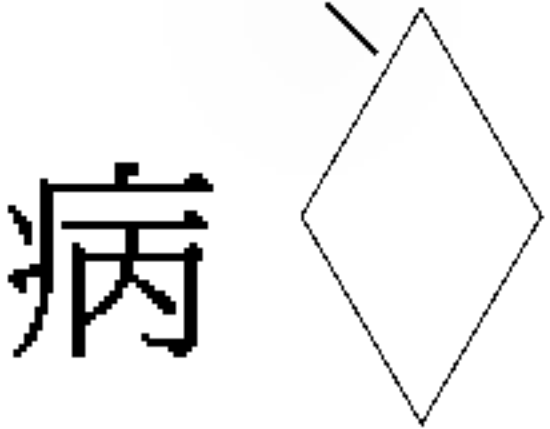
Triangle and Robert

One luau later.

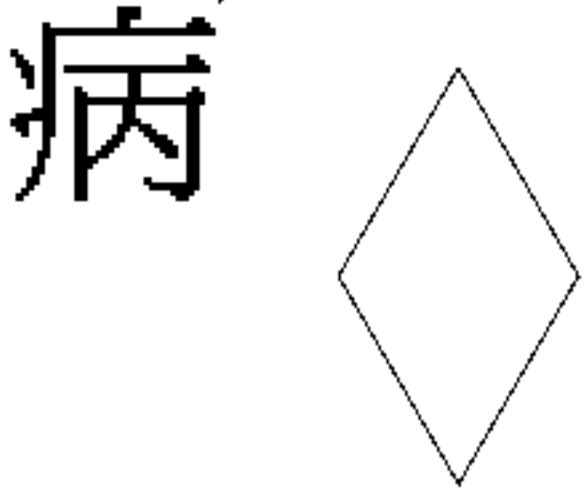
Now can we get started on freeing Triangle?



Freeing Triangle? You mean the luau had no effect?



You upset me, rhombus



Triangle and Robert

One more "liar" later

Why s it n quotes?

A liar technically requires multiple persons

Triangle s here!

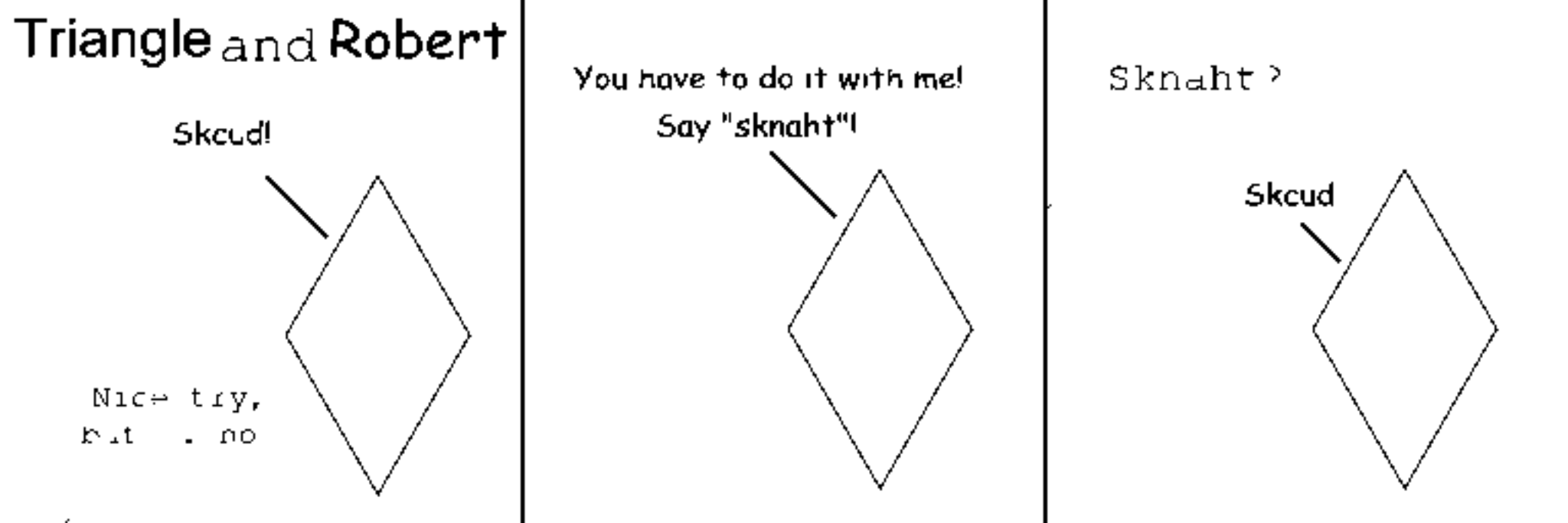
Yes, but he's hardly participating

He s participat ng! Who do you think ate all the roast duck?

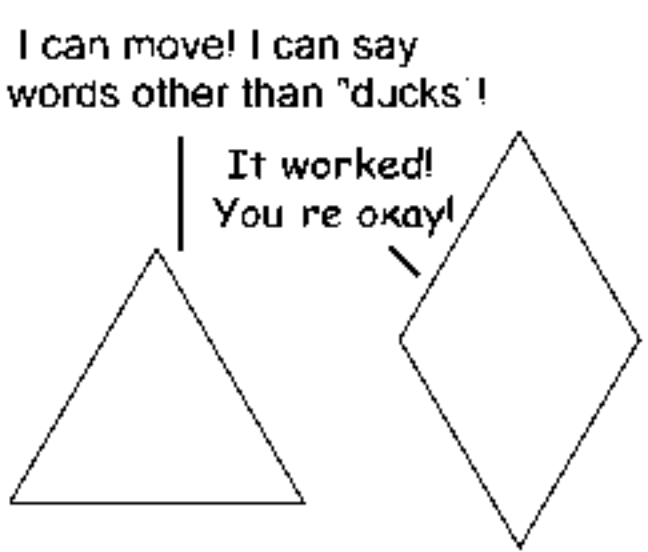
Triangle ate nothing

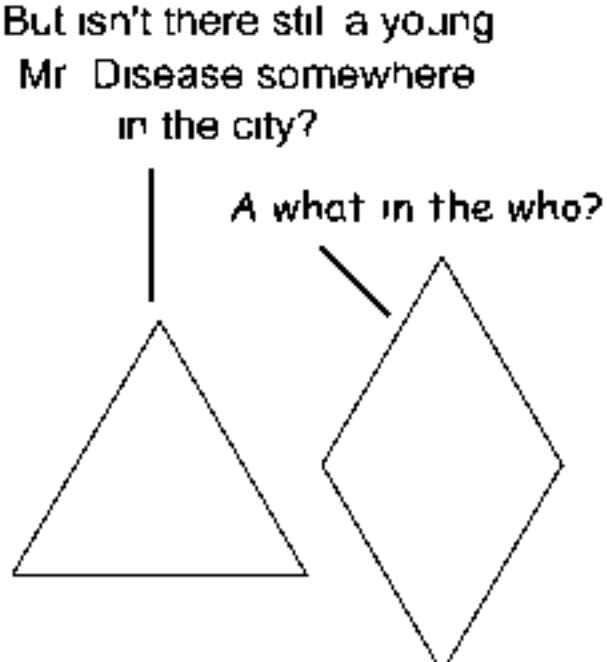
Well, if he s going to order food and not f nish it that s hardly my problem

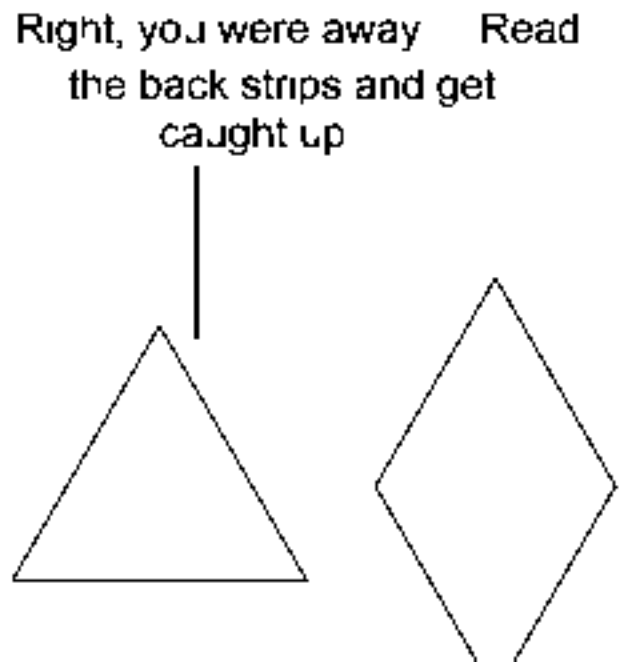
Triangle and Robert

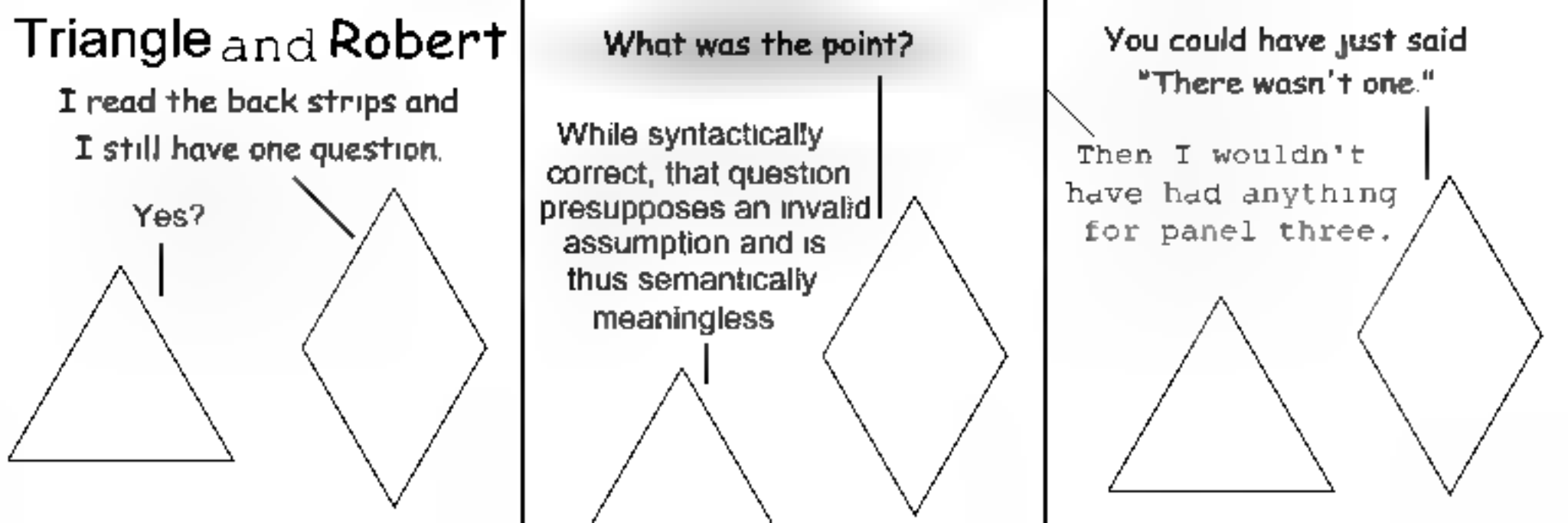


Triangle and Robert

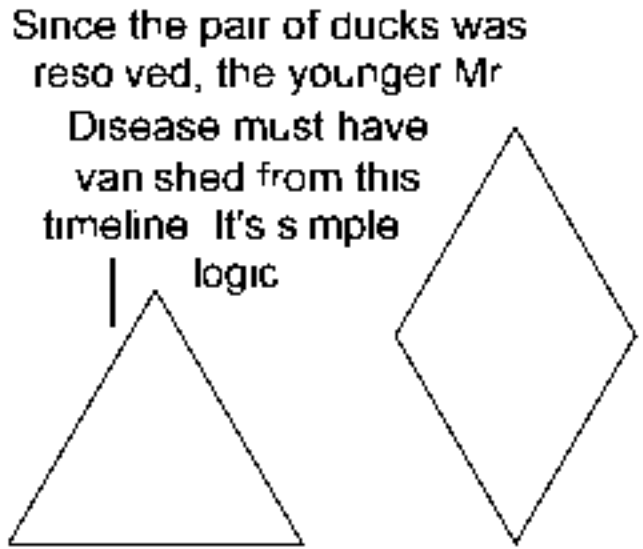


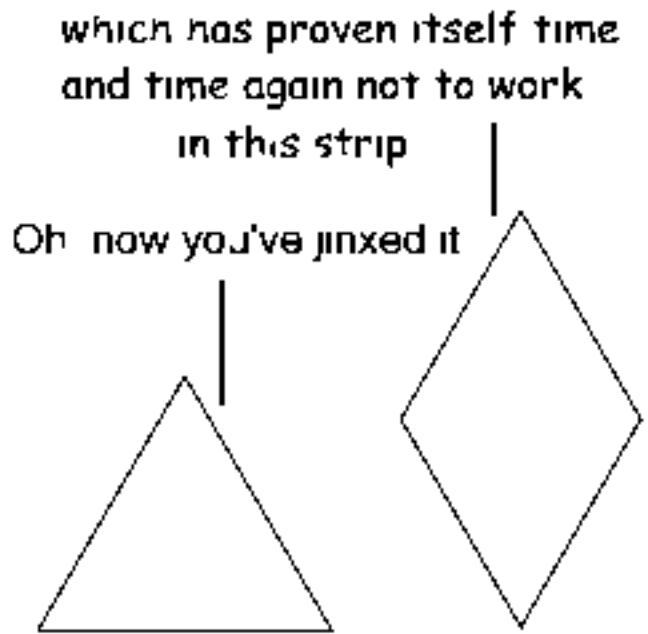


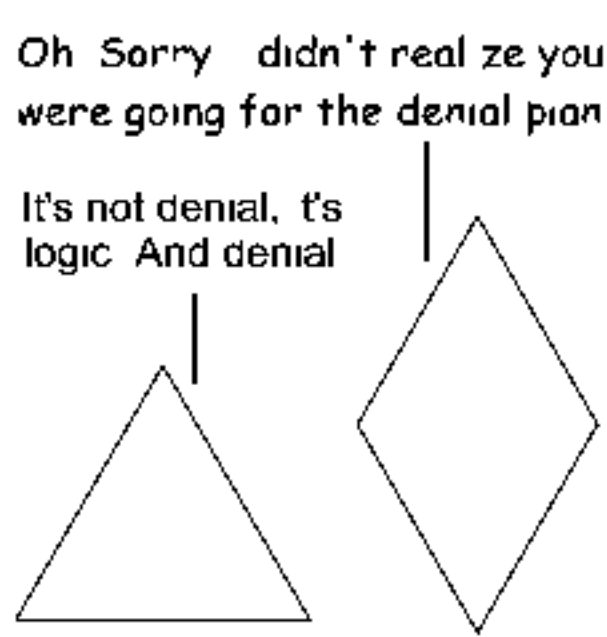



Triangle and Robert
I read the back strips and I still have one question.
Yes?
What was the point?
While syntactically correct, that question presupposes an invalid assumption and is thus semantically meaningless
You could have just said "There wasn't one."
Then I wouldn't have had anything for panel three.

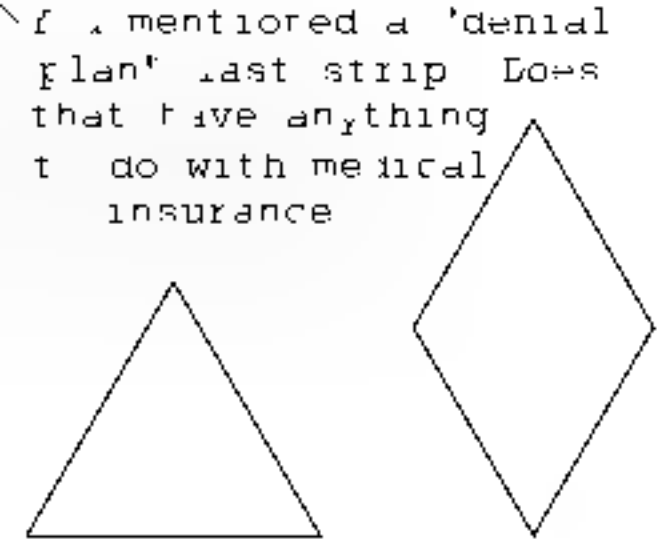
Triangle and Robert

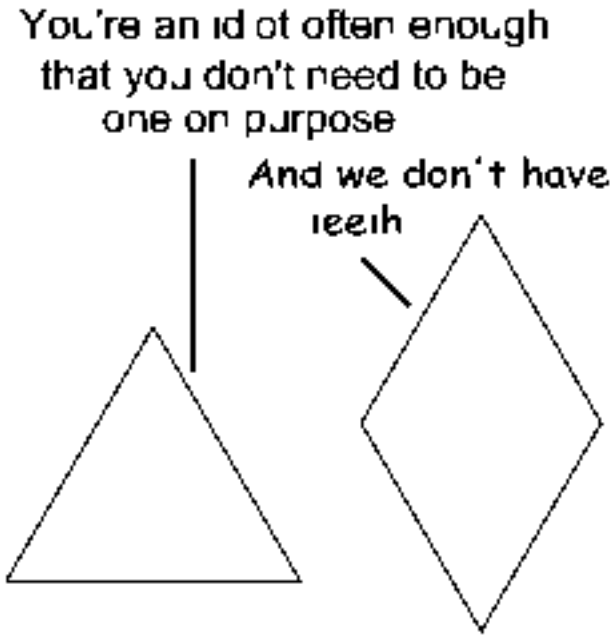


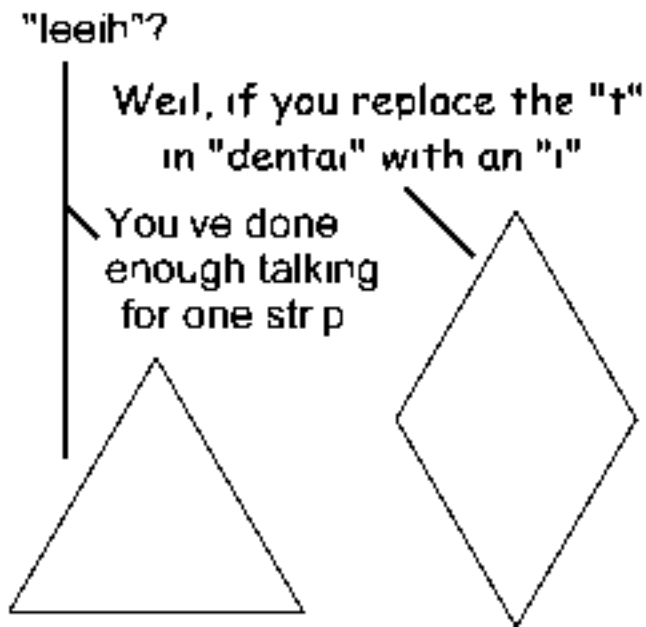




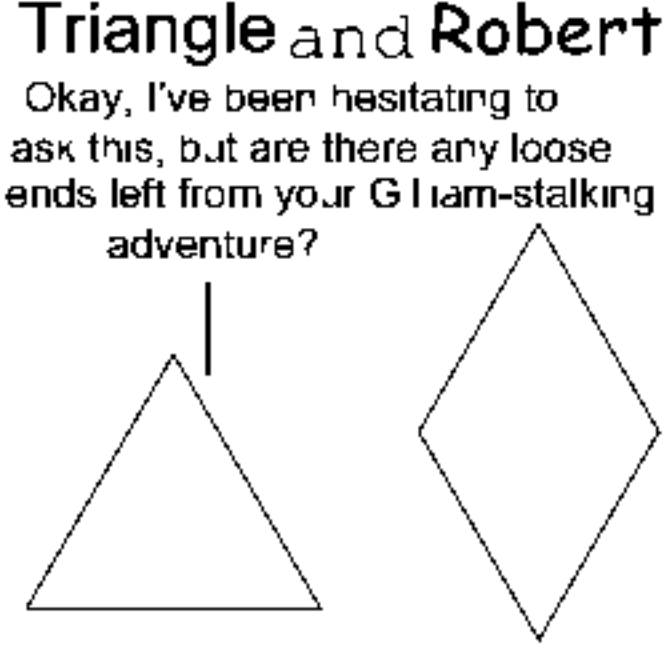
Triangle and Robert

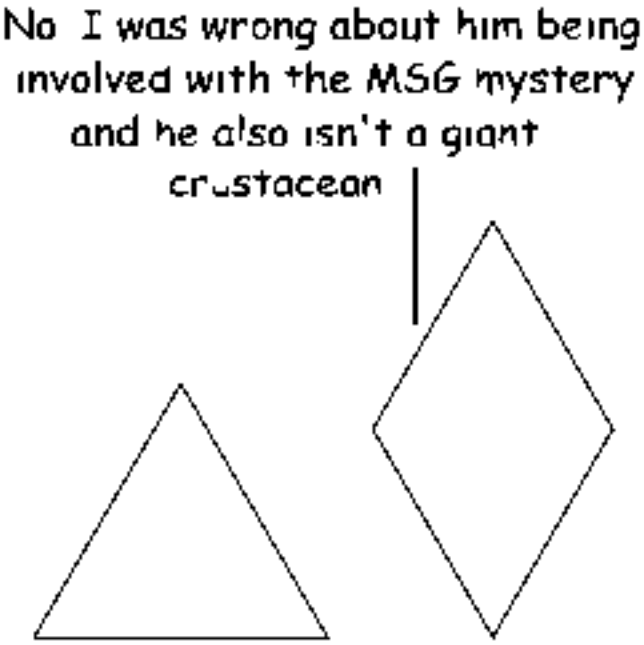


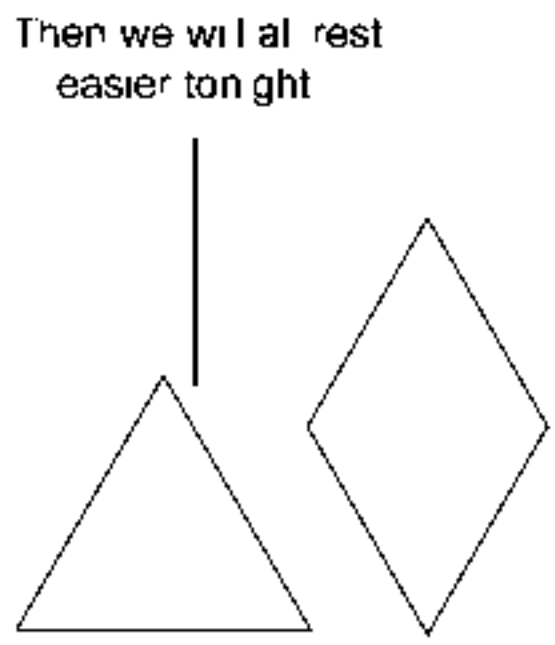




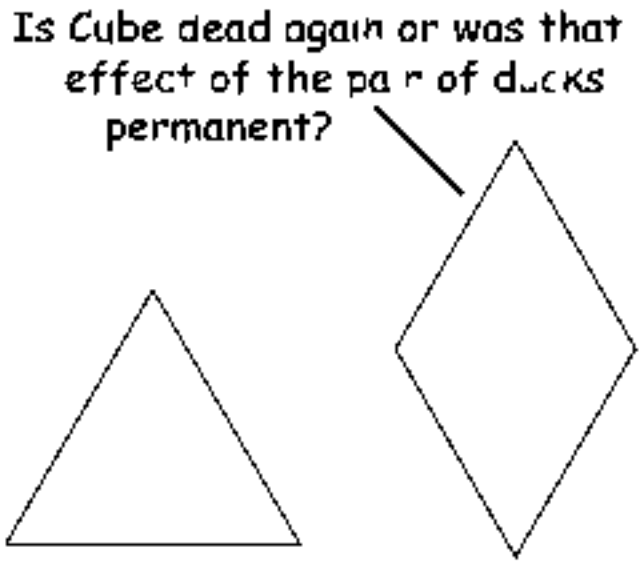
Triangle and Robert

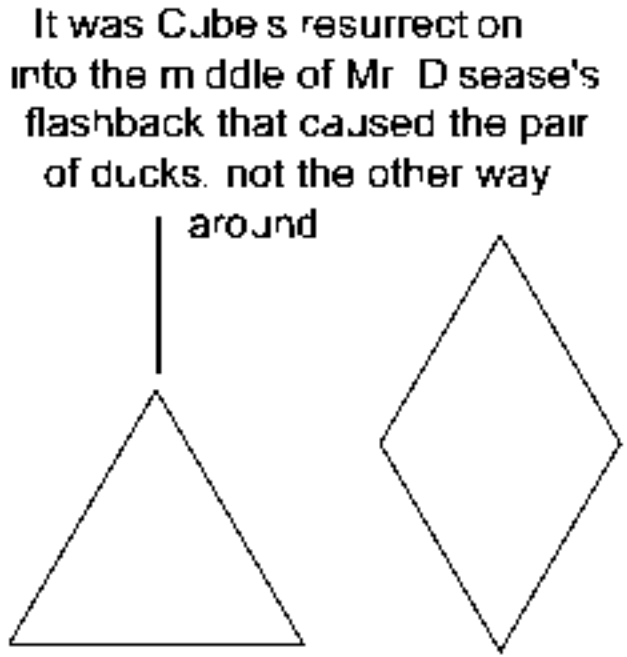


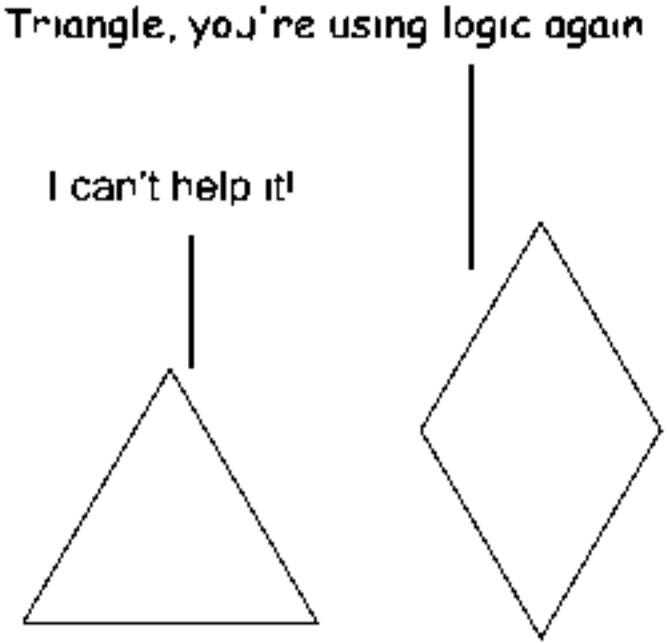




Triangle and Robert



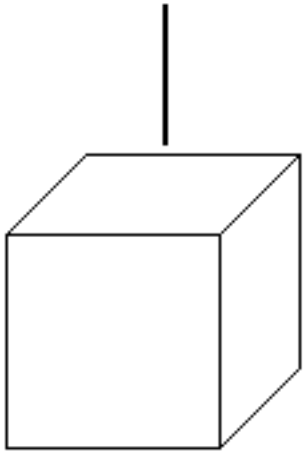




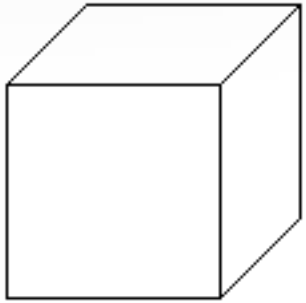
Triangle and Robert

What was the point of all that?

Point

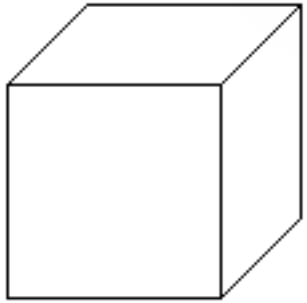


I didn't have one in mind at the time, but I guess in hindsight it serves as an illustration that I'm just as likely to kill you off when I need, and when I don't

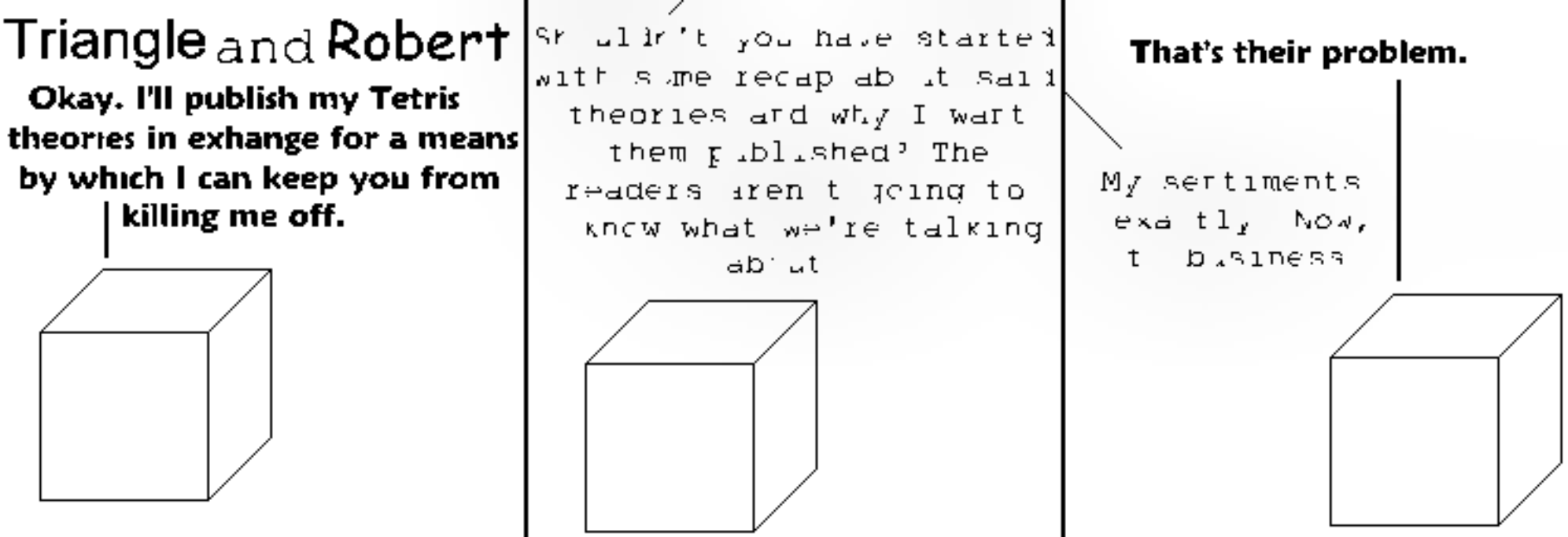


In other words, you're an idiot often enough that you don't need to be one on purpose.

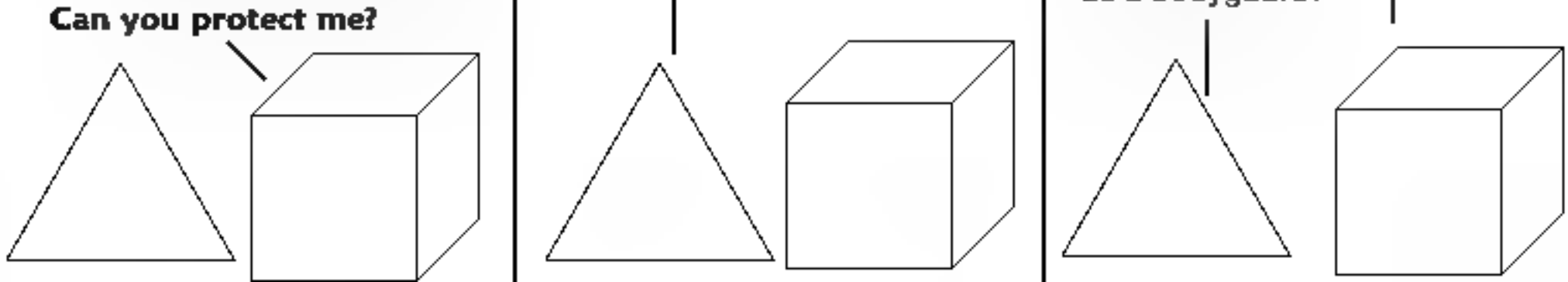
More or less



Triangle and Robert

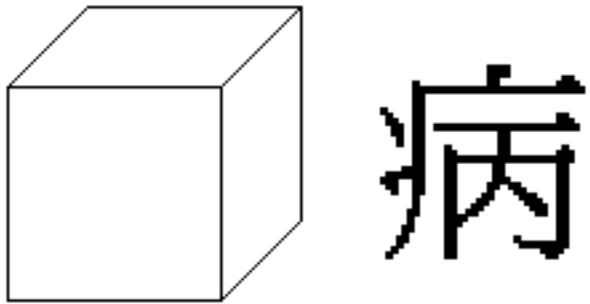


Triangle and Robert

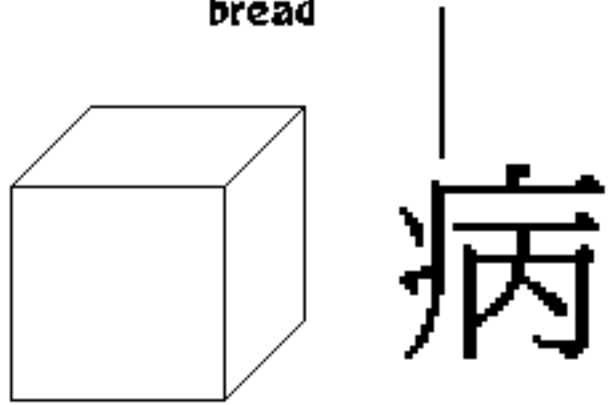


Triangle and Robert

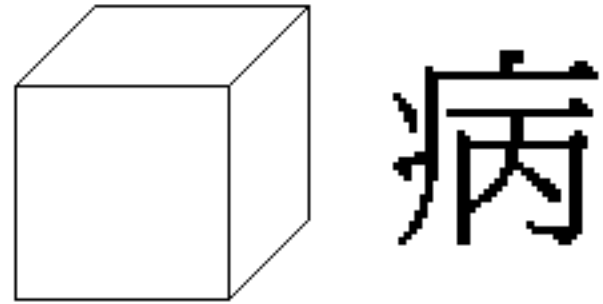
Excuse me? I'd like eighths on my chow mein nachos and another five root beers.



I believe I know why you are here, Cube, and I sympathize with your situation. Eat slowly and I will provide complimentary bread



Thank you. I will.



Triangle and Robert

Triangle, why

The Locust Garden is open 24 hours a day now. As long as Cube stays there and eats he is under Mr. Disease's protection

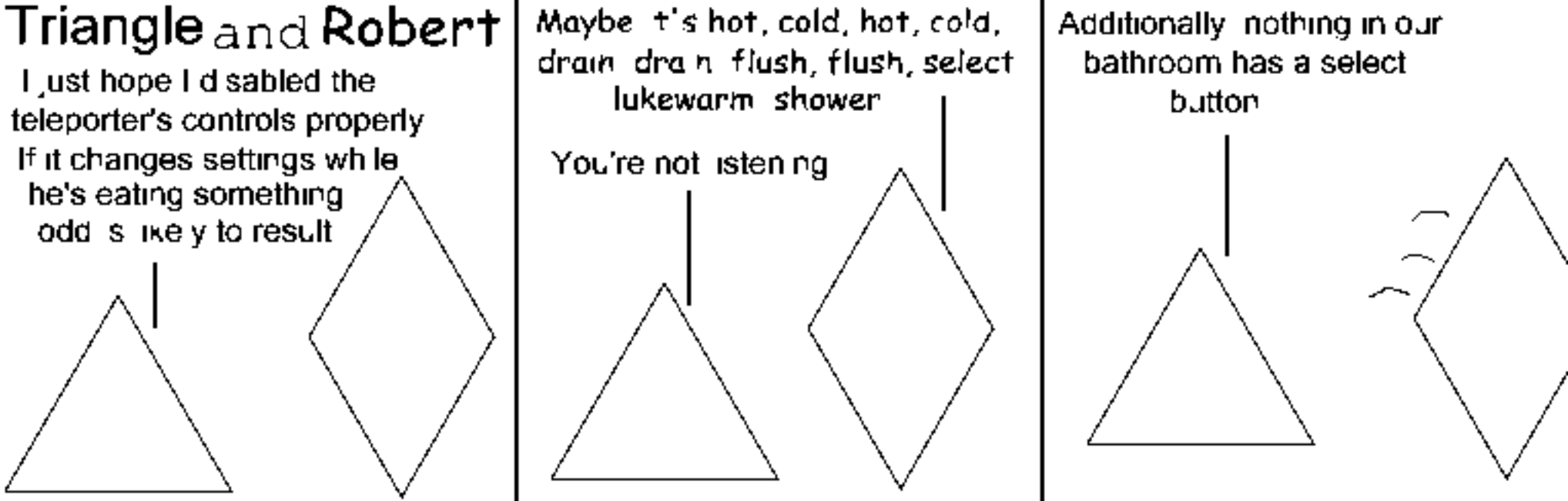
Wacky. A bit straightforward for my taste, but wacky

It's not really that straightforward. I had to make sure he wouldn't get full

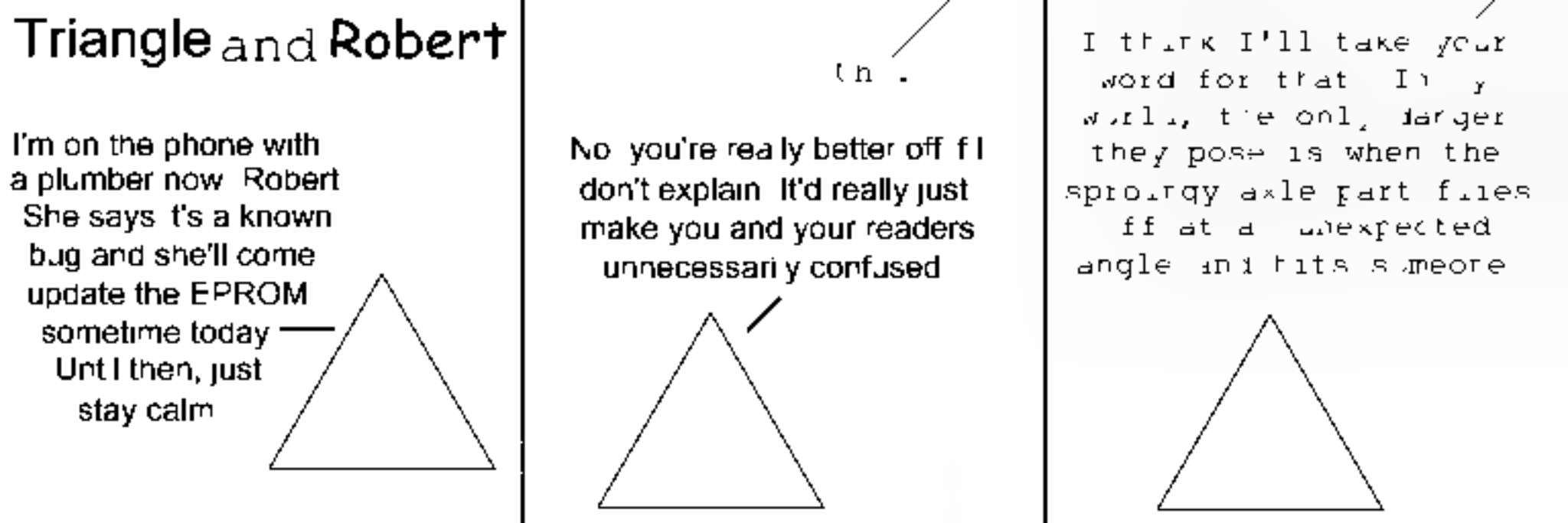
You mean the partially digested chow mein periodically materializing in the bathtub is because of you? Here I was thinking I'd finally found a cheat code!

A cheat code for our bathtub. Bizarre yet consistent

Triangle and Robert



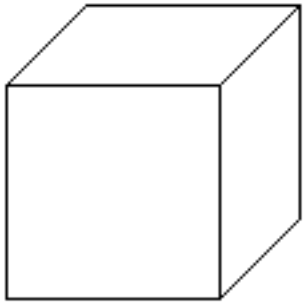
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

I believe danger is approaching

I'm ready for it.



Step aside . glyph.
We don t have any
business with you.

This is my restaurant
Order or depart

You appear not to know
who we are or what we
can do

Again, this is my
restaurant Look over the
menu before you make
your choices.

Triangle and Robert

You think you're a warrior-chef.

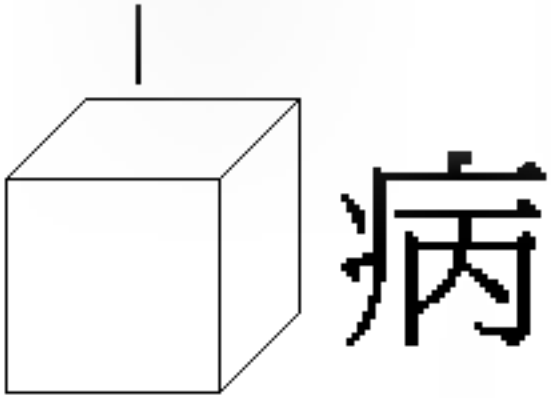
I am.

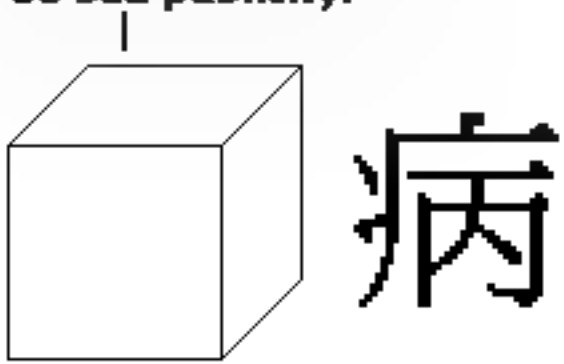
Just what do you plan to do?

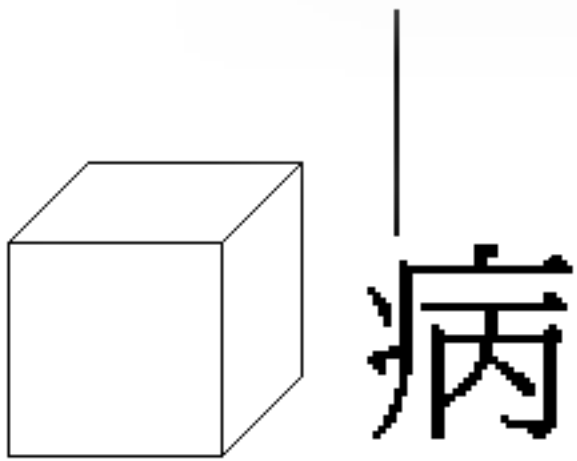
I plan to take your order and serve you a meal, or to eject you from the premises if you do not order

Well, we haven't had lunch. We'll eat, then we'll take care of our business with the cube

Triangle and Robert



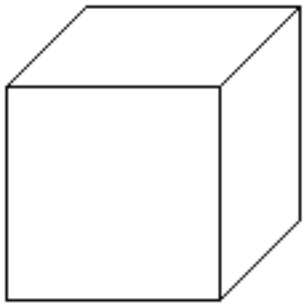




Triangle and Robert

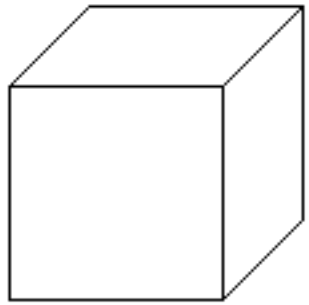
They're eating slowly. I think they're really afraid of you.

They are aware of the quality of my cooking and what it implies.



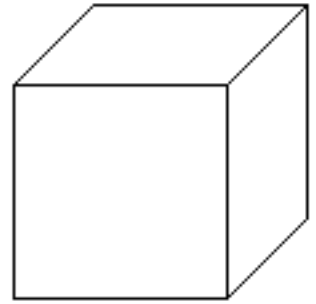
I've never understood the connection between cooking skills and combat ability.

What is there not to understand?



The connection between cooking skills and combat ability.

I will have to enlighten you at some future time Current y, there is much for me to do.



Triangle and Robert

Hey. My fortune cookie just says "anvil"!

You have eaten. Leave the premises unless you desire seconds.

病

We're not leaving without the cube

Your fortune says otherwise

病

What do you mean? It says "anv

THUD

Will you be leaving under your own power or shall I call for an ambulance?

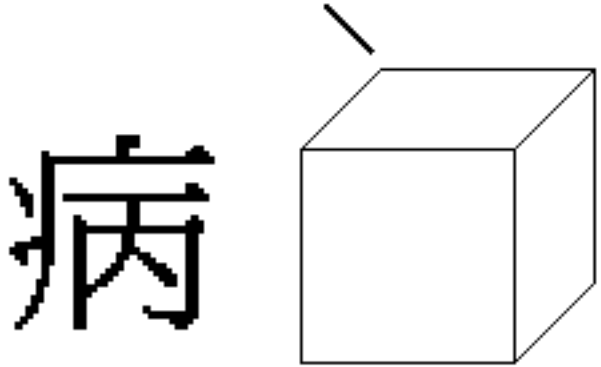
病

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

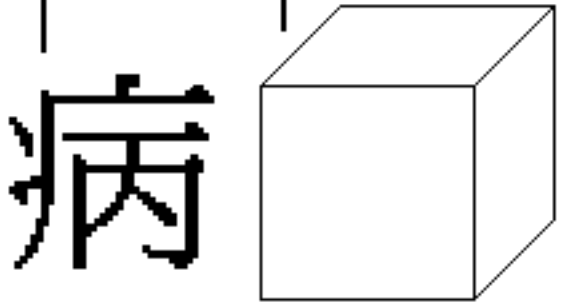
After the dust clears

I now see how cooking relates to combat.



I thought you might

I just hope that was all the assassins they could spare. I don't want this to become a running gag.

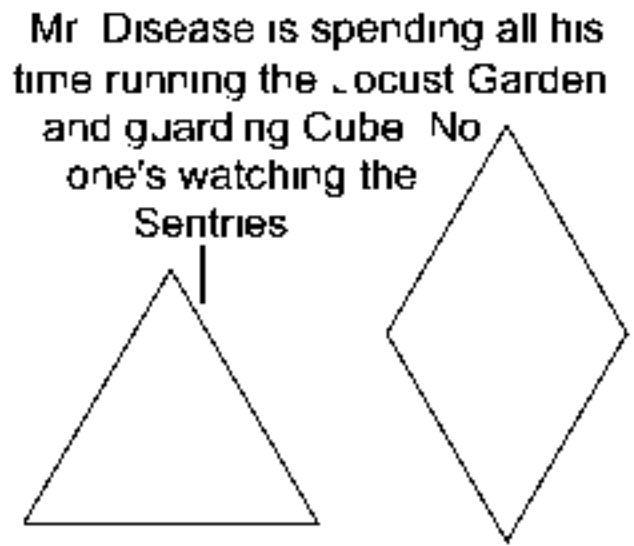


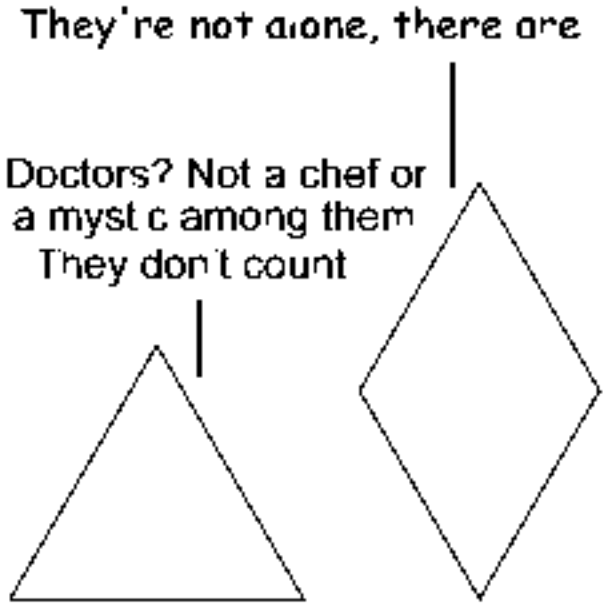
Remain in my restaurant until you have finished writing of your findings and they become published. After that point your death will be of no benefit to the RCDLBA

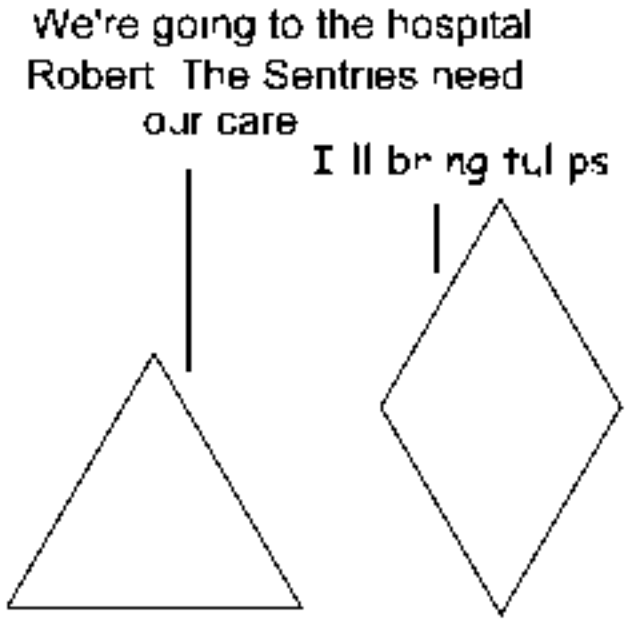
RCDLBA

I was close

Triangle and Robert



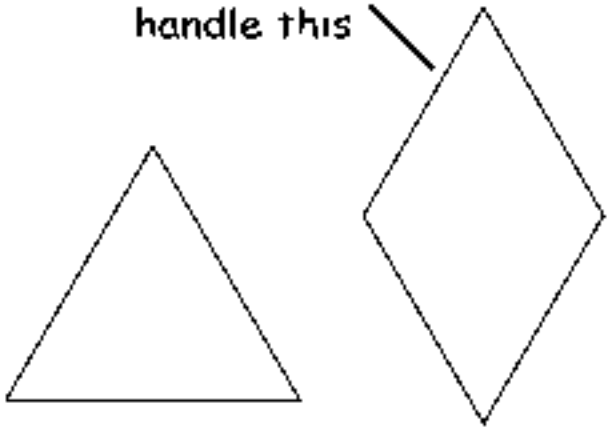




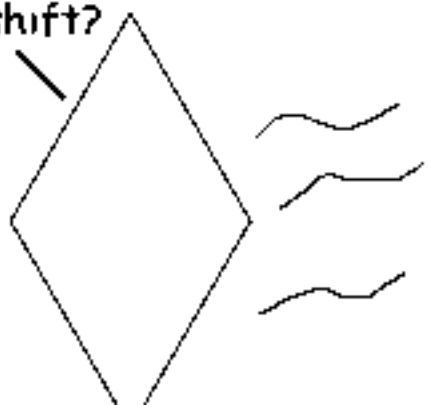
Triangle and Robert

— V siting hours are over

Tr angle, let me handle this

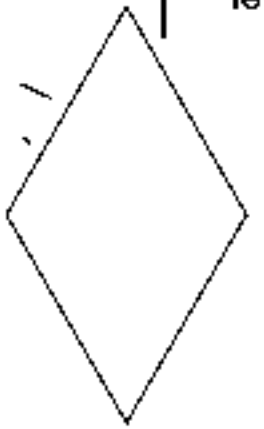


Listen One way or another we re getting into the Sentries' room We can vis t or we can use a wacky scheme Do you want a wacky scheme to happen on your shift?



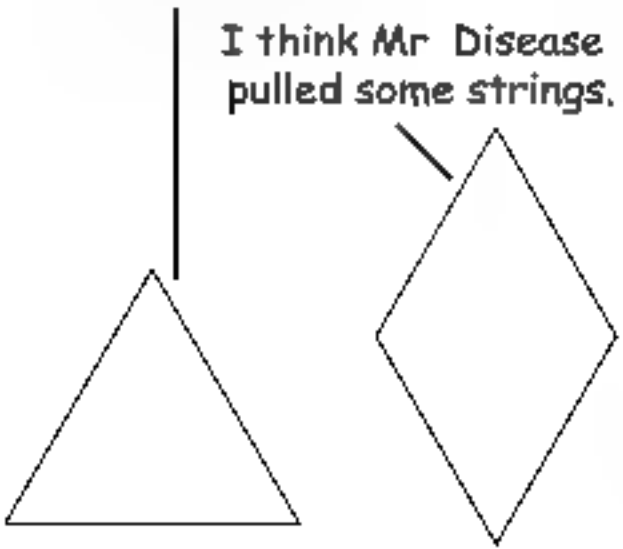
Triangle! She s letting us in!

So I can leave the leeches in the truck?



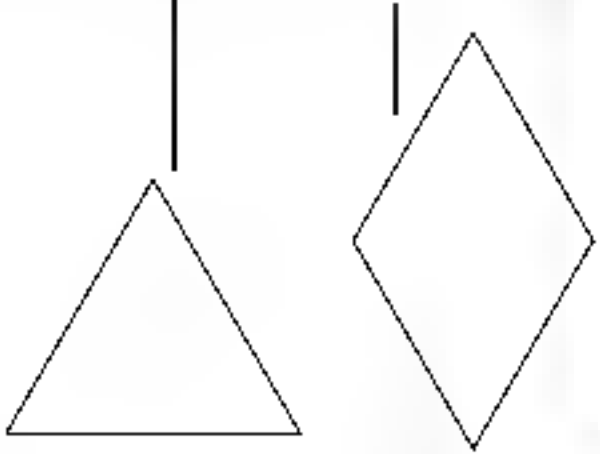
These rooms only have two beds each

I think Mr Disease pulled some strings.



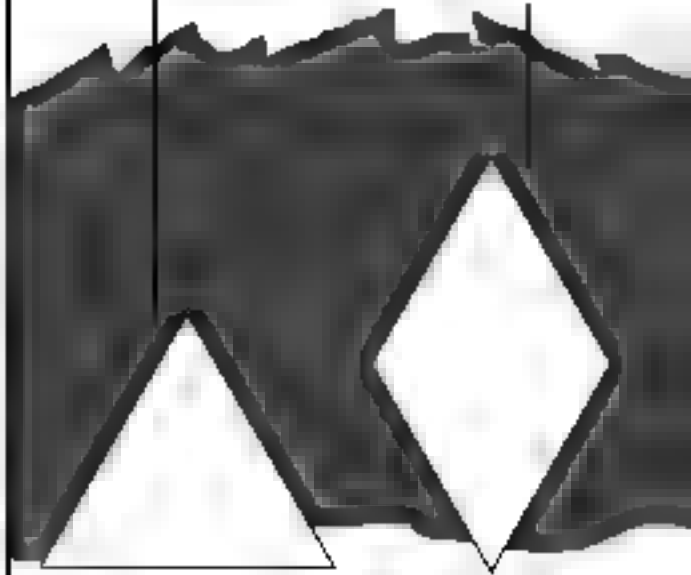
Only if the strings were holding up interior walls.

What do you mean?

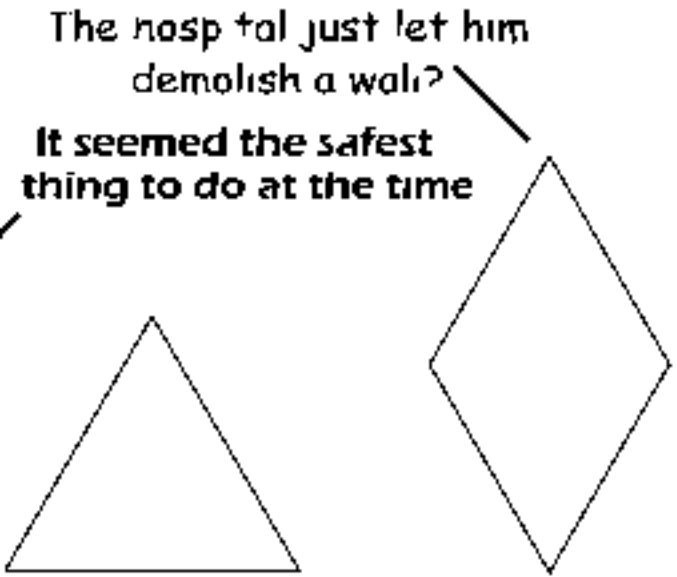


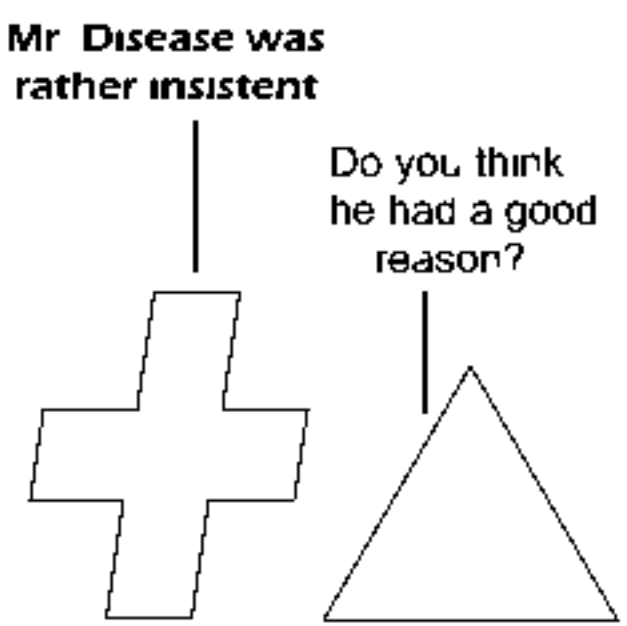
Look

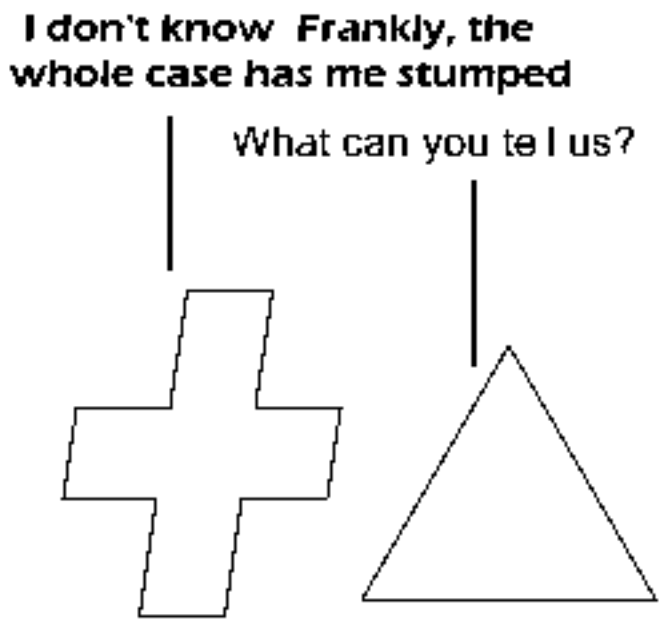
He. remodeled?



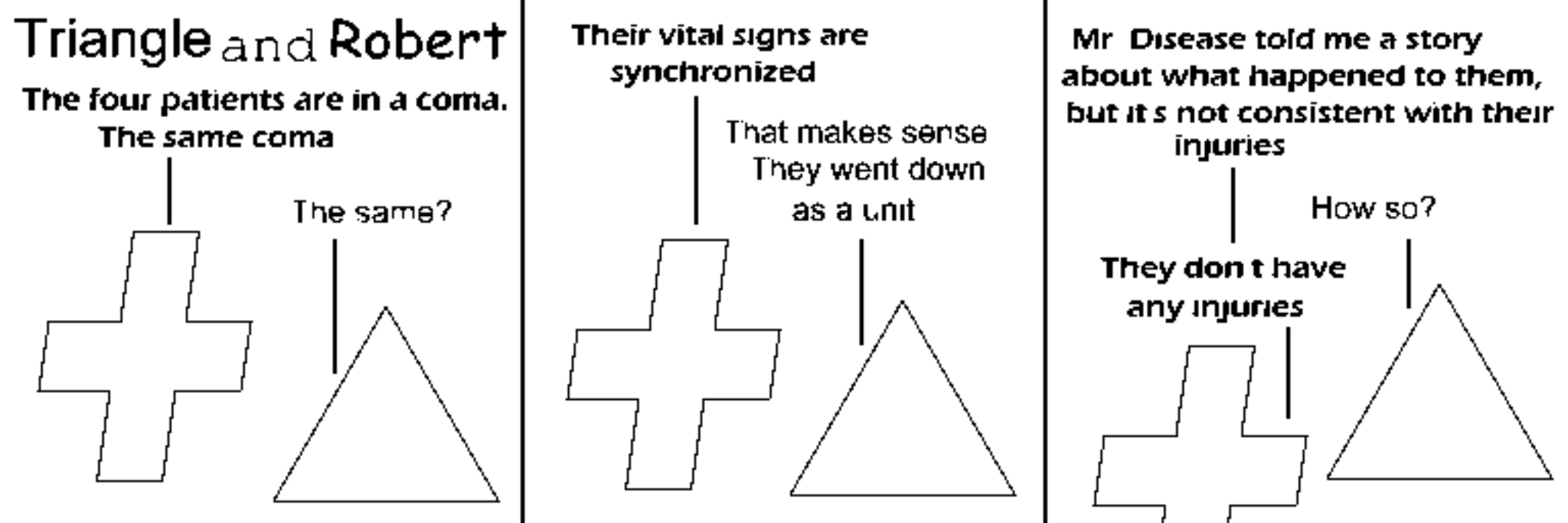
Triangle and Robert



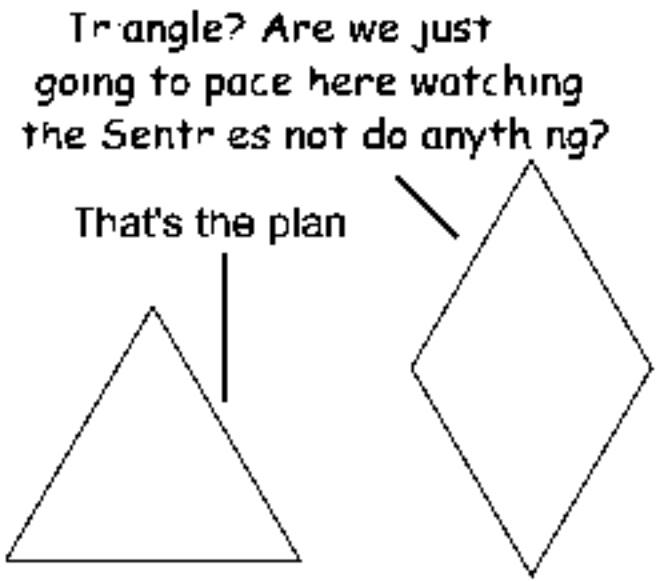


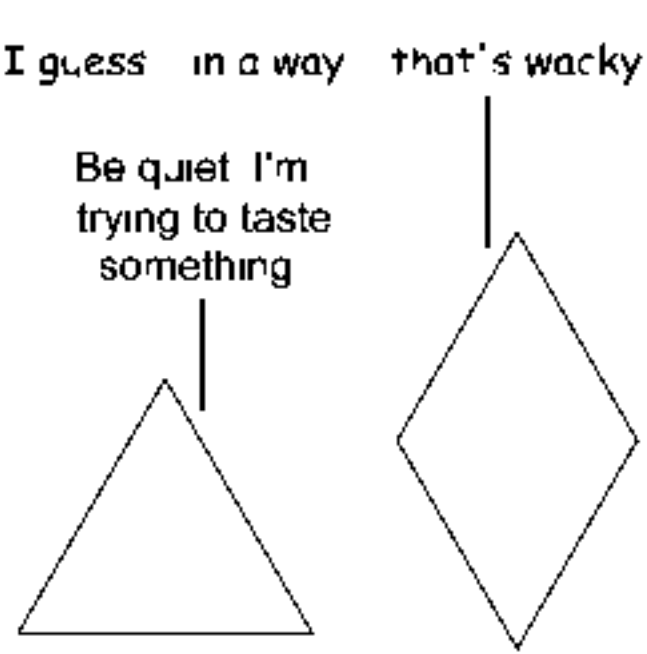


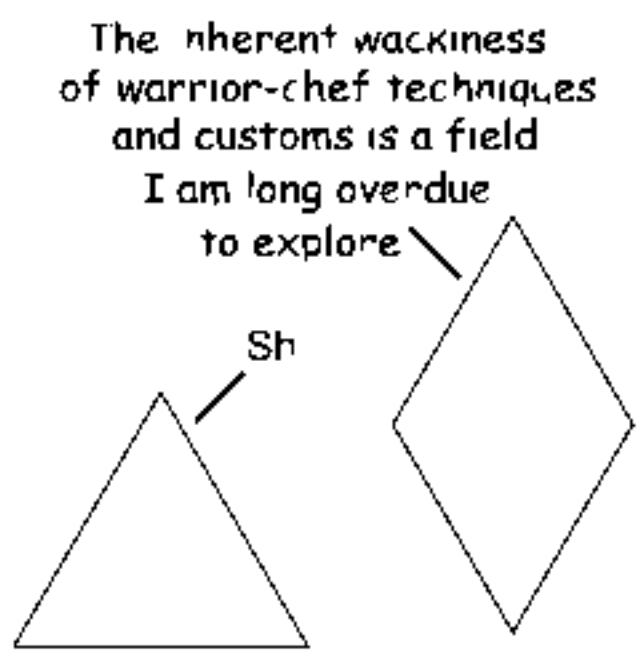
Triangle and Robert



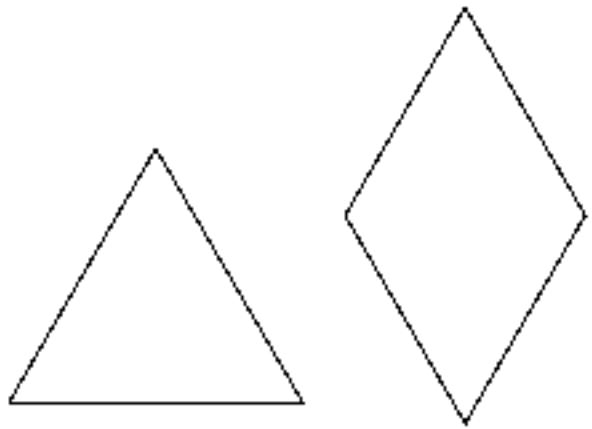
Triangle and Robert

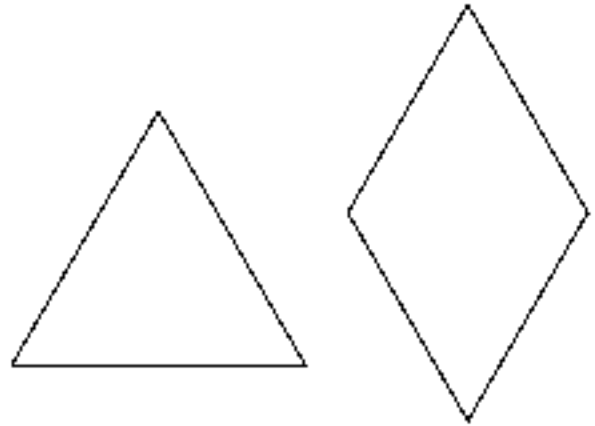


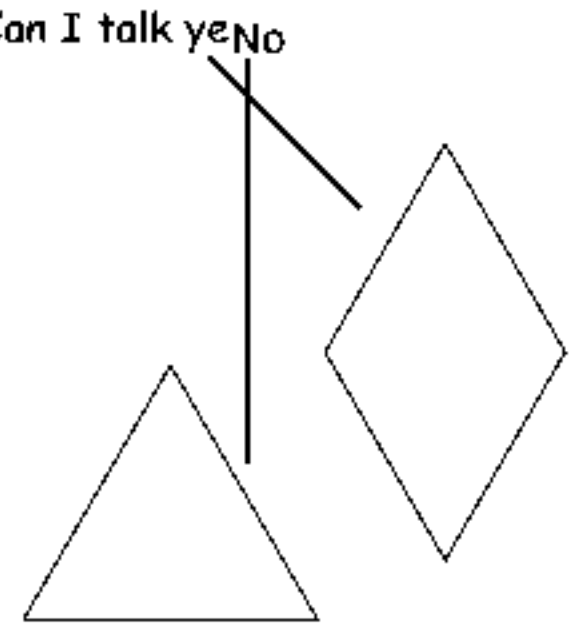




Triangle and Robert

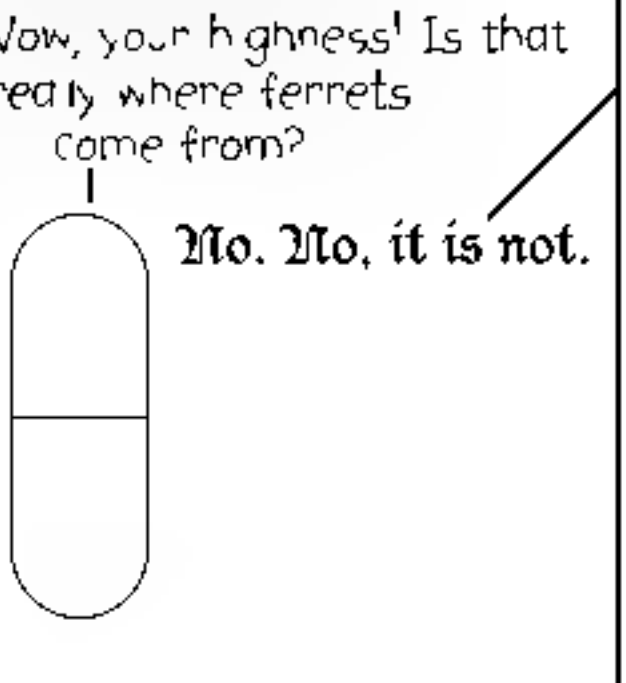


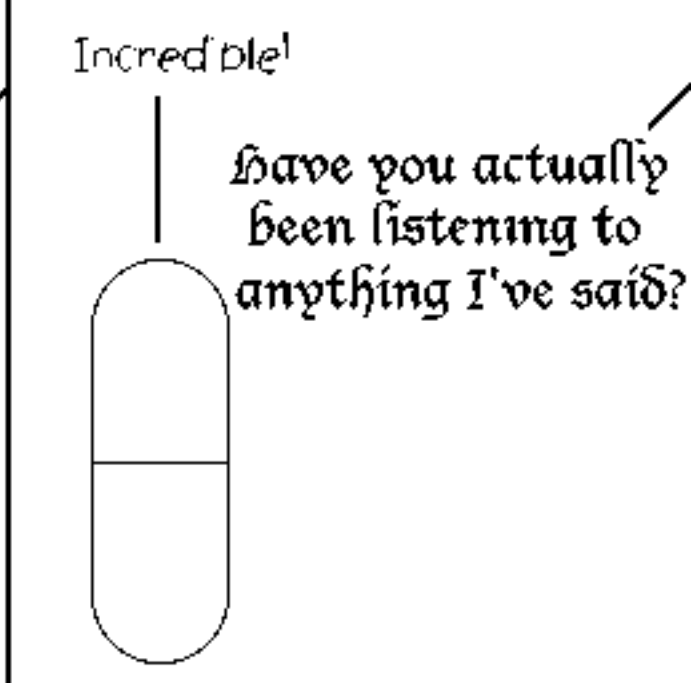




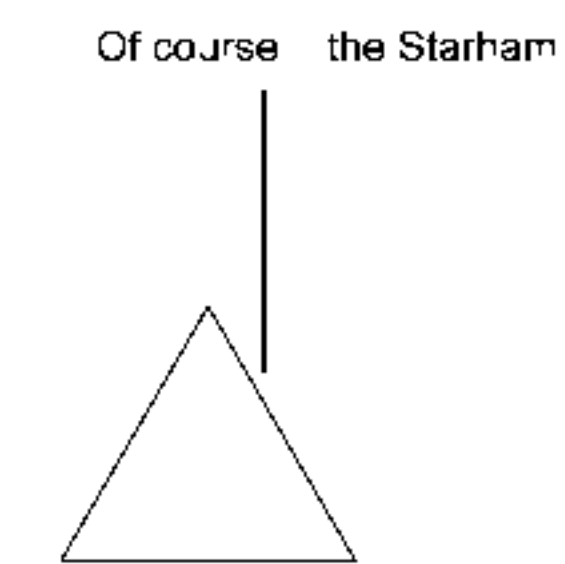
Triangle and Robert

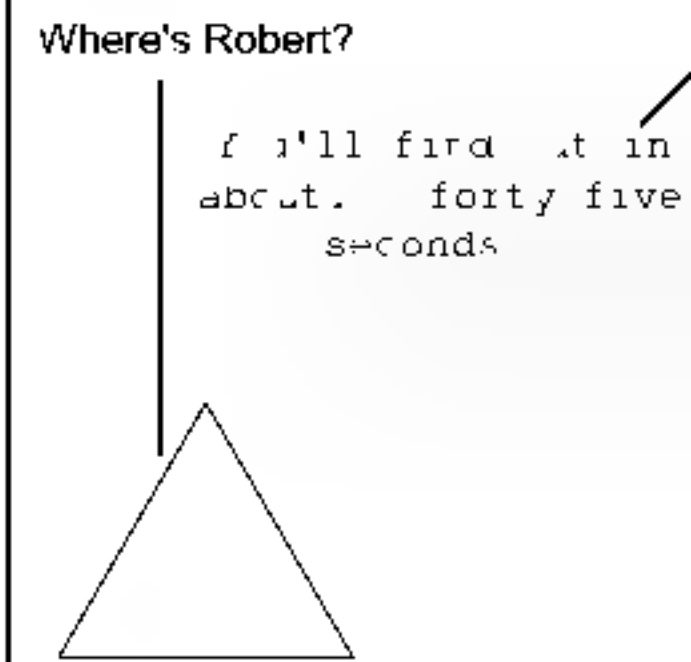
s , while Triangle tastes
at the hospital, we go
r w to . m. some
o her scene





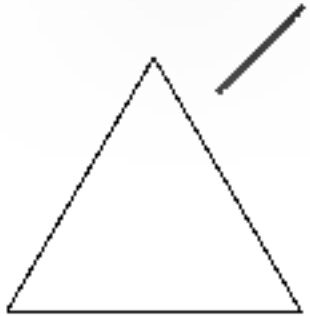
Triangle and Robert



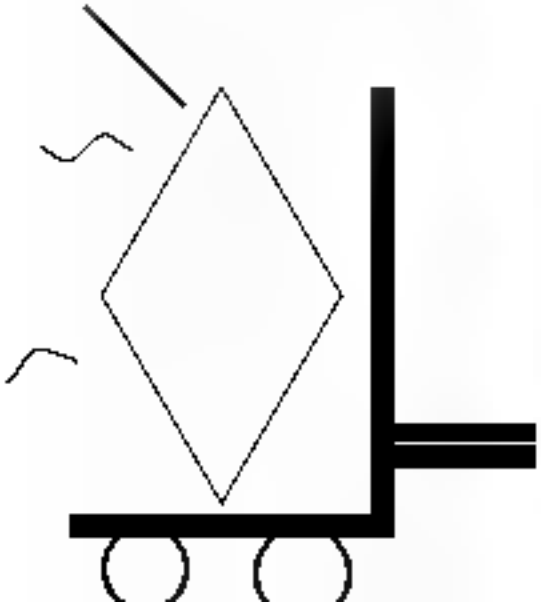


Forty-eight seconds later...

Robert? Robert! What are where did you you're going to crash!



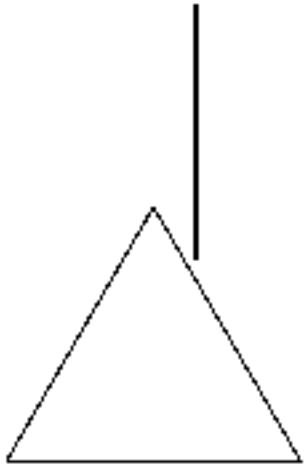
That's what I'm trying for!



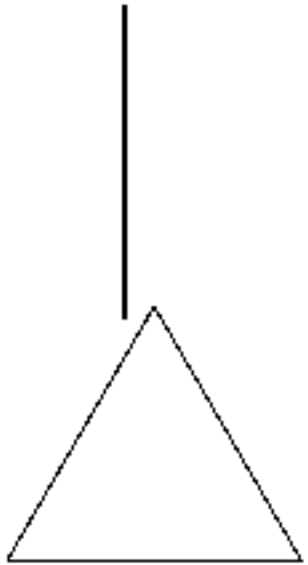
CRUNCH

Triangle and Robert

Why are you **crunch**

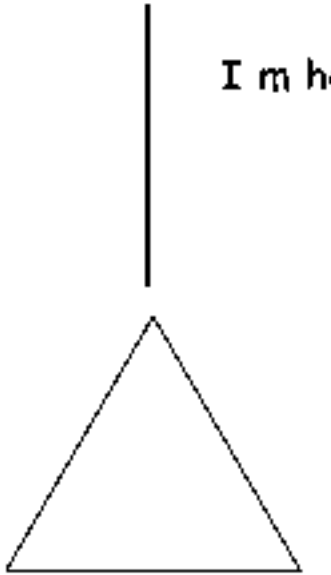


ramming a forklift **CRUNCH**

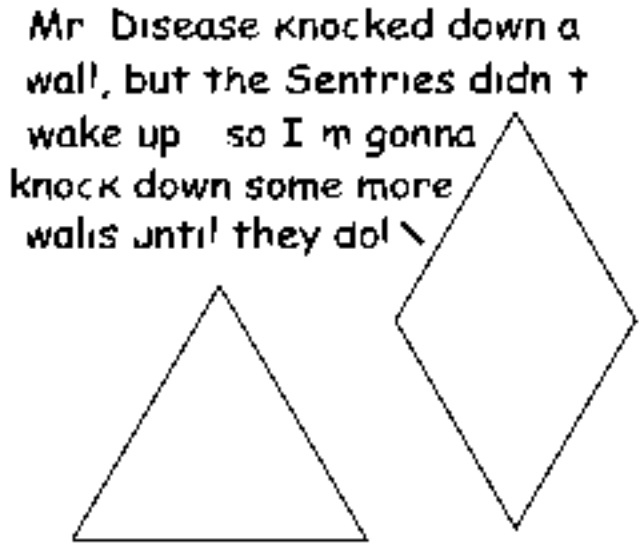


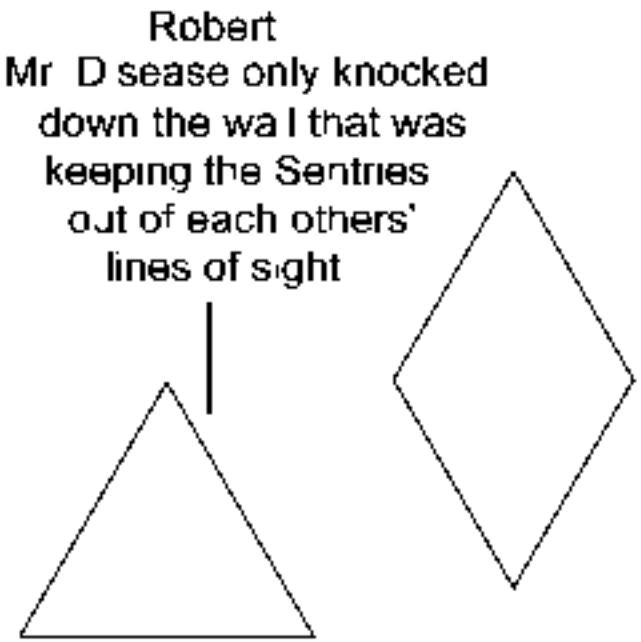
into the walls?

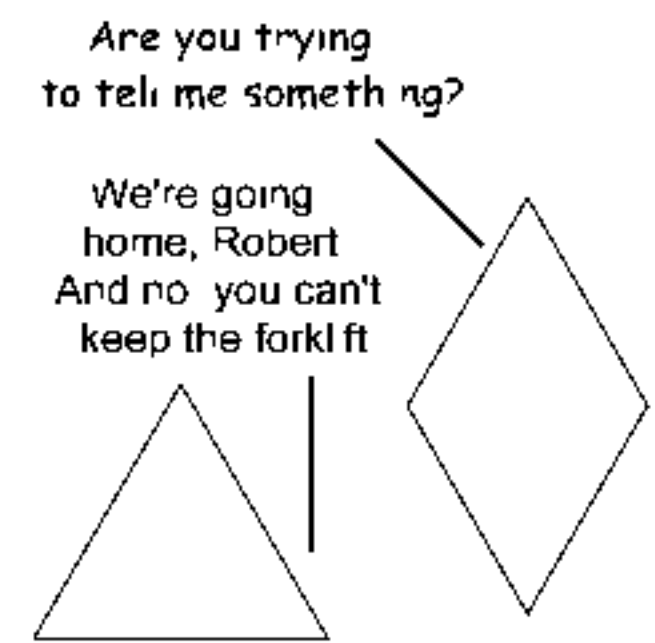
I m helping! _____



Triangle and Robert



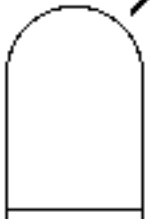




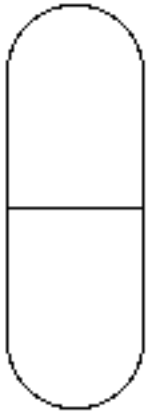
Triangle and Robert

Ferrets were never a part of this conversation.

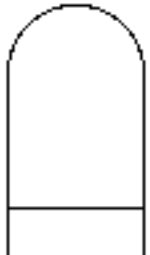
Hi I'm Prozac the Bear!



We are aware of that. Now listen.

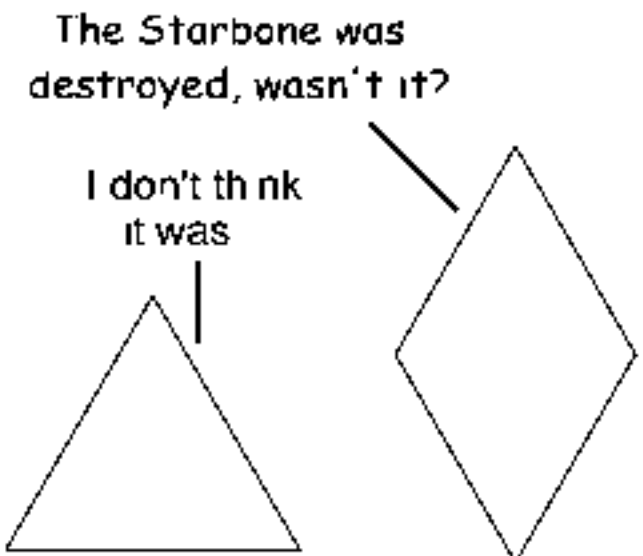


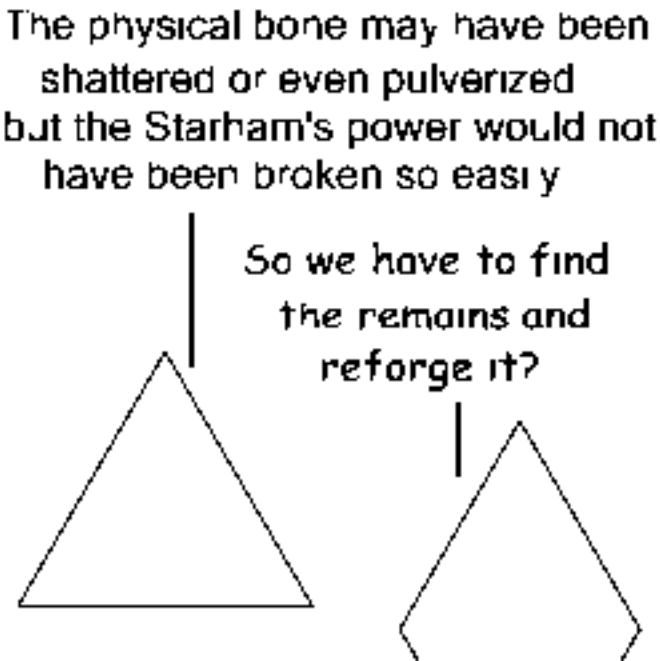
Listen very carefully, Mr. the Bear, for the fate of this land hinges on your understanding and wisdom.

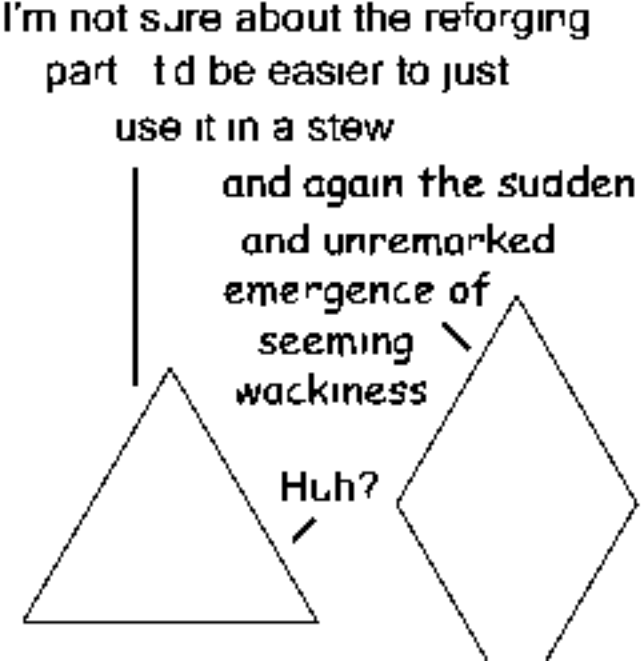


Don't worry, ma'am, marmots are my specialty.

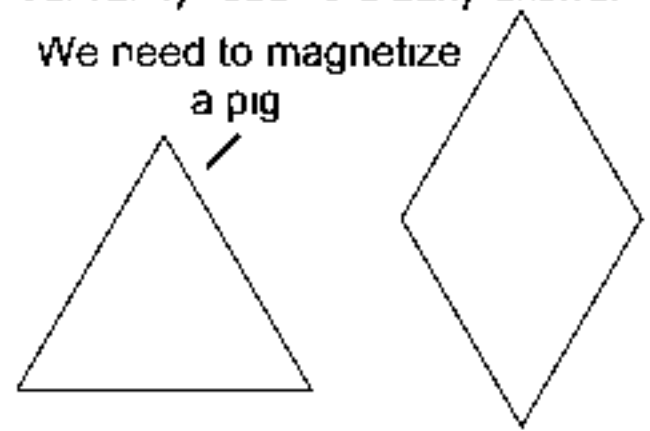
Triangle and Robert

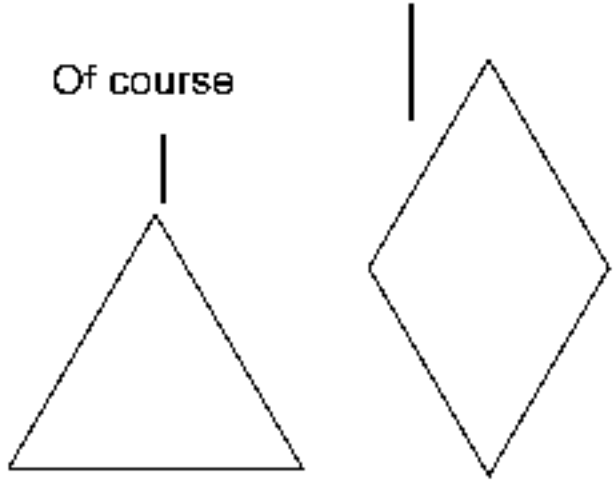


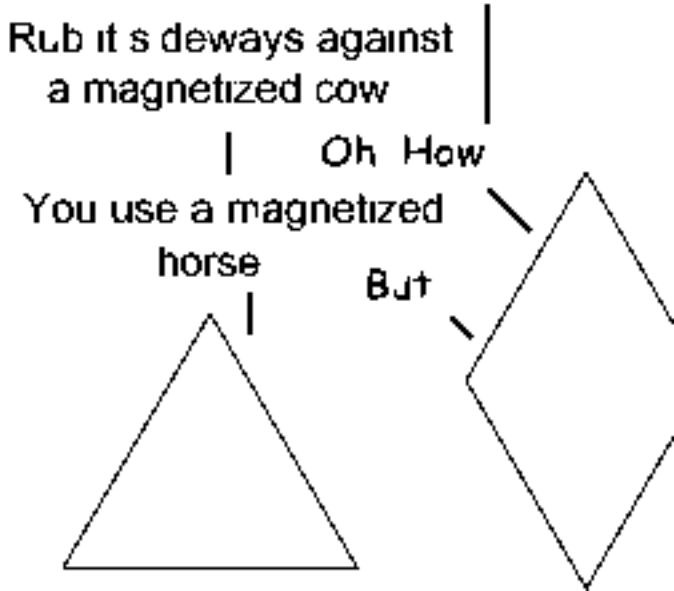




Triangle and Robert



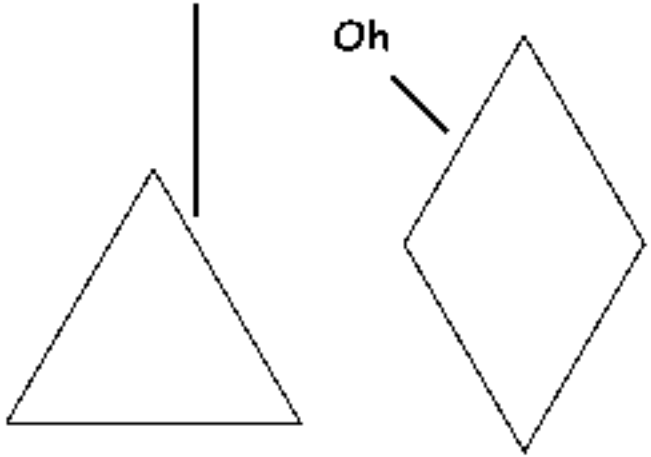




Triangle and Robert

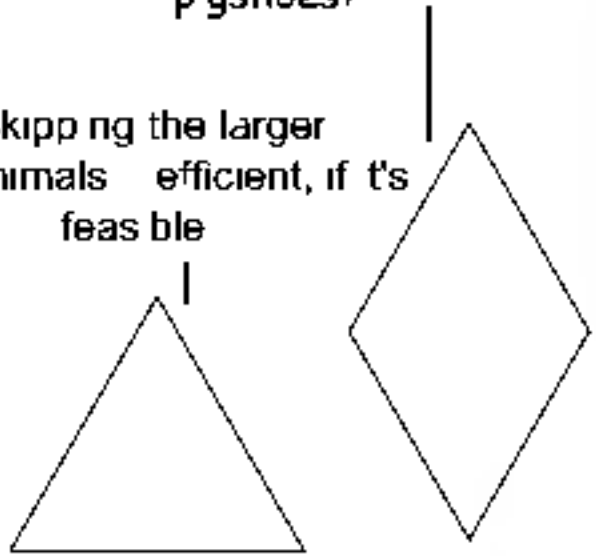
You magnetise the horseshoes and ride it around a whi e

Oh



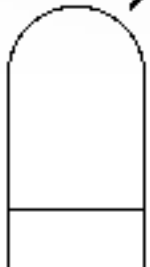
What if you made magnetic p gshoes?

Skipp ng the larger animals efficient, if t's feas ble



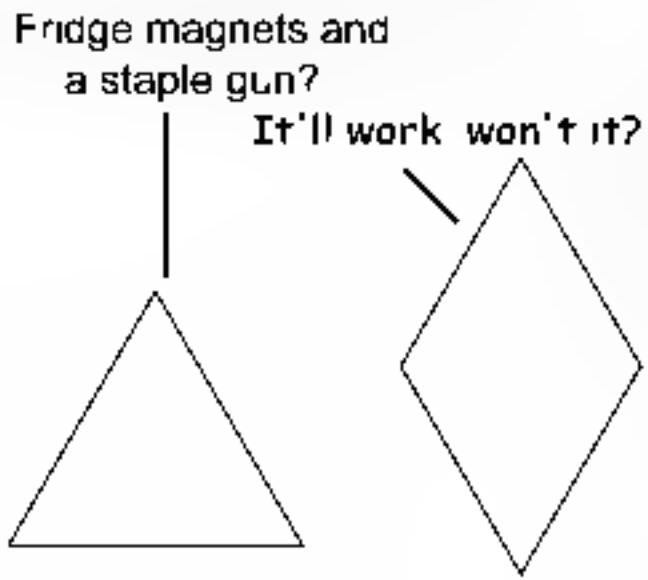
M re or ess me nwhile, in another plot.

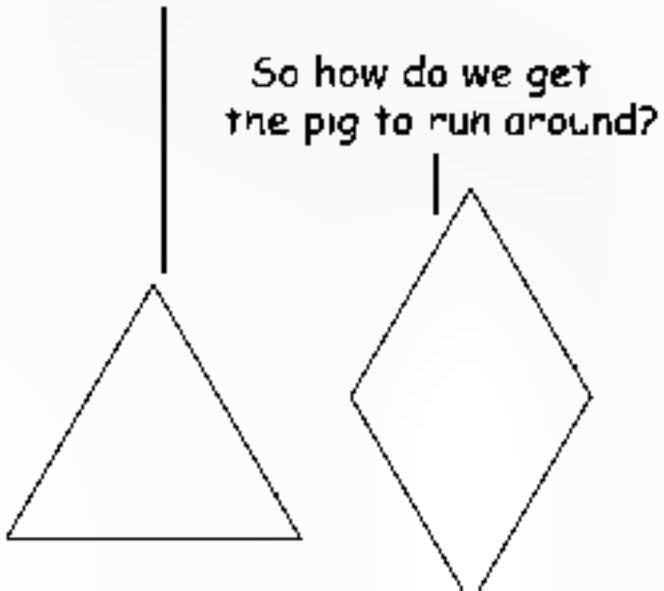
Then you can st p t the ferret in any st bady of water and t po nt north!

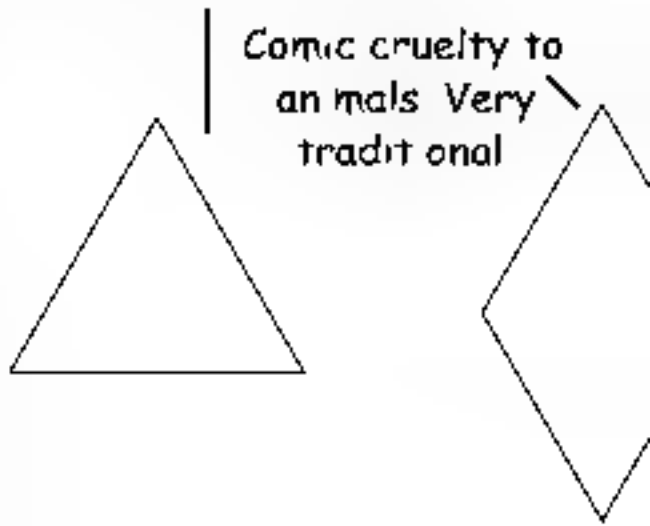


Please leave.

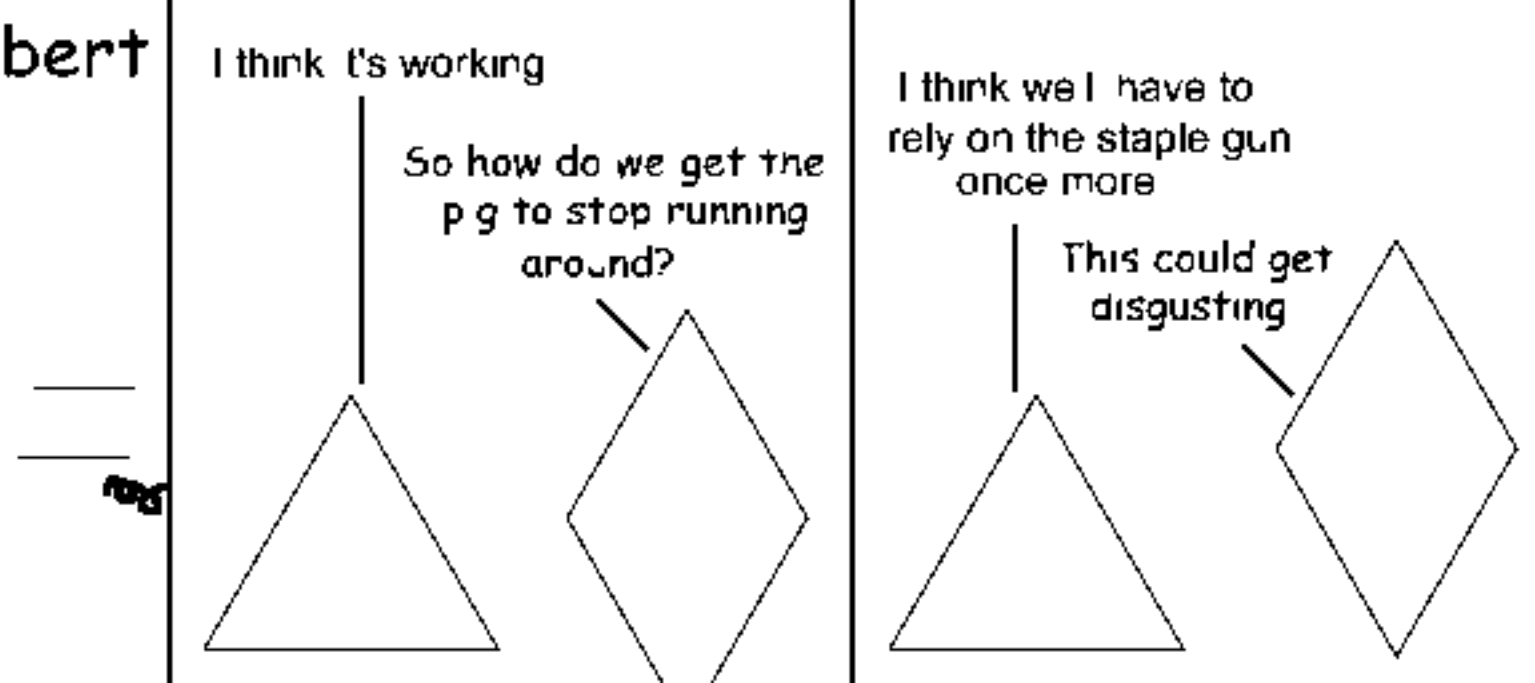
Triangle and Robert



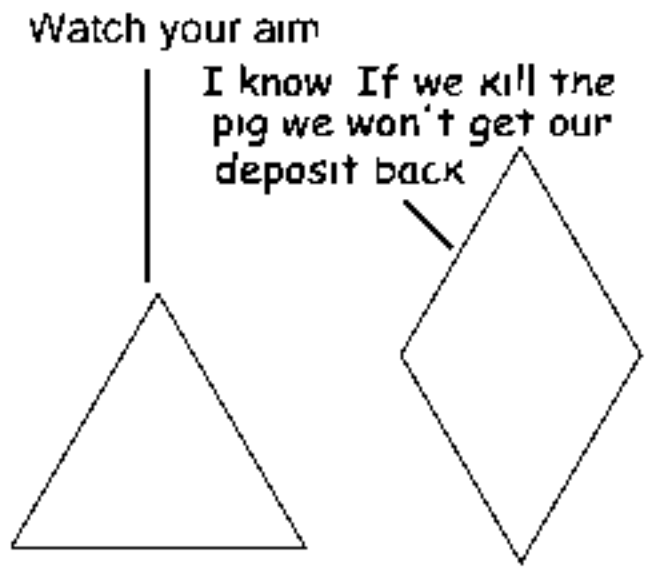


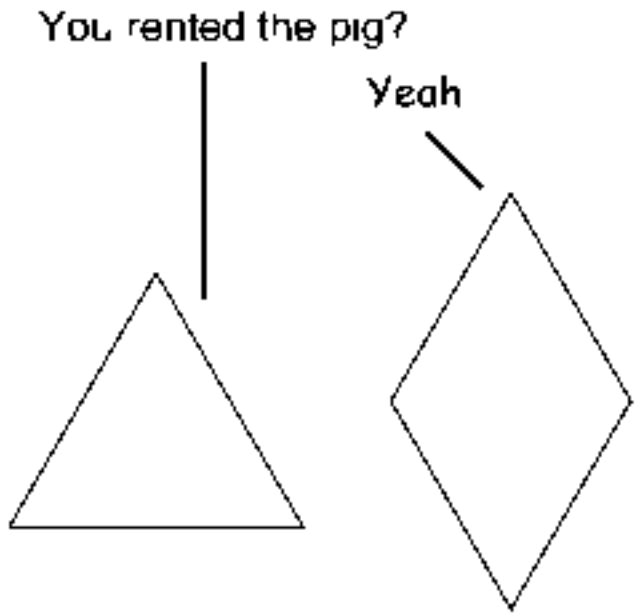


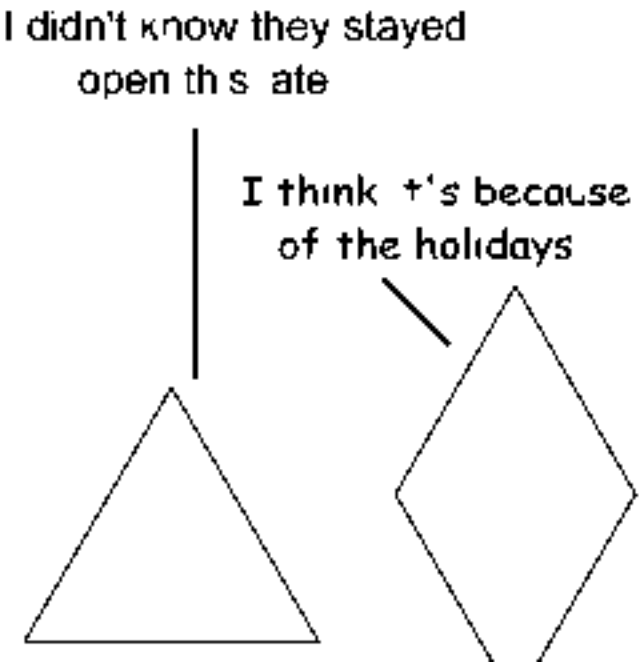
Triangle and Robert



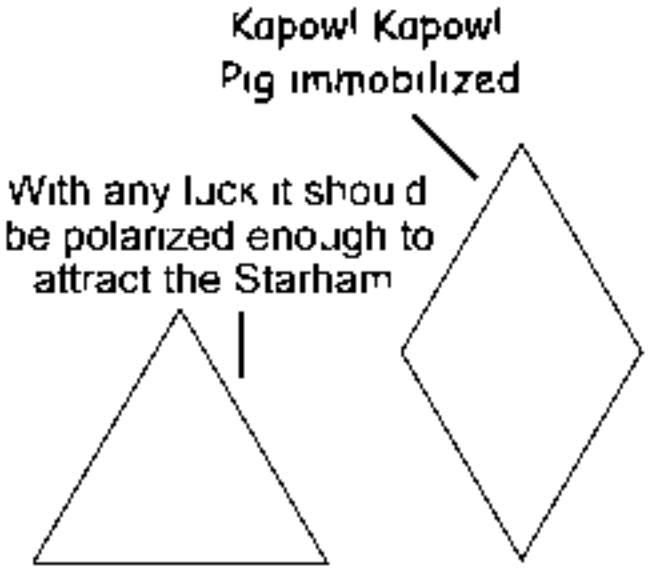
Triangle and Robert

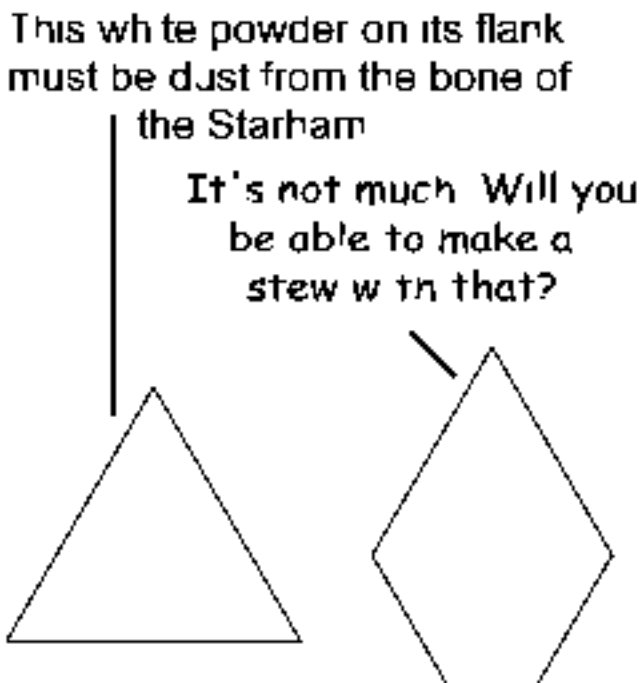


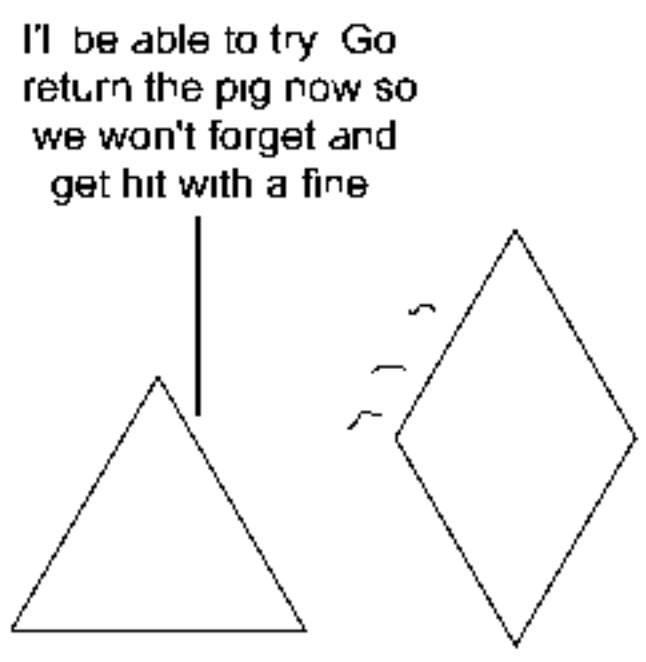




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

And so, Robert has 24 hours to demagnetize and return a magnetized rental pig

No problem. I just need to get to a good centrifuge

No livestock" that's new
I doubt it's enforced

Frenchy's All Night Centrifuge

NO LIVESTOCK

Six thousand high velocity pig revolutions later

Someone's coming! No time for a whimsical escape route, I'm going to need a screwball excuse

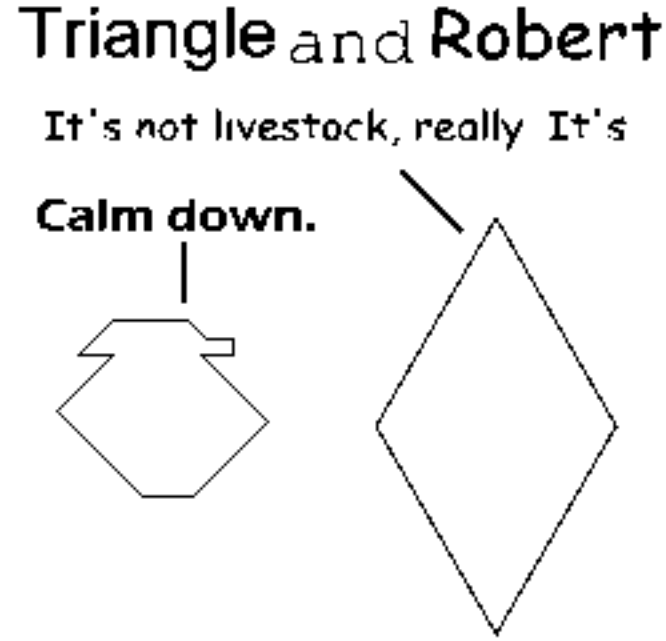
Triangle and Robert

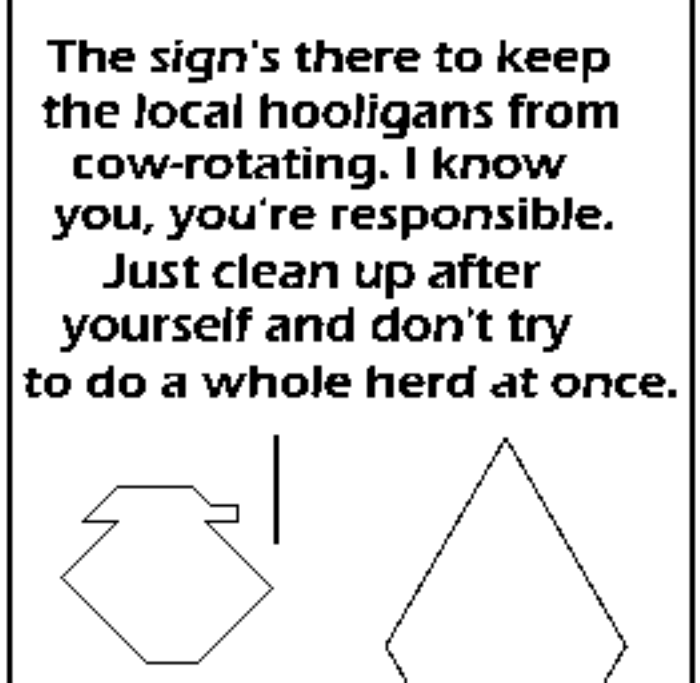
Now repeat it. It is essential that you remember word for word.

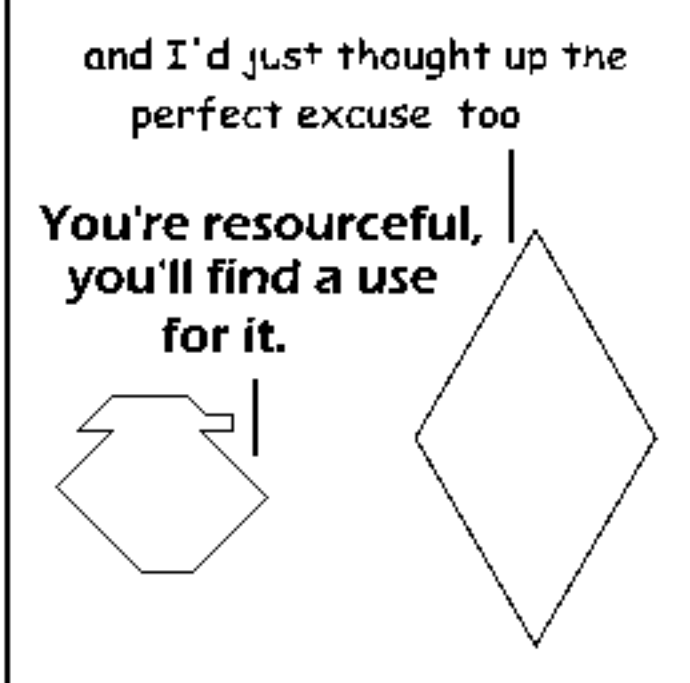
When the ferret is r sing s x ferrets sha turn t back, three from the ferret and three from the other sighty sma er ferret n the and of Marmot where the ferrets l e Amen

That was in no respect even vaguely correct. Think, Prozac! You are the only one who can save us... unfortunately.... I'm going to lie down now.

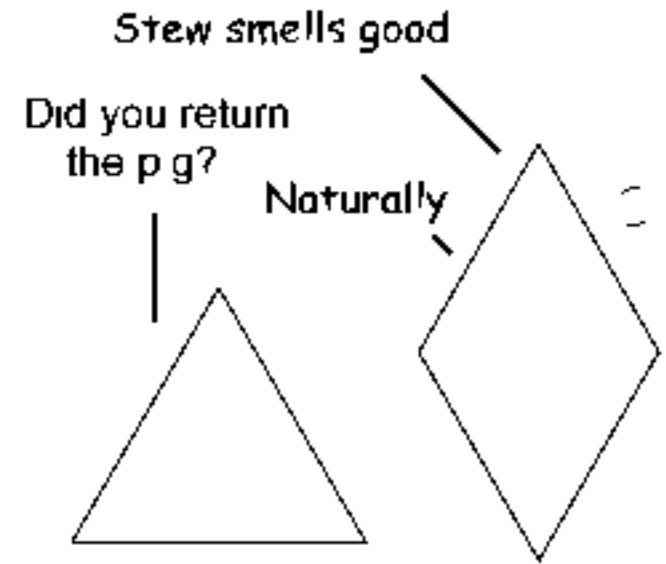
Triangle and Robert

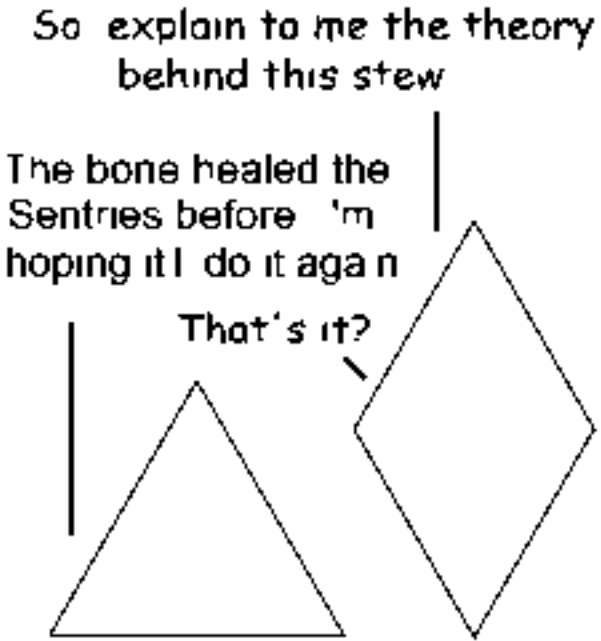


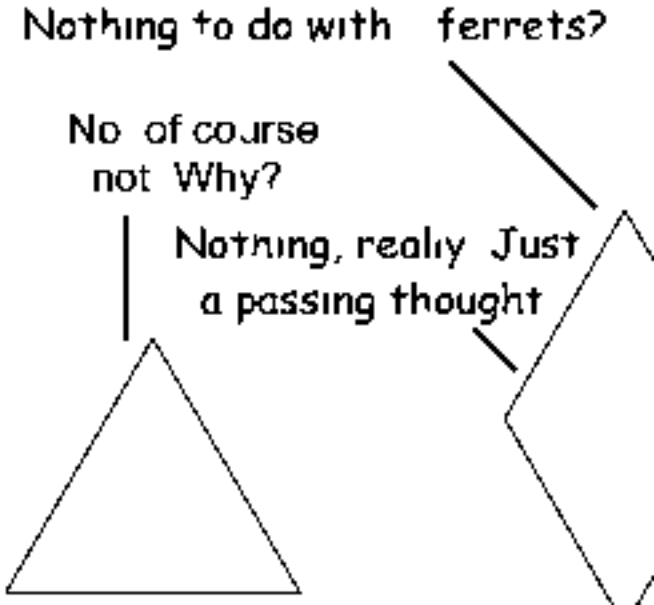




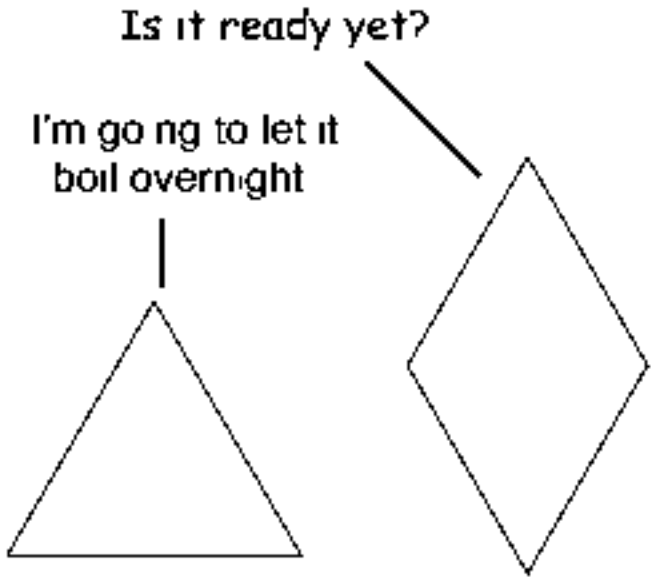
Triangle and Robert

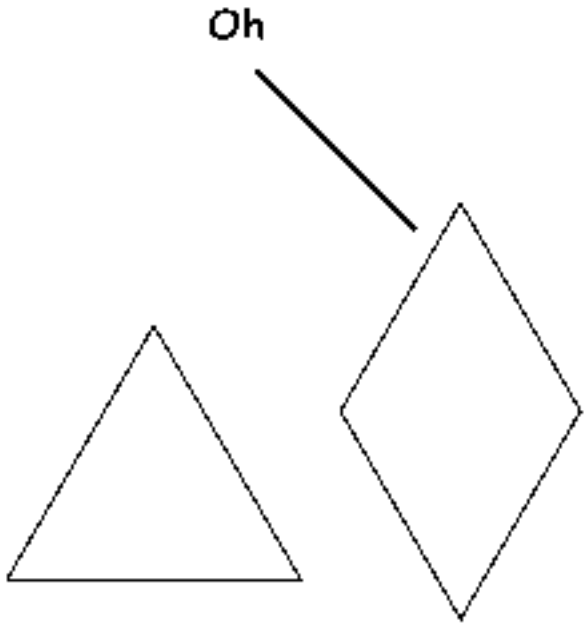


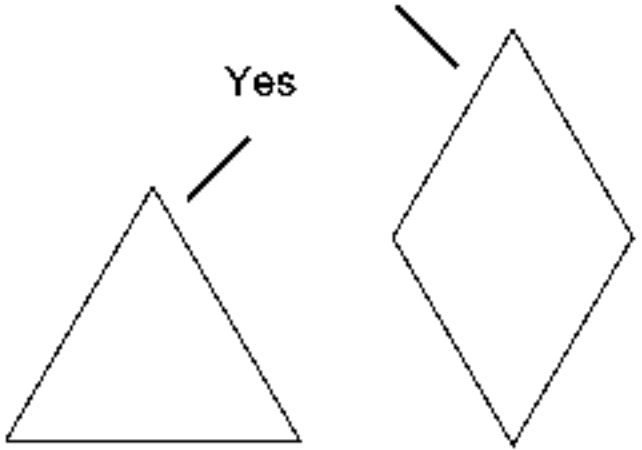




Triangle and Robert

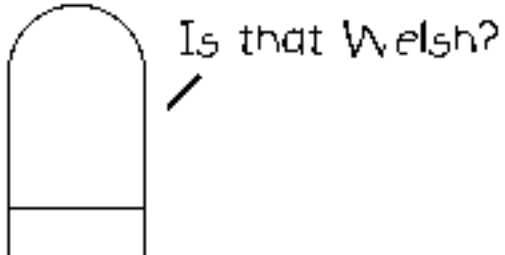




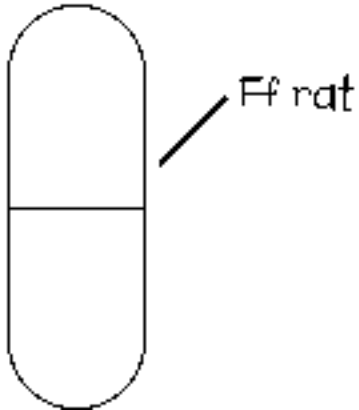


Triangle and Robert

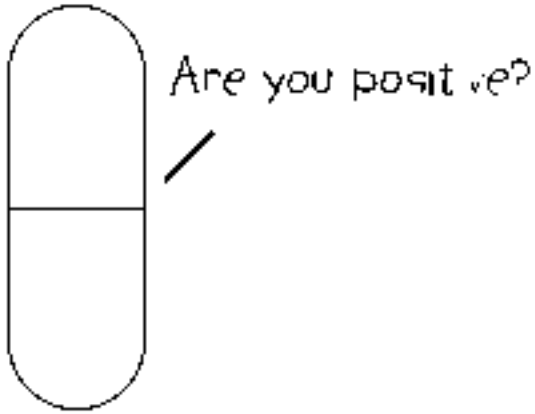
No, "tariff" spelled backwards would be "ffirat". Now please, please listen to me.



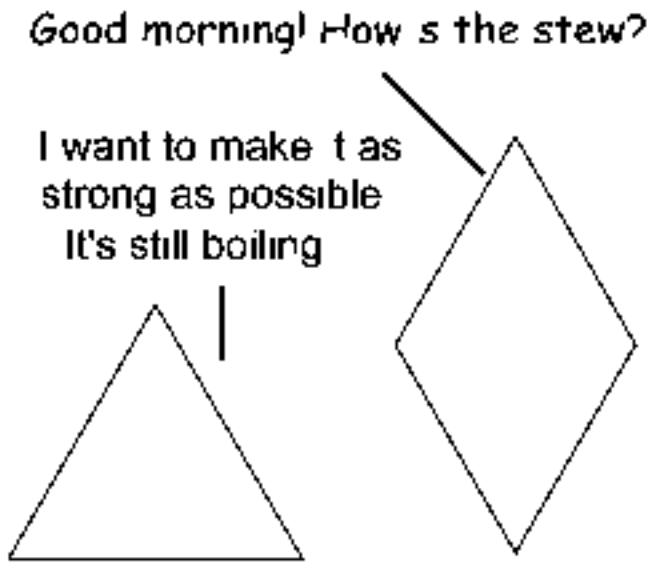
Is what Welsh?

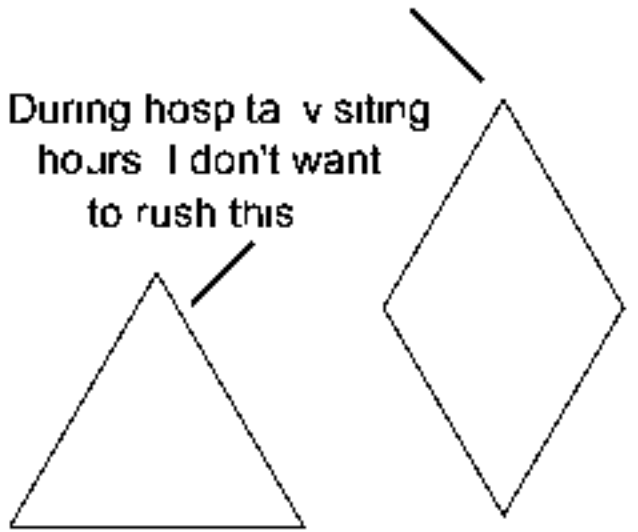


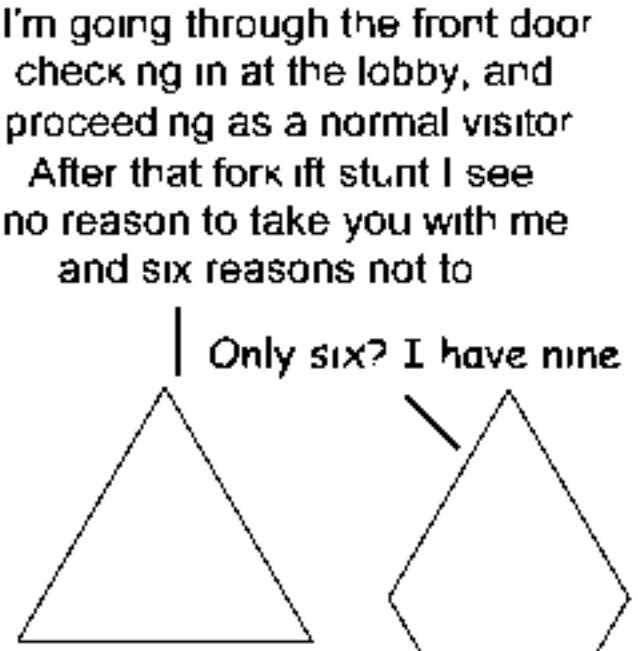
No. It's not Welsh. It's not anything.



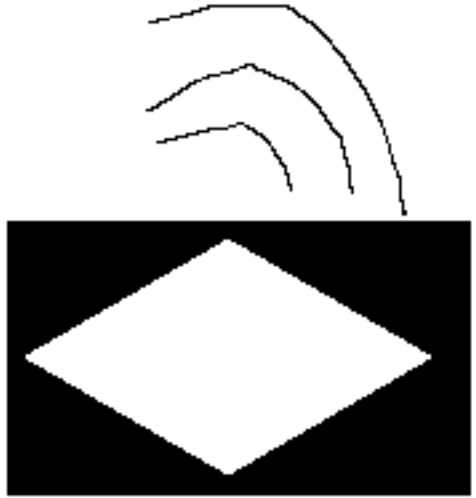
Triangle and Robert







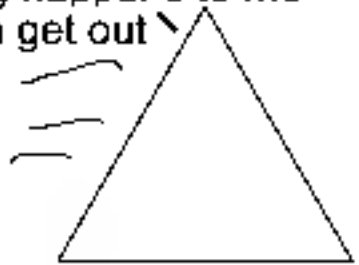
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

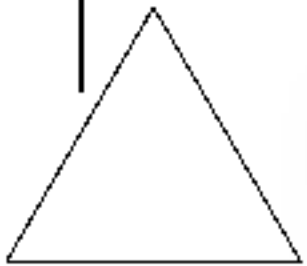
Is that really safe

The meat will only be unbreakable while I'm conscious and unhurt. If anything happens to me Robert can get out



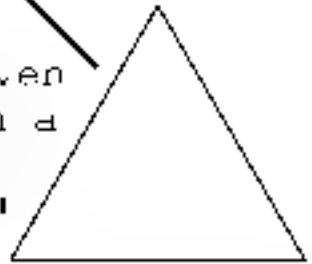
What if you're delayed or captured unharmed

Plan C



C as in "Convince the Cartoonist to Come up with something"

Right, that's the one

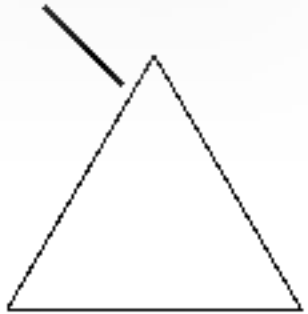


I couldn't even come up with a C word to end it with!

Triangle and Robert

That rhombus isn't with you, is he?

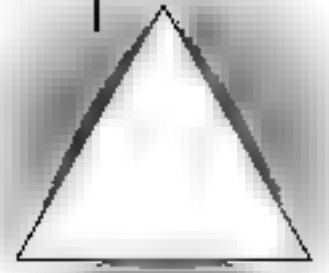
No, You could say he's at a meeting



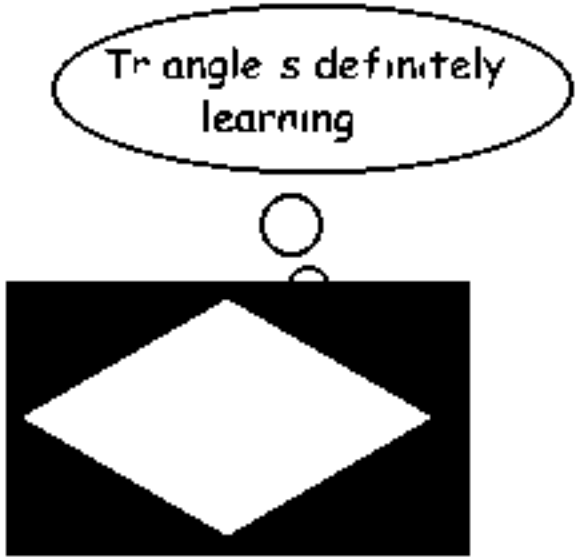
Okay, go on in. You know the room.

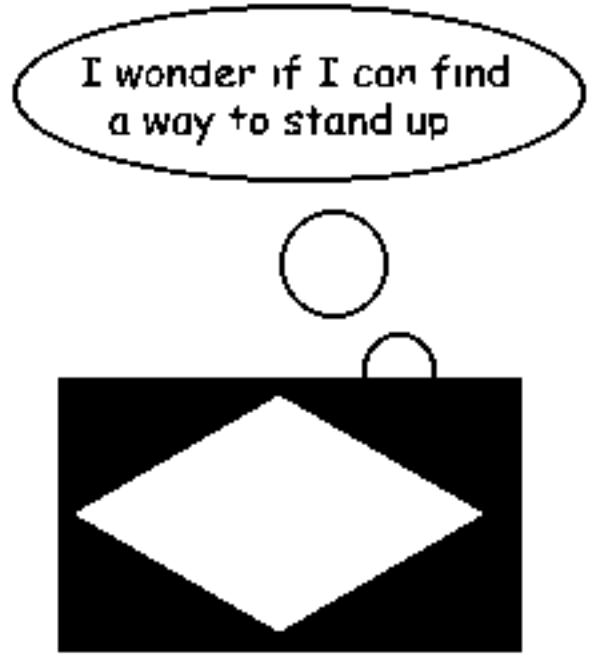
Thank you

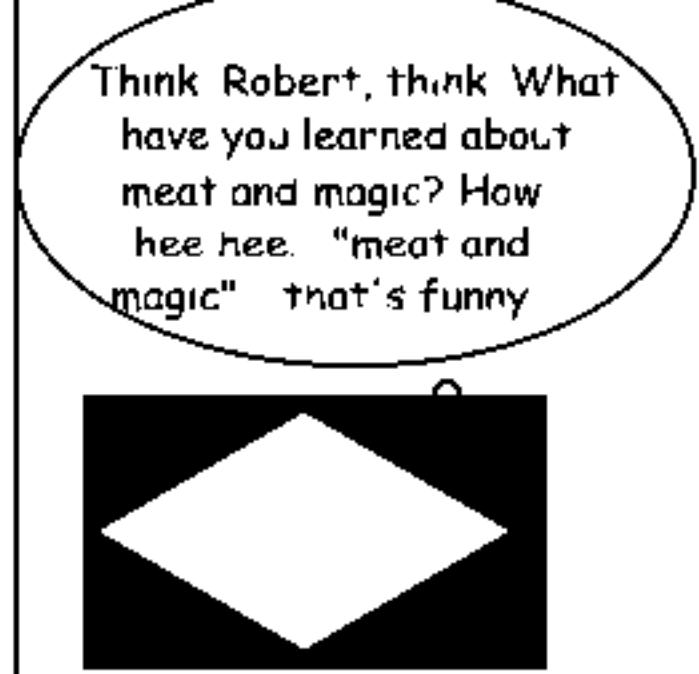
Sentries! I arrive and I bear stew!



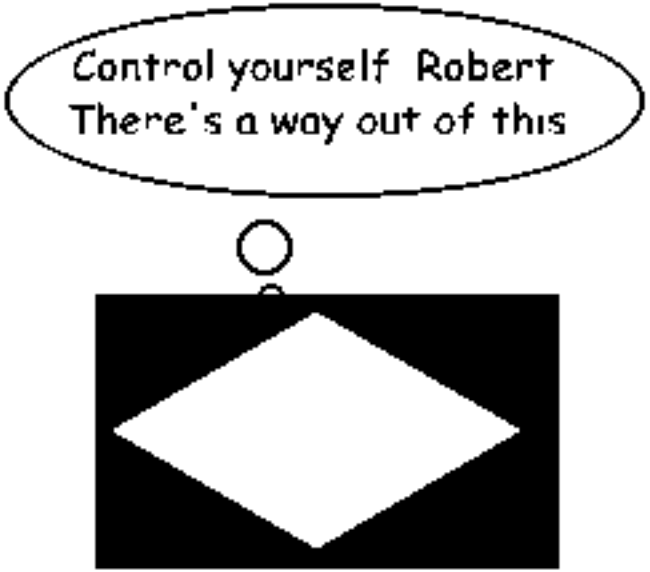
Triangle and Robert

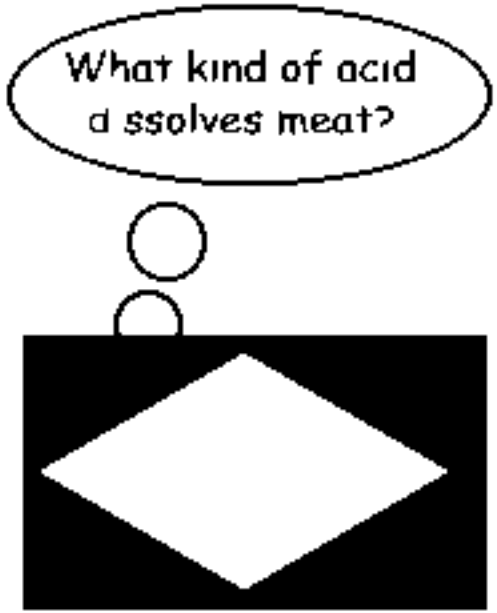


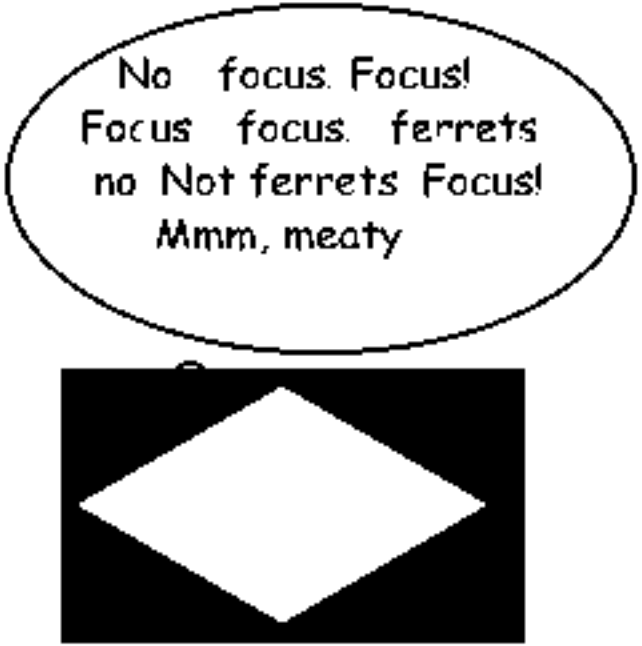




Triangle and Robert



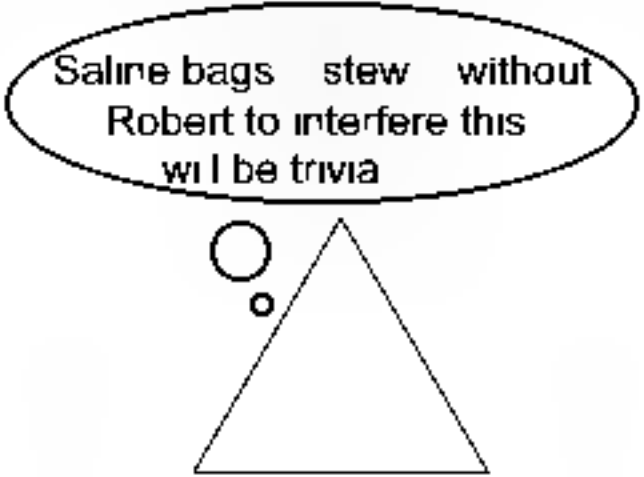




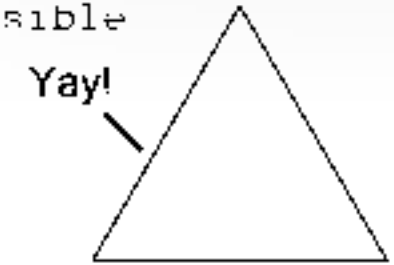
Triangle and Robert

Using his awesome lack of telepathic powers, Robert fails to command a nearby hole of ferrets to come to his aid

Meanwhile, in a hospital the name of which I have yet to determine



Curiously enough, it is indeed trivial, and as the tainted stew courses through the blood vessels of the four comatose Sentries its effects are almost immediately visible



Triangle and Robert

Encased in his meaty and immobile ex-rectangle, Robert makes a startling discovery

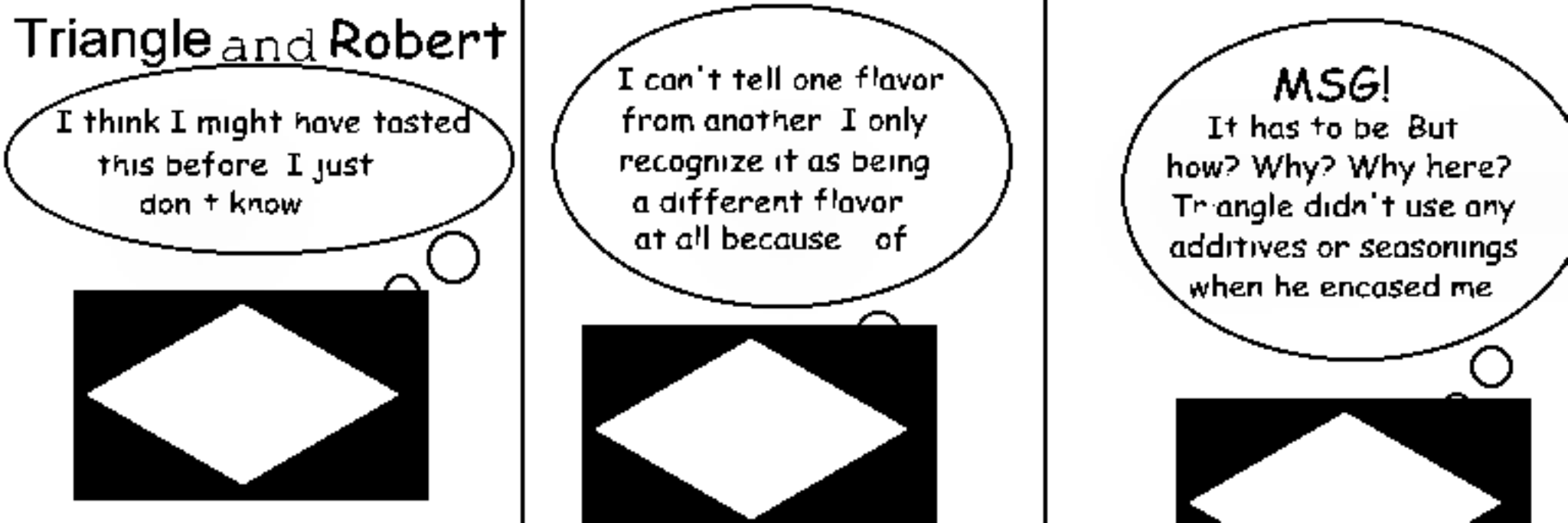
The taste of potted meat is not wholly pleasant

That's not the discovery

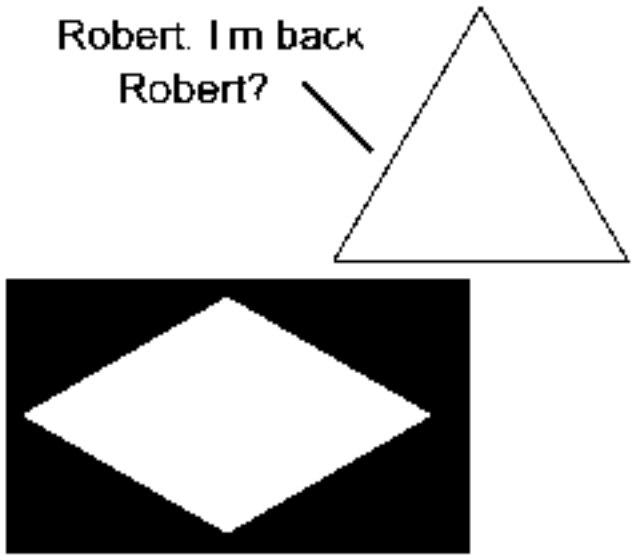
This doesn't all taste like potted meat. There are patches of something tangy

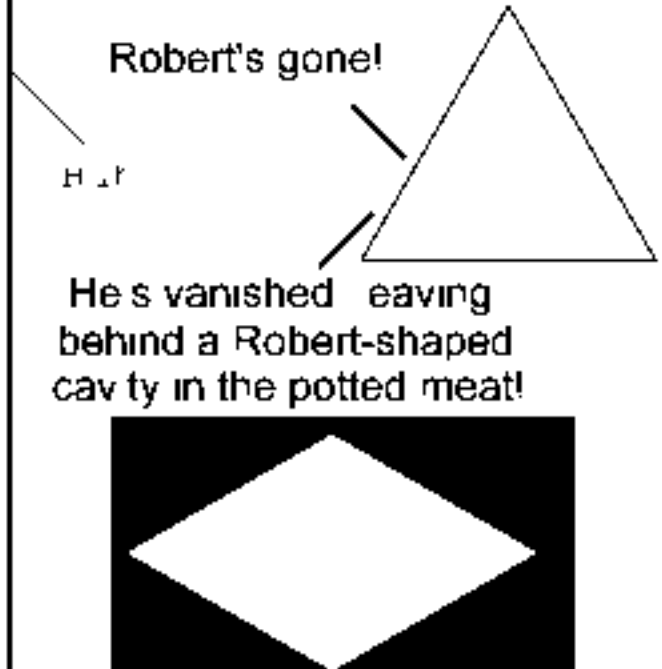
Right, that's the one

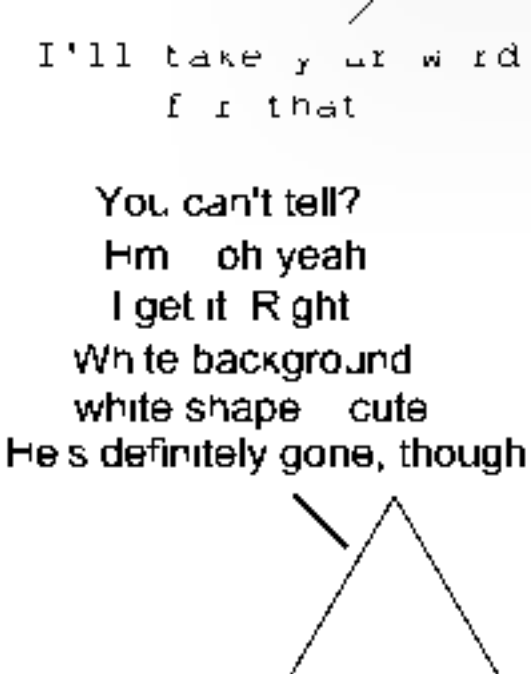
Triangle and Robert

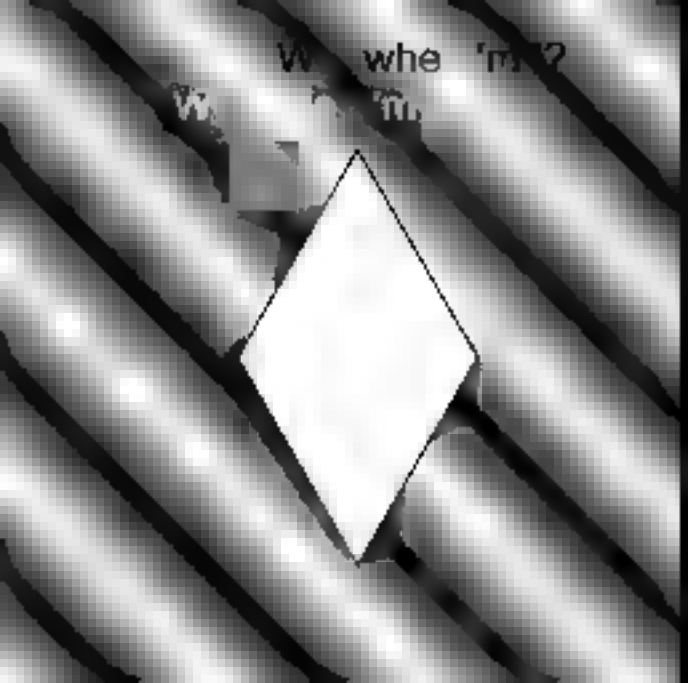


Triangle and Robert





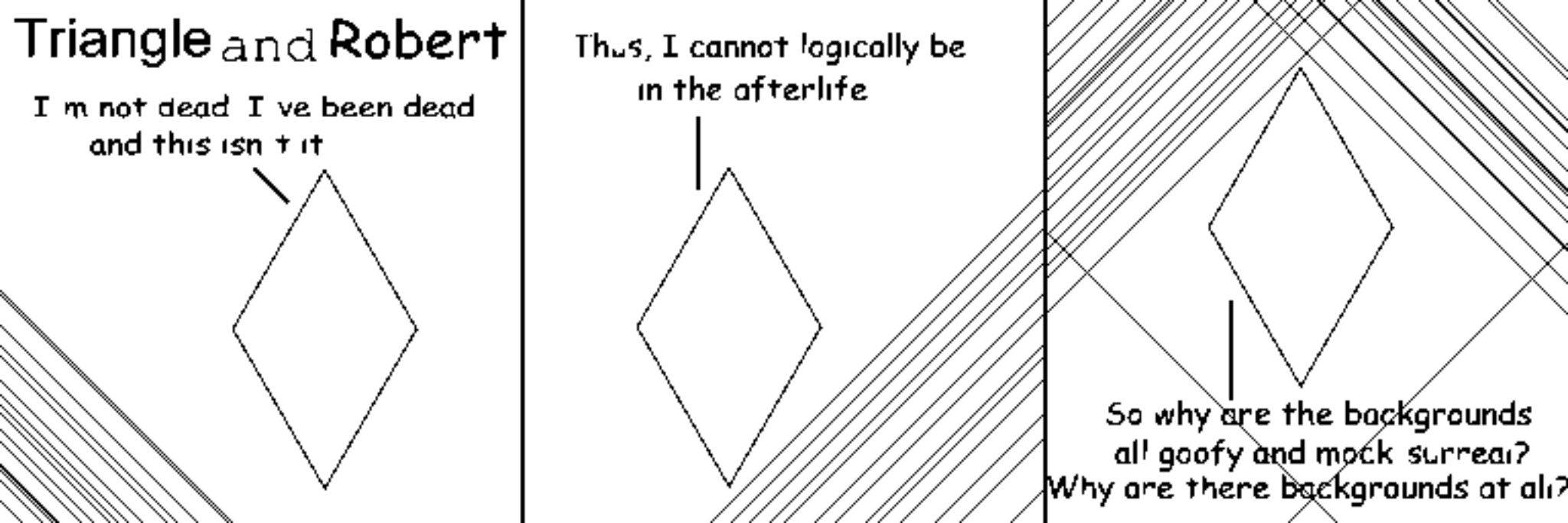




Where... am....

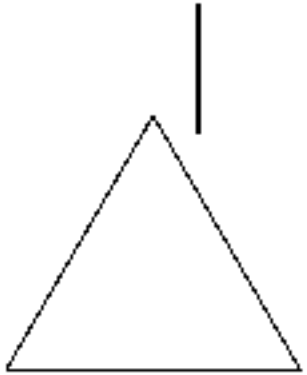
Oh. Here again. They must have redecorated.

Triangle and Robert



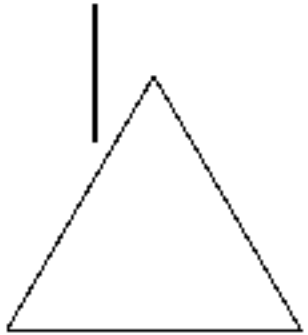
Triangle and Robert

The rectangle s unbroken
Robert wasn't broken out
that imp ies teleportation



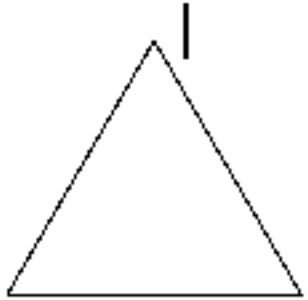
The q.esti n then becomes
did he t-leport o.t, or
wa he telep rted ut

I'm more concerned with
destinat on than motive



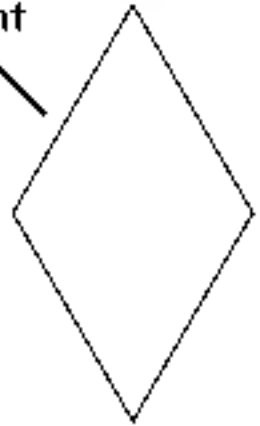
The q.esti n then becomes
where

You re just typ ng to
see yourself talk now

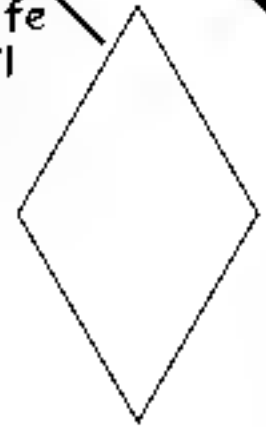


Triangle and Robert

This isn't gratuitous background junk
It has a scent



Wandering aimlessly around a pointlessly decorated landscape which may or may not be the afterlife is awfully dull



The cartoonist's attempts to liven it up by messing around with dithering only make the situation more depressing

Triangle and Robert

The potted meat was tampered with!

Chosen one! Do you require my aid?

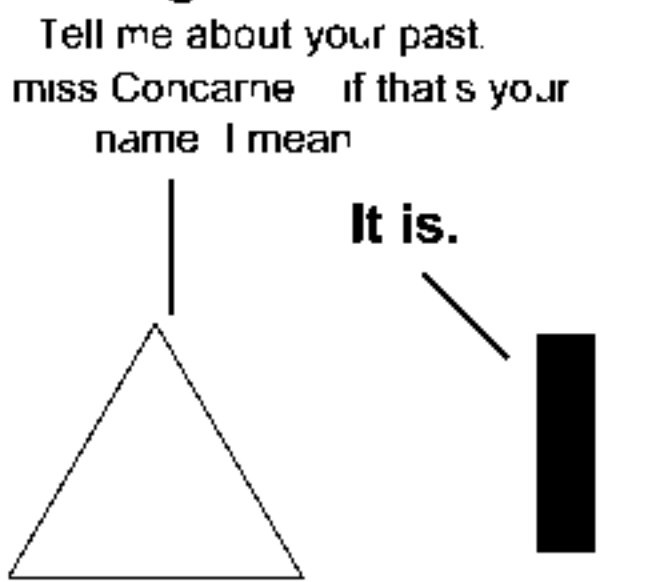
You're a) conscious, b) ambulatory and c) following me?

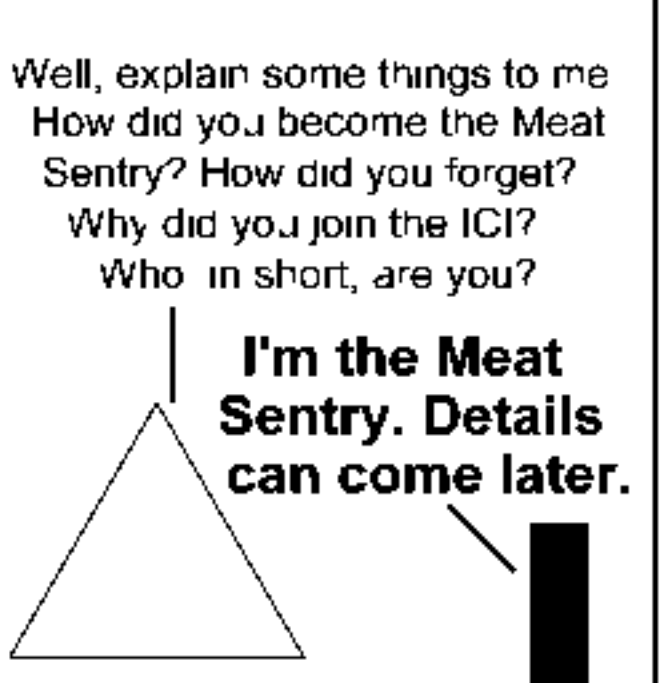
Whatever you added to our IVs acted quickly! I awakened sensing meat-related distress, so I pursued.

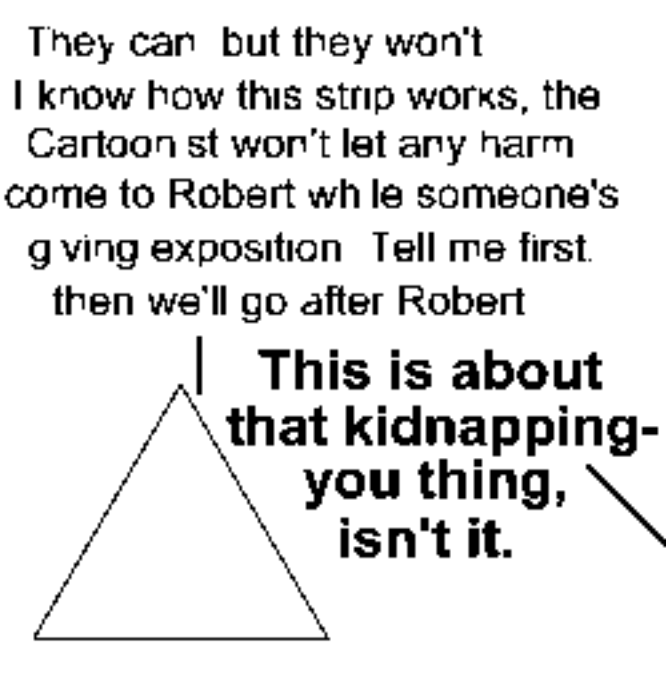
Meat-related d stress? Since when have you been able to sense that? seem to recall you being almost startling y non-telepath c

Your potion healed more than my body, Triangle. Many abilities I had forgotten are returning to me.

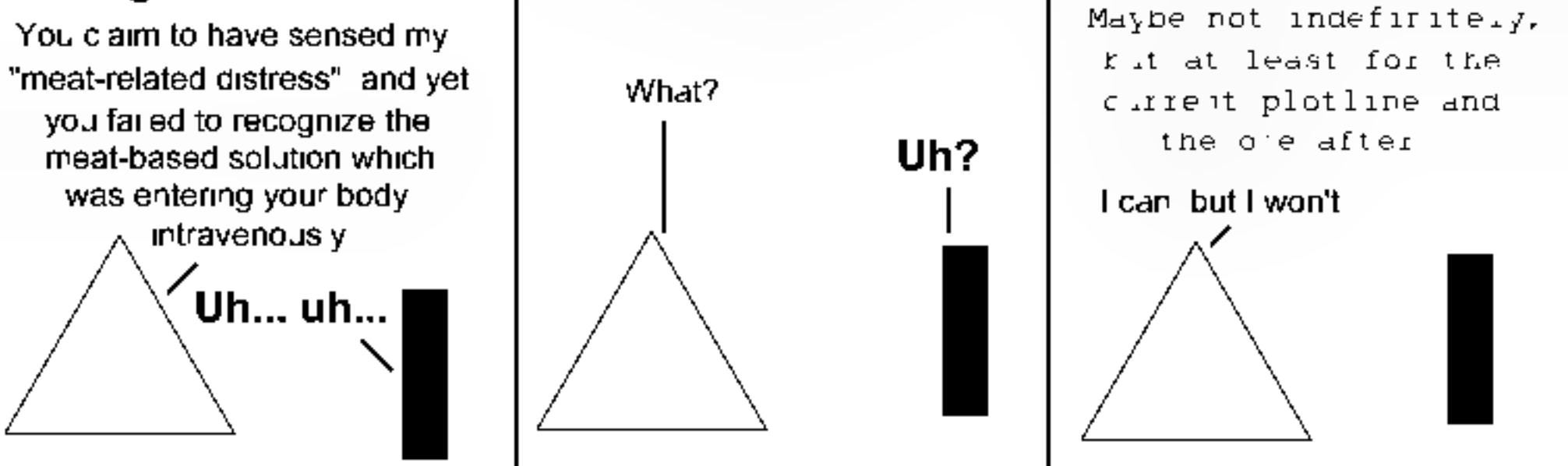
Triangle and Robert

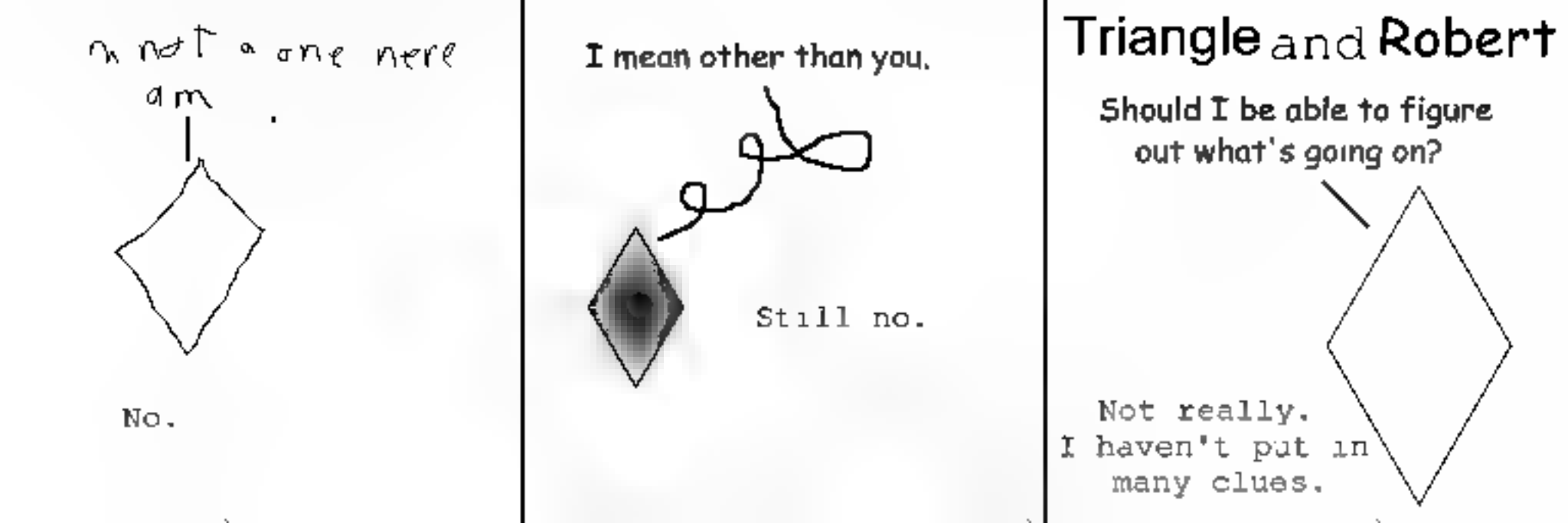






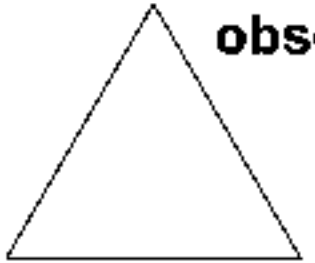
Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
I mean other than you.
Still no.
Should I be able to figure out what's going on?
Not really. I haven't put in many clues.
No.

Triangle and Robert

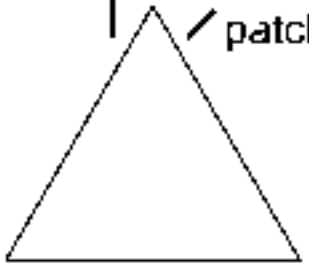
I can explain my actions, but I can't excuse them. Don't take me with you if you don't trust me, but at least listen to my observations.



I suppose

Note the tangy patches on the potted meat.

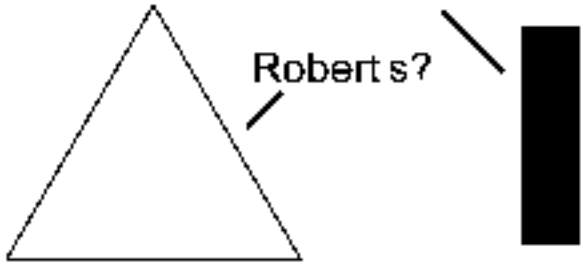
What tangy patches?

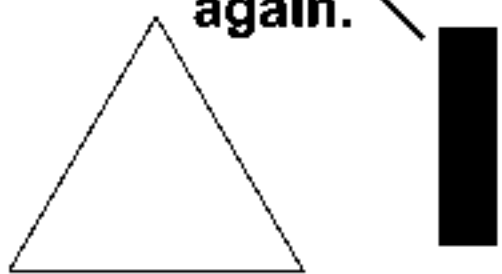


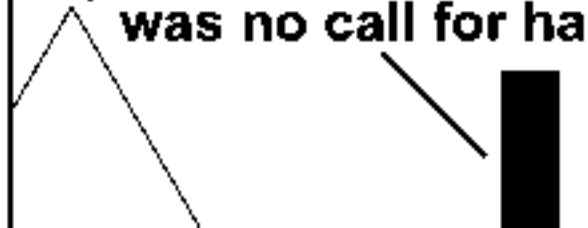
You have blinded yourself with self-reliance, Chosen One. Well, not blinded, per se, but the gustatory equivalent thereof.

That would have sounded better if you'd stopped after "Chosen One"

Triangle and Robert



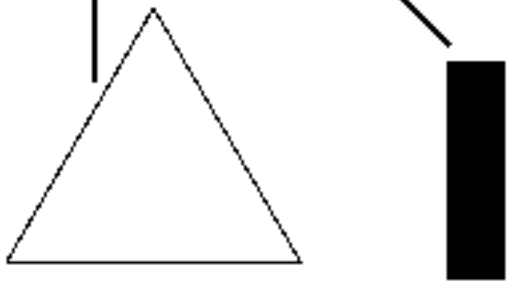




Triangle and Robert

You know, you talk b g
We couldn't fit a
punchline ast str p

Force of habit.

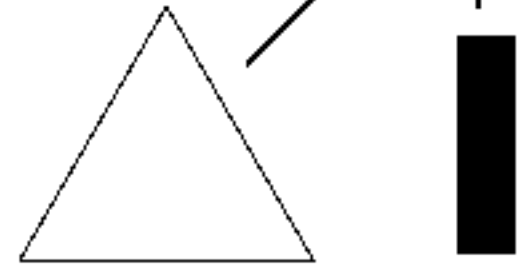


I did a lot of shouting in the Meat Enforcers.

Is there any chance
you cou d turn it down?
My ears hurt no
I have a uh headache?
My apex hurts

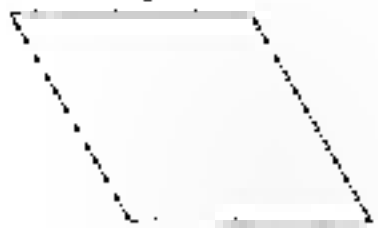
You speak strangely.

I know The
Cartoonist has some
strange ideas and
in a way I m one of them

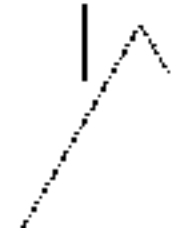


Triangle and Robert

You haven t pretended to go insane again, so th s isn t a mock-up of your psyche

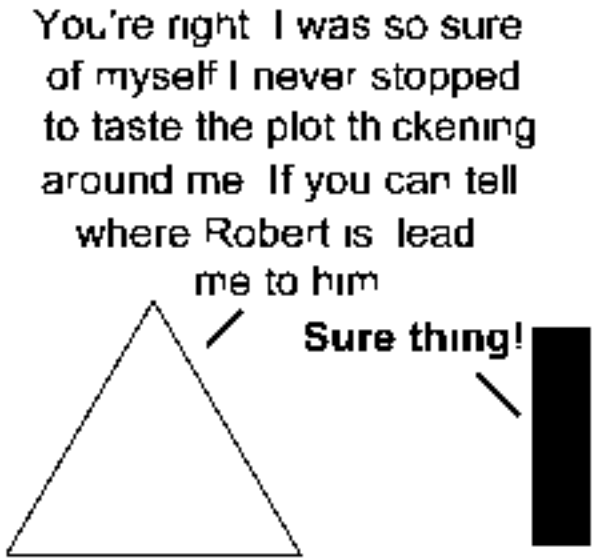


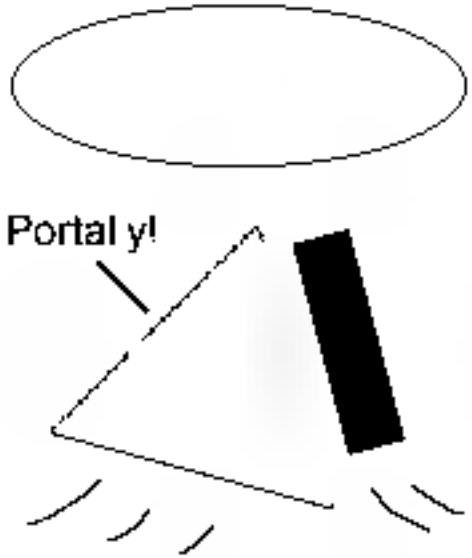
It's not precisely the afterlife It s not the Zone of No Pudding it's it s tangy Almost like a pale imitation of of course This is the neural flavored network substitute!

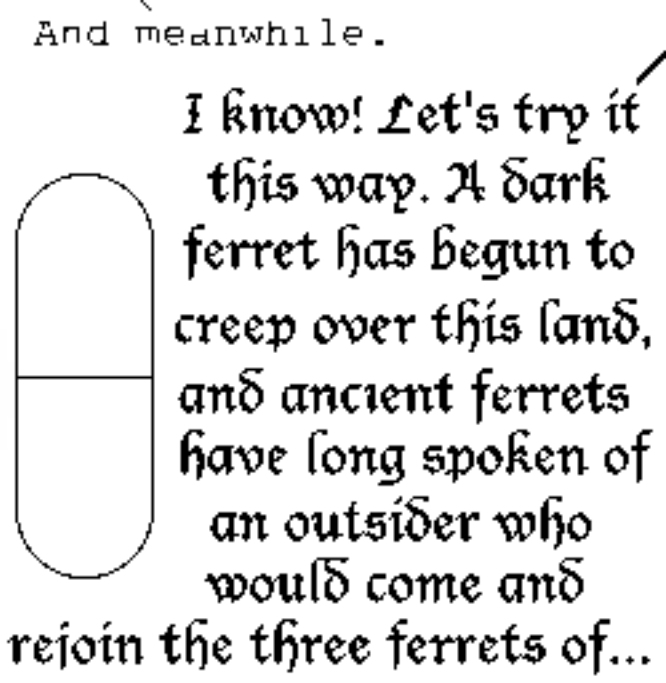


The mind of the MSG The question is what does it want with me.

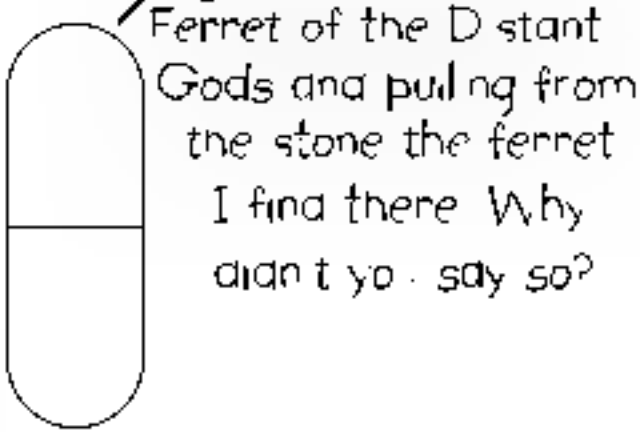
Triangle and Robert

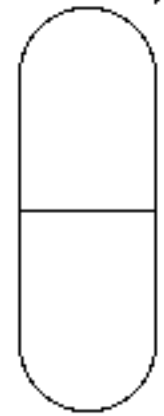


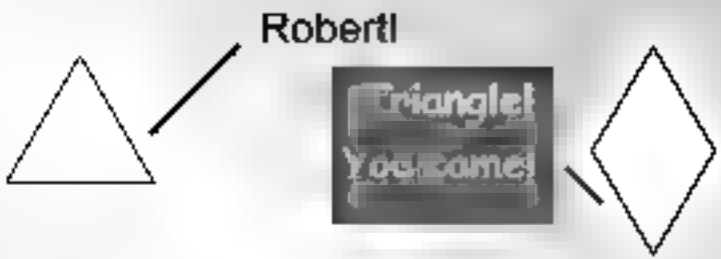




Triangle and Robert

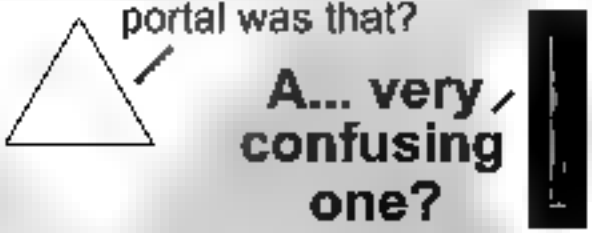




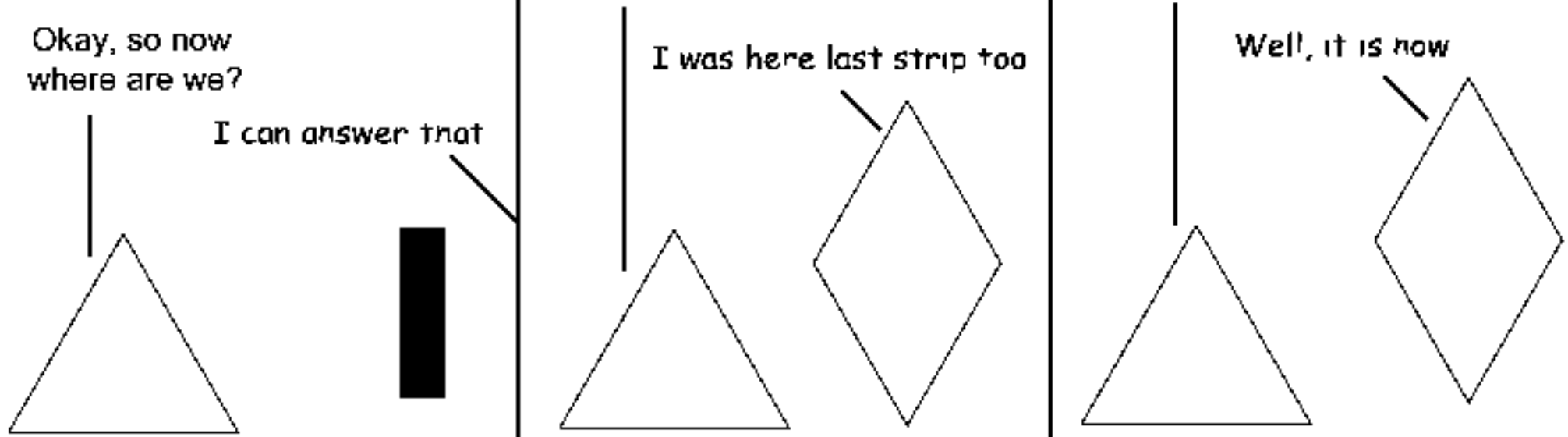

Robert!
Triangle!
You came!

Robert? Where are you?

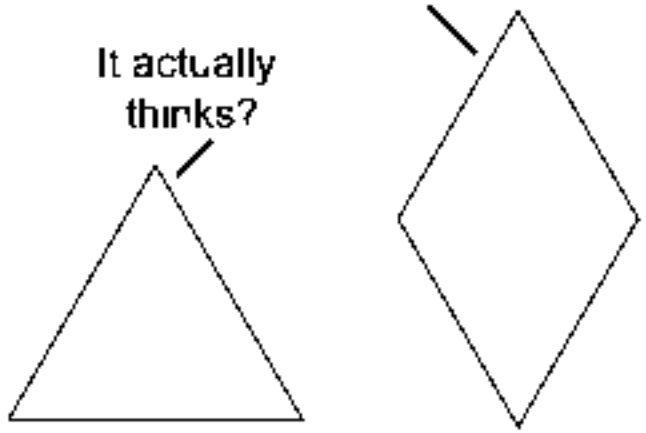
What order are these panels in?
What panels?

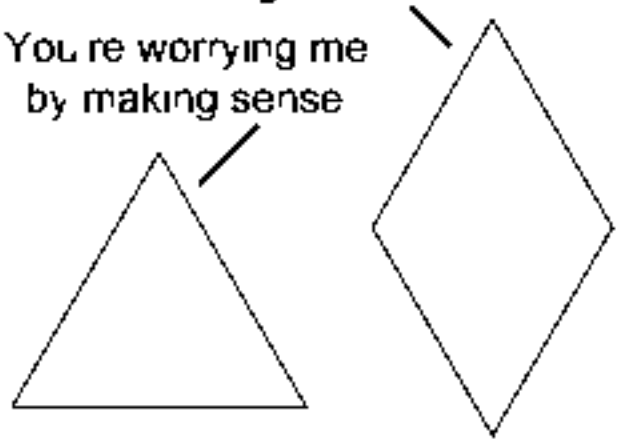

What kind of portal was that?
A... very confusing one?

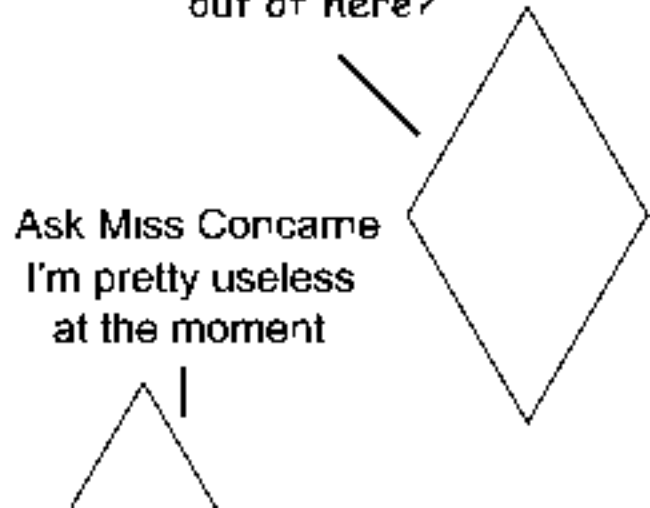
Triangle and Robert

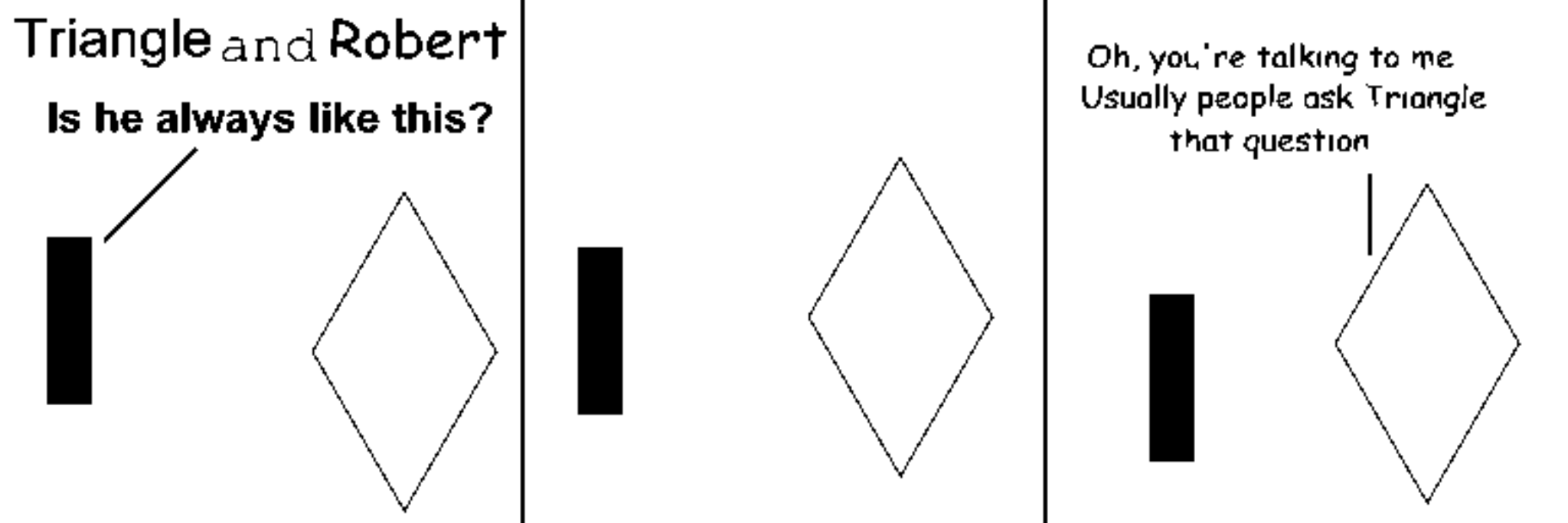


Triangle and Robert



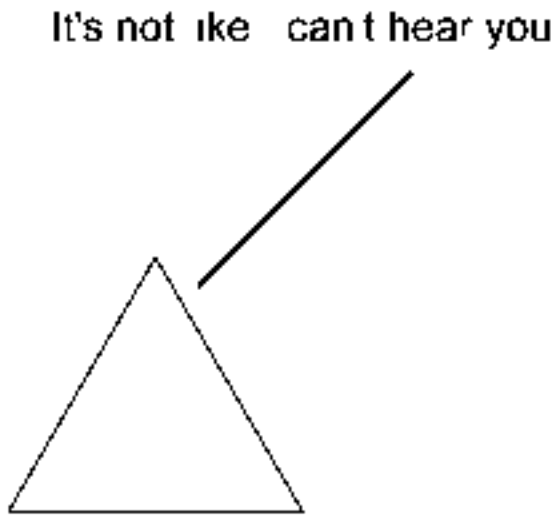


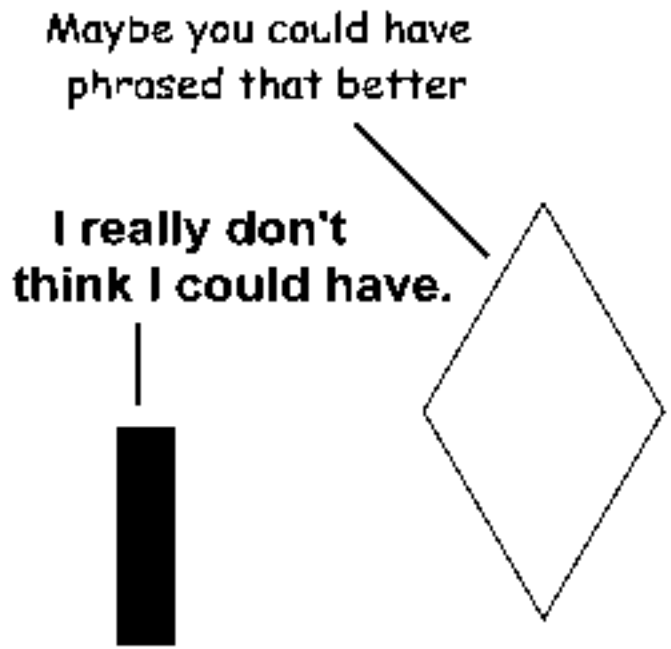


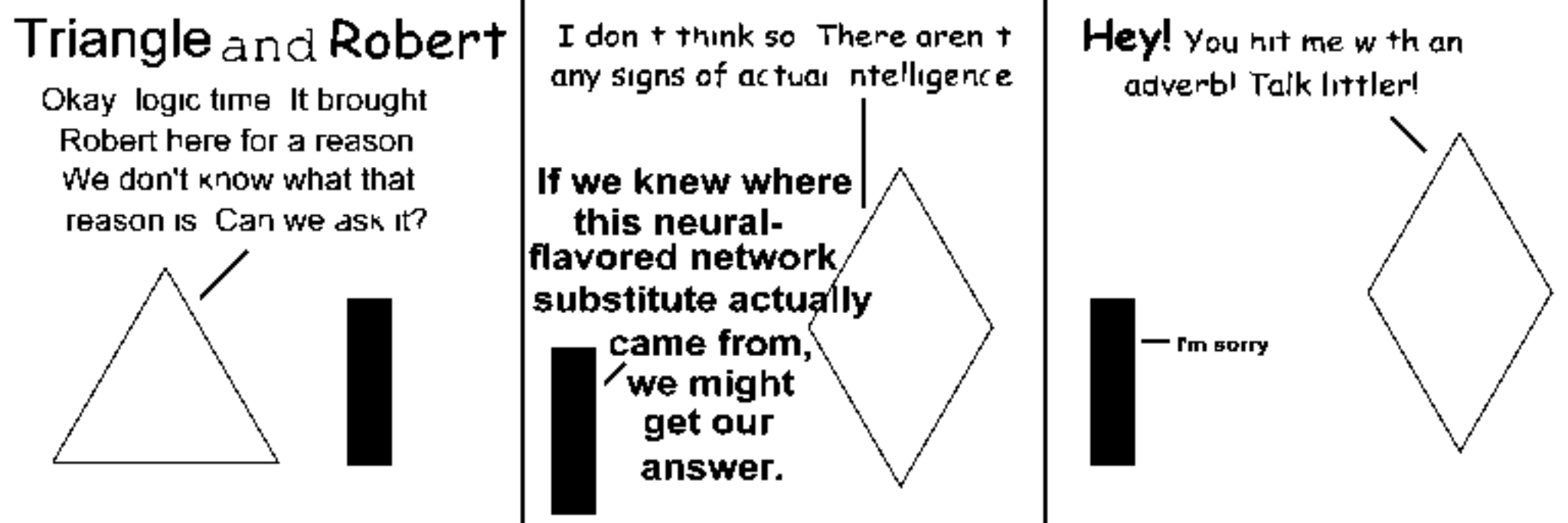

Triangle and Robert
Is he always like this?
Oh, you're talking to me
Usually people ask Triangle
that question

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert






Triangle and Robert
Okay logic time It brought Robert here for a reason We don't know what that reason is Can we ask it?
I don t think so There aren t any signs of actual ntelligence
If we knew where this neural-flavored network substitute actually came from, we might get our answer.
Hey! You hit me w th an adverb! Talk littler!
I'm sorry

Triangle and Robert

By the Ferrets of Light and Dark and the Four Ferrets of the Earth, I command you to turn from these shores until the last ferret has gone from this land!

He never learned the incantation the right way! We're all doomed.

To seal this order I summon the Big Scary Ferret Whose Name I Can't Pronounce from his undersea lair to drive you back!

Triangle and Robert

It can't commun cate
It wants Robert for something
and it can t communicate

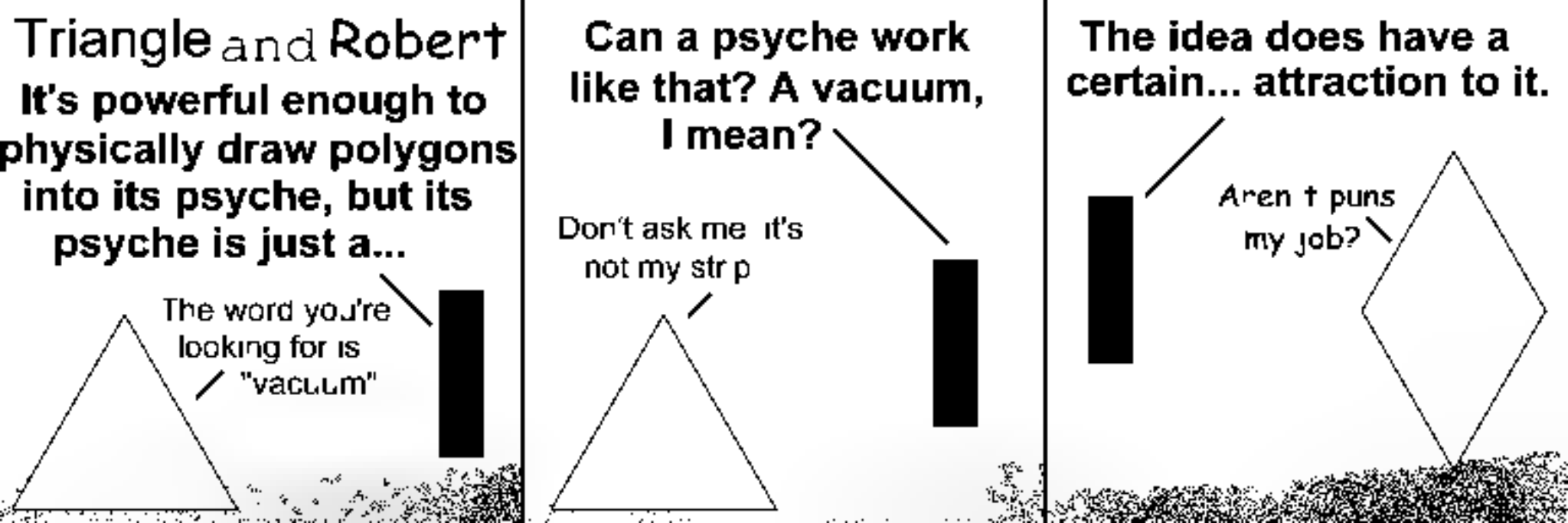
It wants a messenger?

If it has a notion of "messenger" maybe
It seems like too h gh-level a concept

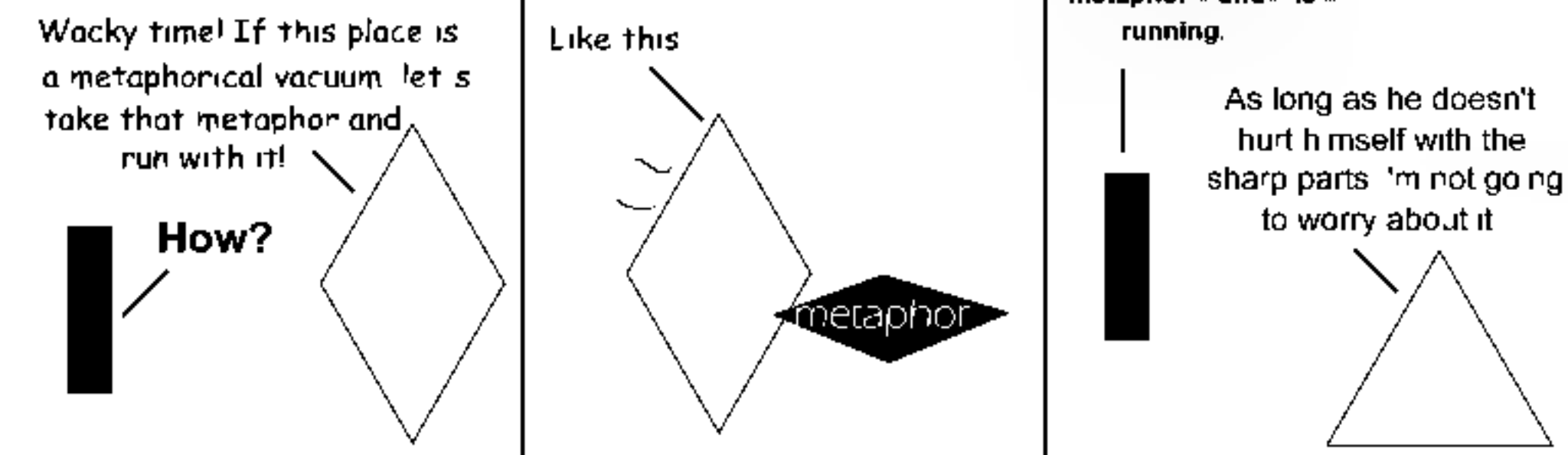
Here's a thought! Just how powerful is this thing?

I was trying not to think about that. but the answer's approx mately "ridiculously"

That's what I was thinking too.


Triangle and Robert
It's powerful enough to physically draw polygons into its psyche, but its psyche is just a...
The word you're looking for is "vacuum"
Can a psyche work like that? A vacuum, I mean?
Don't ask me it's not my str p
The idea does have a certain... attraction to it.
Aren t puns my job?

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Now what's he doing?

I think he's found the metaphorical outside of the metaphorical vacuum cleaner bag

Is it possible to carry a metaphor too far?

He once hiked fifty m les pull ng a b g cart full of metaphors

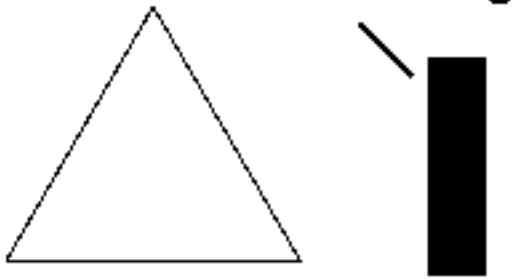
Fortunately, it's not my duty to understand what you're talking about.

That's a good pos t on to be in

Triangle and Robert

It won't tear!

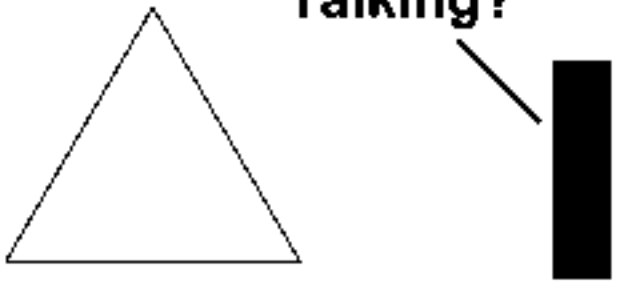
I really thought he was onto something.



He probably is

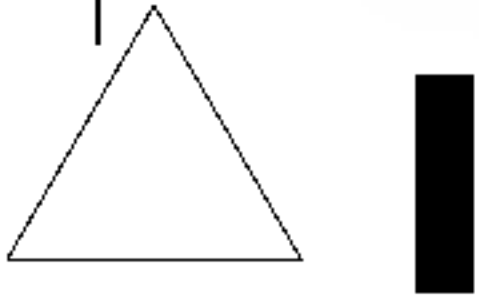
I am! Just keep talk ng!

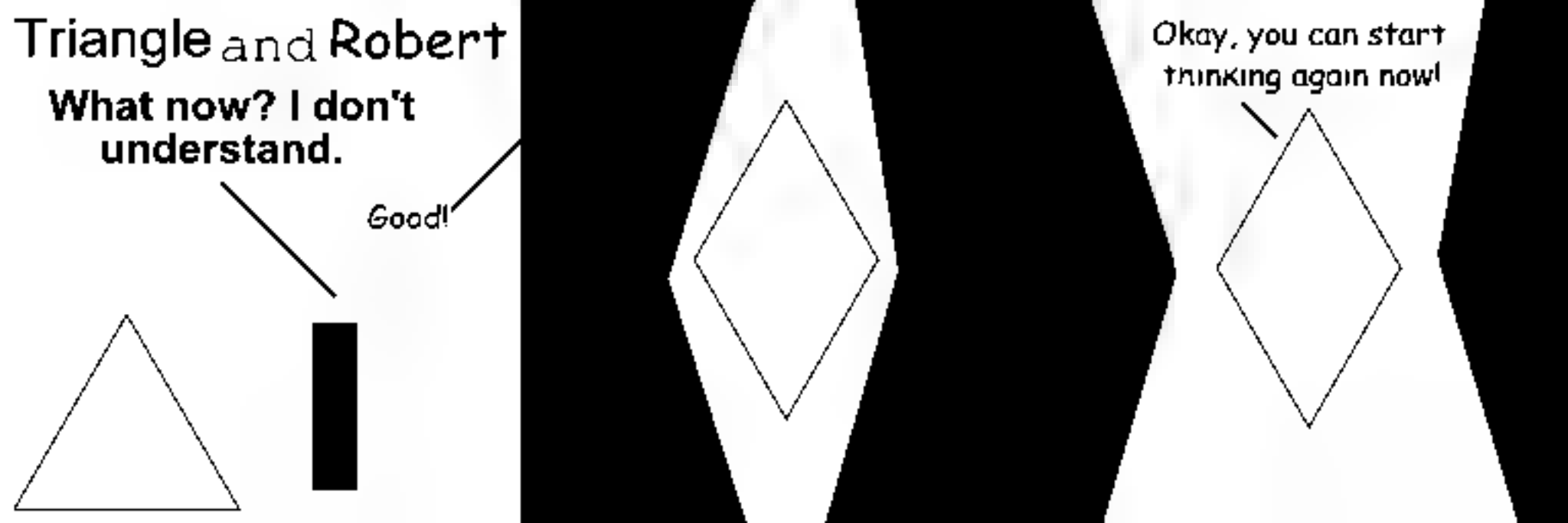
Talking?



He has something in mind

Uh no! I have noth ng n m nd! Just chat amongst yourselves!

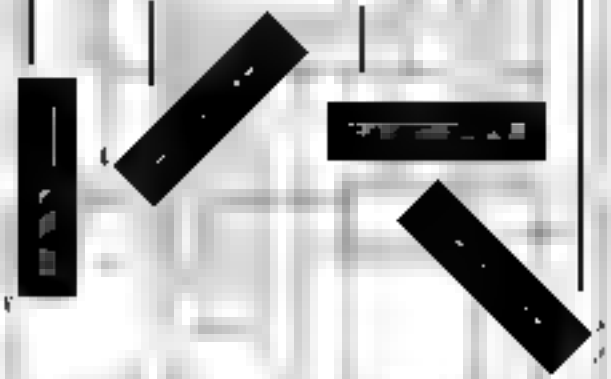



Triangle and Robert
What now? I don't understand.
Good!
Okay, you can start thinking again now!

Robert, I *really* don't know what's going on now

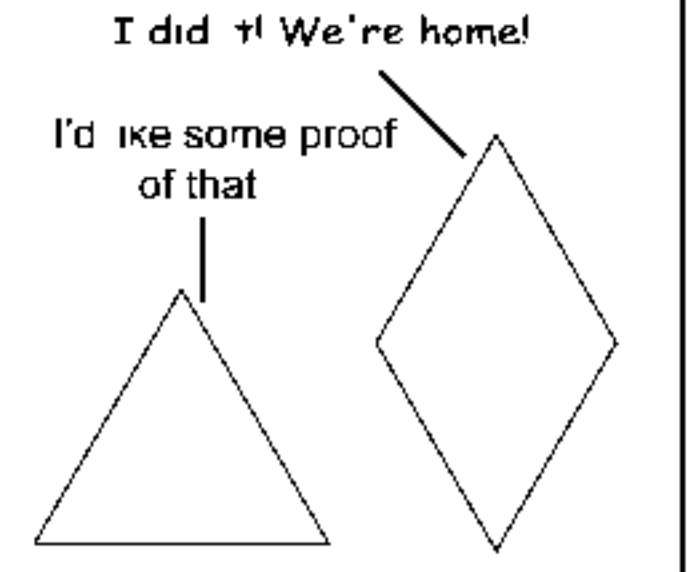
Yes, I know that

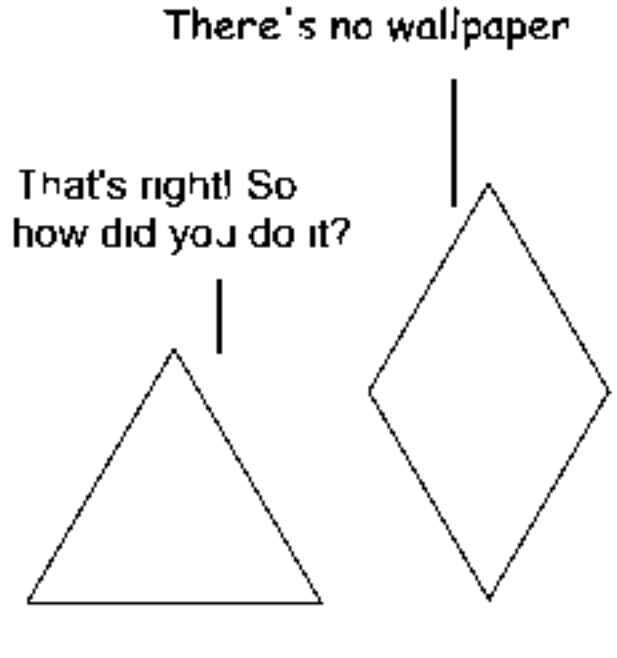
Okay, now I would really like some sort of explanation.

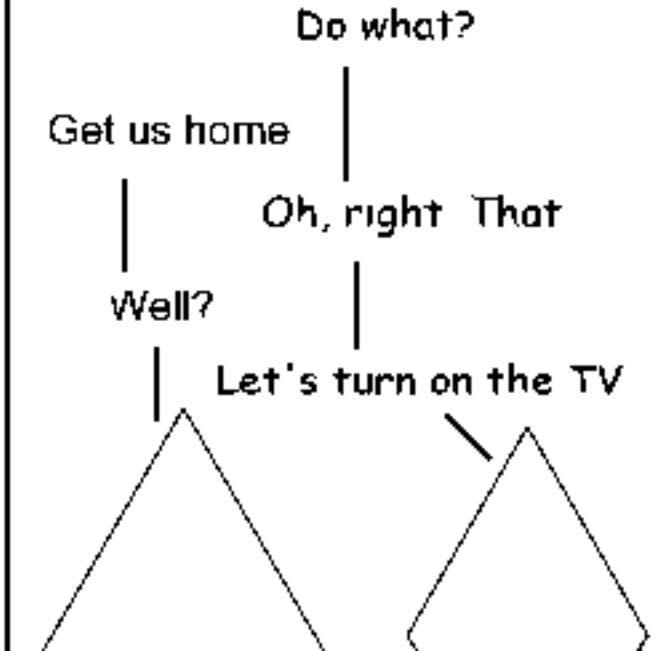


Don't ask me.
Please don't ask me.

Triangle and Robert

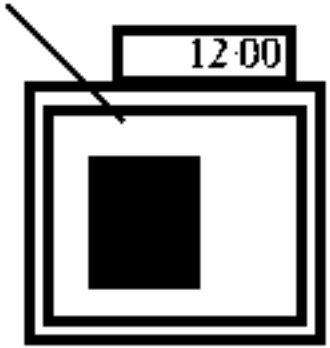




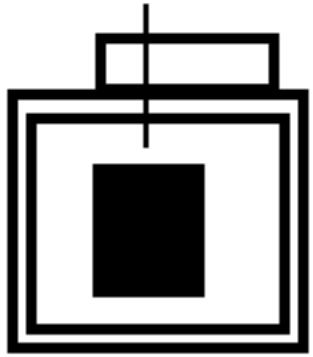


Triangle and Robert

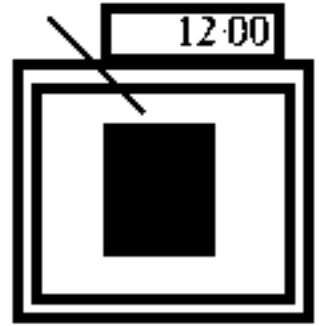
... however, not by the dark forces analysts had predicted. Preliminary reports suggest that the



long-sleeping ferret-god Bakh-Scraalye was the instrument of the kingdom's demise. It seems, although conjecture is of course risky

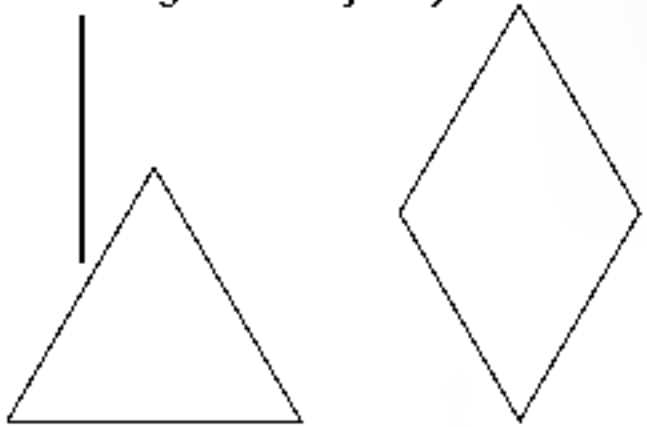


at this early point, that popular children's show pharmaceutical Prozac the Bear, whose royal appointment as Hero had confounded pundits...



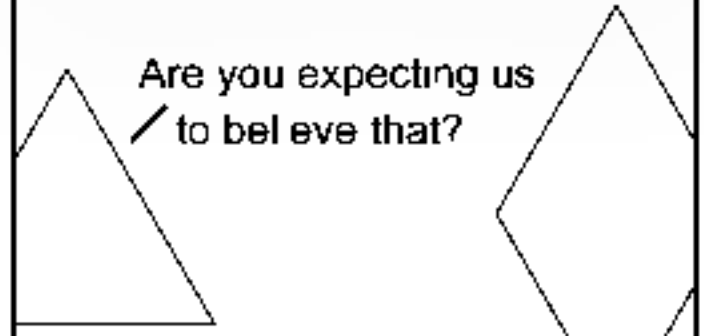
Triangle and Robert

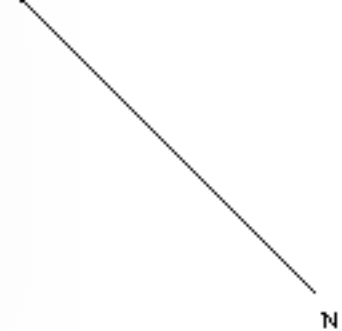
It's over? The whole Prozac/ferret p otline s over without involv ng us n any way?



It was sort of a dramatic c unterpoint Themes from each p t thread appeared in the other in modified f rm to richen the total narrative statement

Are you expecting us to bel eve that?





Triangle and Robert

Now, what's the plan?

What plan?

Plan for what?

The next assault on the Factory. You must have one in mind, Triangle.

Actua ly I m not entire y clear on well much

The Sentr es are opposed to Orpuddex, I understand that But why are you striking aga nst h m? Your presence is a sufficient deterrent, isn't it?

No! You do not understand the nature of his threat.

What did we te you about font size?

Triangle and Robert

The Pudding-Watcher enslaves the souls of the dead to revert the non-pudding mass of the Earth to pudding! If the Factory is not destroyed, all life but his own will cease!

You are correct. Miss Concarne I had not recognized the gravity of the situation. How much time do we have?

Time?

Before the Factory is fully operational

It is operational. It has been running since before the dawn of polygons.

So where's the rush then?

What do you mean, "rush"?

Triangle and Robert

Orpuddex's plan won't come to fruition **Puddingion.**

What?

Not fruit. Pudding.

The word's still "fruition" and Orpuddex's plan won't come to it for thousands of years, if even that soon. Meanwhile the souls enslaved in his Pudding Factory of the Dead are no worse off than they would be released

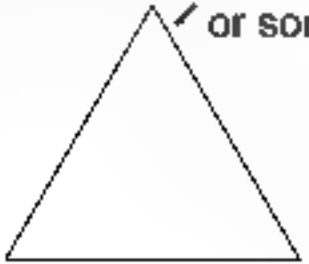
I've seen the afterlife

It's dul

Yes, it's a clear global threat which must be defeated. However, it is a very *slow* global threat which does not need to be defeated anytime soon.

Then why did you take such pains to revive me and the other Sentries?

Maybe it was presumptuous of me, but I was somehow under the impression that the Sentries actually had something to do with something relevant, like the Time of the Oval or something



You do not consider the Pudding-Watcher to be relevant?

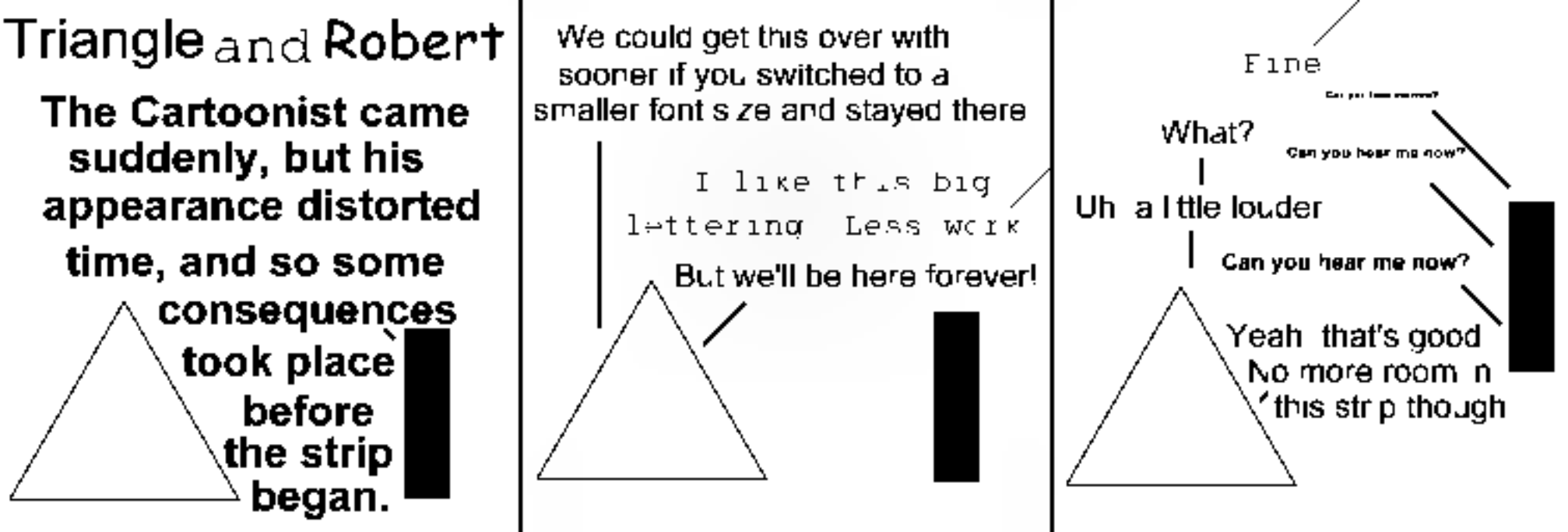
Yes, that's it exactly Orpuddex relates to. all this The Factory doesn't, but Orpuddex himself does. I was hoping you knew something

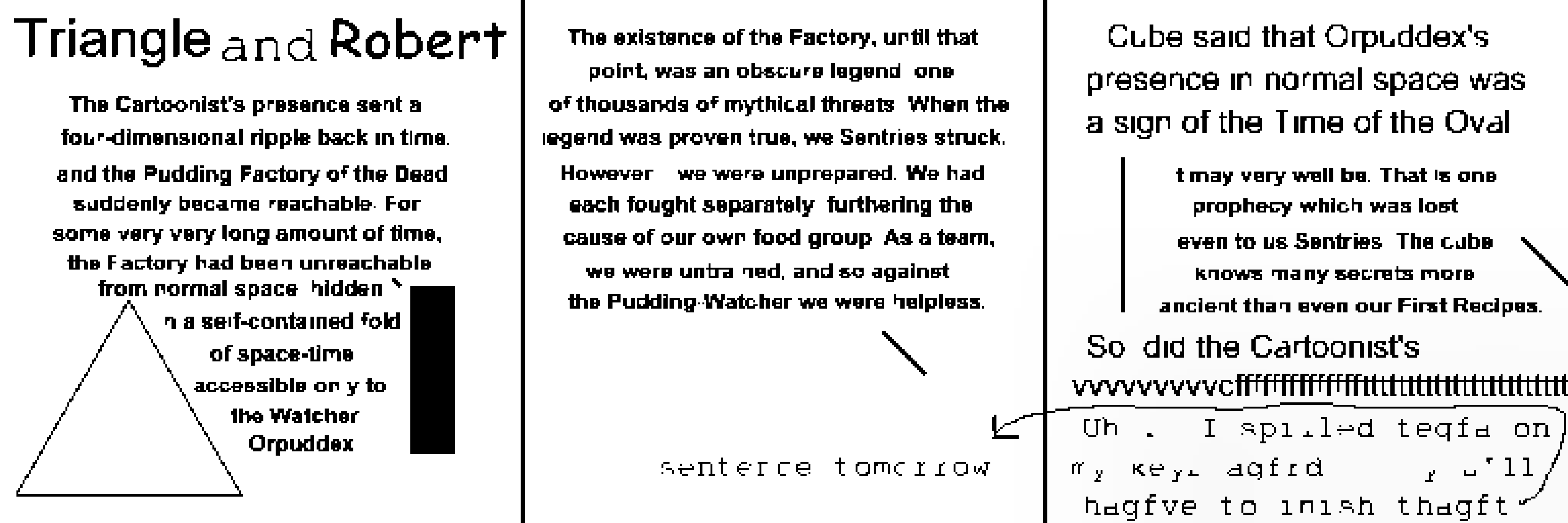
Now that you mention it, my memory has become fairly stable. I believe I may have aught to tell.

"Aught?"

Blame the Cartoonist for that one.

Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
The Cartoonist's presence sent a four-dimensional ripple back in time, and the Pudding Factory of the Dead suddenly became reachable. For some very very long amount of time, the Factory had been unreachable from normal space hidden in a self-contained fold of space-time accessible only to the Watcher Orpuddex
The existence of the Factory, until that point, was an obscure legend one of thousands of mythical threats When the legend was proven true, we Sentries struck. However we were unprepared. We had each fought separately furthering the cause of our own food group As a team, we were untrained, and so against the Pudding-Watcher we were helpless.
sentence tomorrow
Cube said that Orpuddex's presence in normal space was a sign of the Time of the Oval
It may very well be. That is one prophecy which was lost even to us Sentries The cube knows many secrets more ancient than even our First Recipes.
So did the Cartoonist's
vvvvvvvvcffffffffffffttttttttttttttttttt
Uh . I spilled teqfa on my keyb agfrd , I'll hagfve to inish thagft

Triangle and Robert

So d d the Cartoon st's presence tr gger the Time of the Oval or did the T me of the Oval cause the Cartoonist to begin the strip?

don't know That might be a false dichotomy

n any event the emergence of the Pudding-Watcher from his hiding ed us to attack We lost and he devoured our memories.

And you a l reacted d fferently the Dairy Sentry started thinking he was a letter and physical y changed into one the Grain Sentry started a new I fe as the Food Pyramid

We each had our reasons. I dimly recalled my role as a defender of meat.... but I had forgotten the Sentries, and the closest job I found was that of a Meat Enforcer

But surely, you recognized them as evil before long?

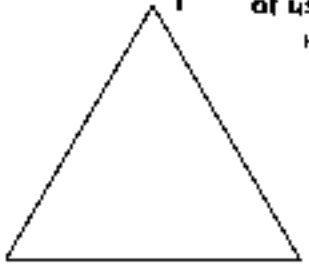
No It looks different from the inside. And.

I know Don't call you Shirley

Triangle and Robert

So then, once your memories were restored you all went for the Factory aga n

The first time we attacked the Vegetable Sentry was absent. We thought that with all four of us combined, we would have no trouble

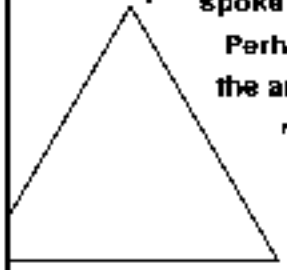


Why wasn't the Vegetable Sentry with you the first time?

He had suffered a defeat and was meditat ng. You know that

I do?

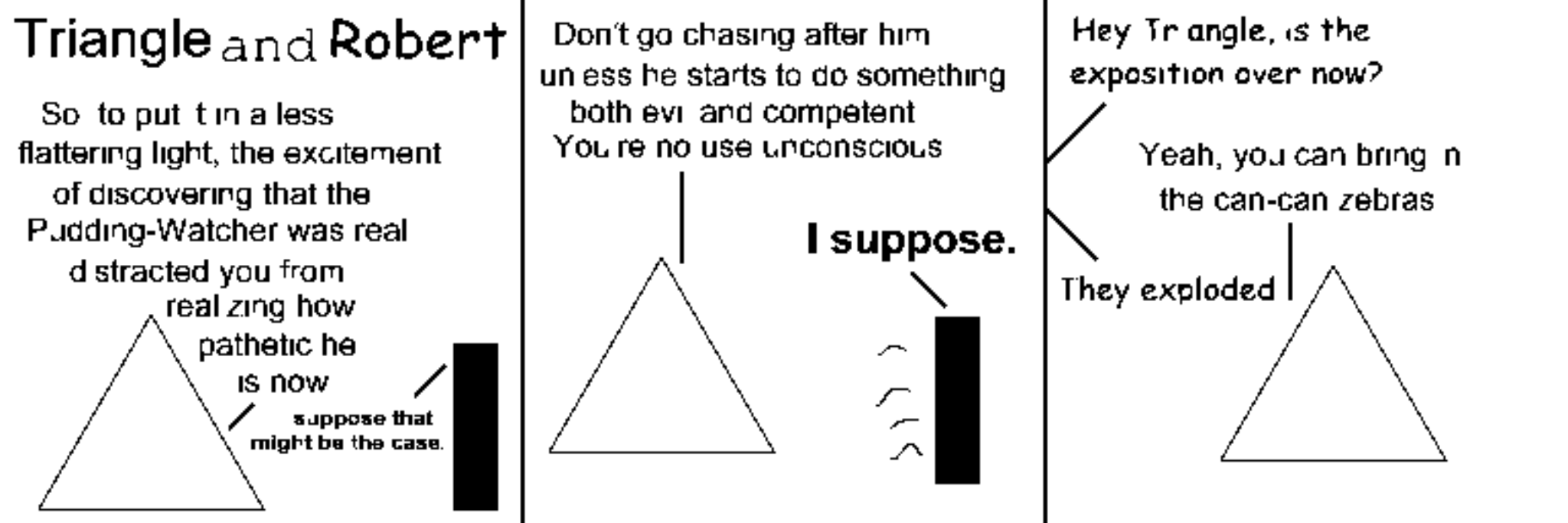
It was many strips ago that he spoke to you about the matter Perhaps you should peruse the archives f your memory needs refreshing.



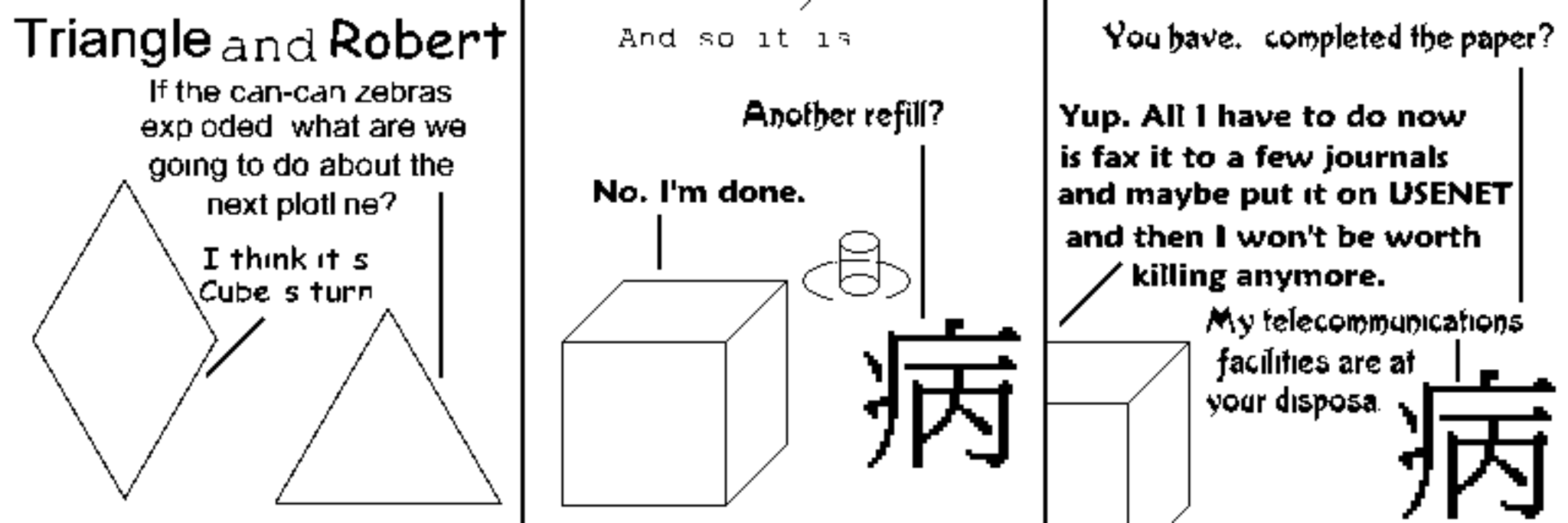
We had thought he would respond to our ca l, but he was too deep n thought. Then, when we were defeated, he absorbed some of the psychic shock and his meditation turned nto a coma.

From wh ch I awoke h m n Denmark So that's why he still had his memor es and why he d dn't know where the rest of you were

Triangle and Robert

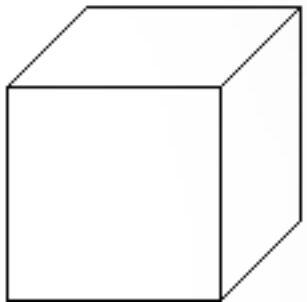


Triangle and Robert

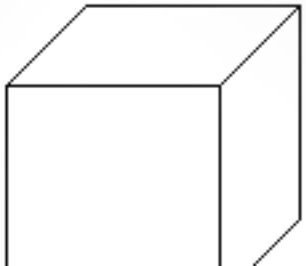


It's sent. I am no longer in need of your protection. Thank you for your hospitality, Mr. Disease.

It is not in the way of a warrior-chef to deny hospitality to a customer.

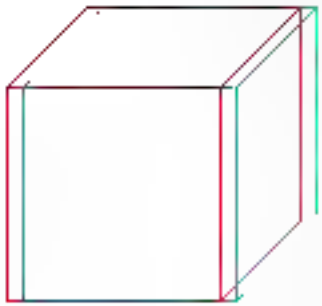


You kept refilling everything for me, even after days. Nothing in your code requires free seconds on main courses or hot beverages. Why did you go so far out of your way to help me?



I must know what transpired in the city of Tetris. Your story will fill in many gaps in the history of the warrior-chef tradition.

Oh.

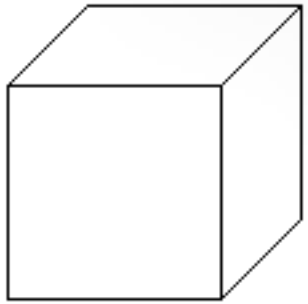


Also, the Locust Garden's continued appearances in the comic strip are surprisingly good for business.

Triangle and Robert

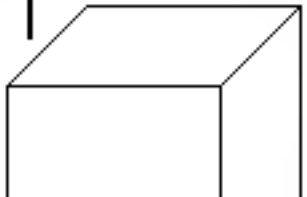
Cartoonist! I've held up my end.

So you have. By your actions, much knowledge formerly lost is now within the domain of polygons.



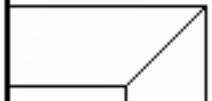
And as for your end?

You will be beyond my ability to be harmed. It is a simple process. Remember that though you have eight vertices, I draw but seven.



So?

Make a mark upon your hidden vertex, and keep the nature of the mark hidden to me. Any of the ancient scripts I don't have a font for will do. I will then be unable to draw you from an arbitrary angle, and so I will have no power over your life and death.

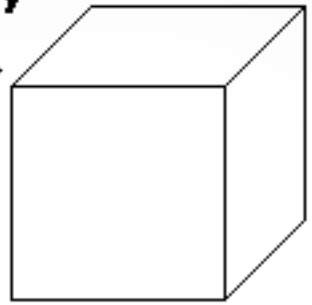


What an incredible load of bezier crap.

Triangle and Robert

I draw you from the other side in the afterlife. Look at the archive if you don't believe me.

This sounds very tenuous.



It is. If I really wanted to kill you, I still could. The point is that, since we've spent strips negotiating this deal, the readers would know if I deliberately broke it. If I deliberately go back in my world, the whole strip falls apart.

The Gospel According to Kevin Smith?

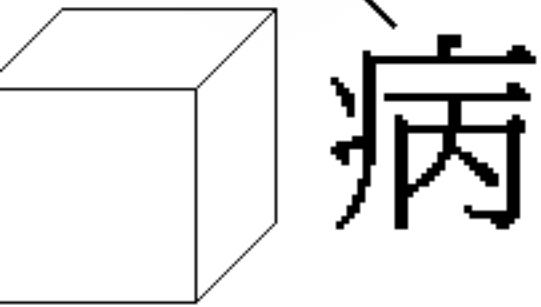
Dogma fear, sort of like that. And I can't kill you accidentally, since you'd be ejected from the afterlife for non drawability.

How can I be sure my spirit will have the mark, not just my body?

Use really good ink.

Triangle and Robert

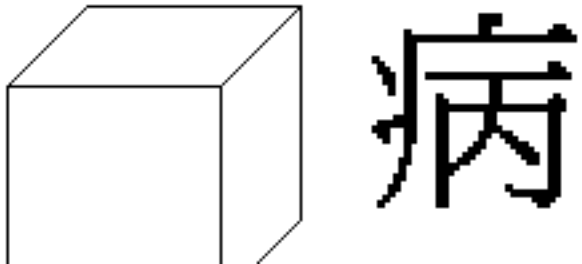
Cube, your conclusions, though they contradict much of what I believed myself to learn, are inescapable



If I'd been thinking on the right track the peppermill would have been the only clue I needed.

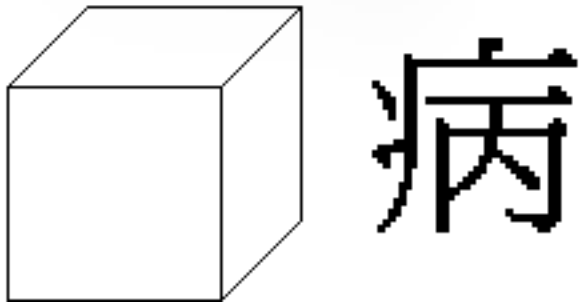
That's true.

How were you to know?

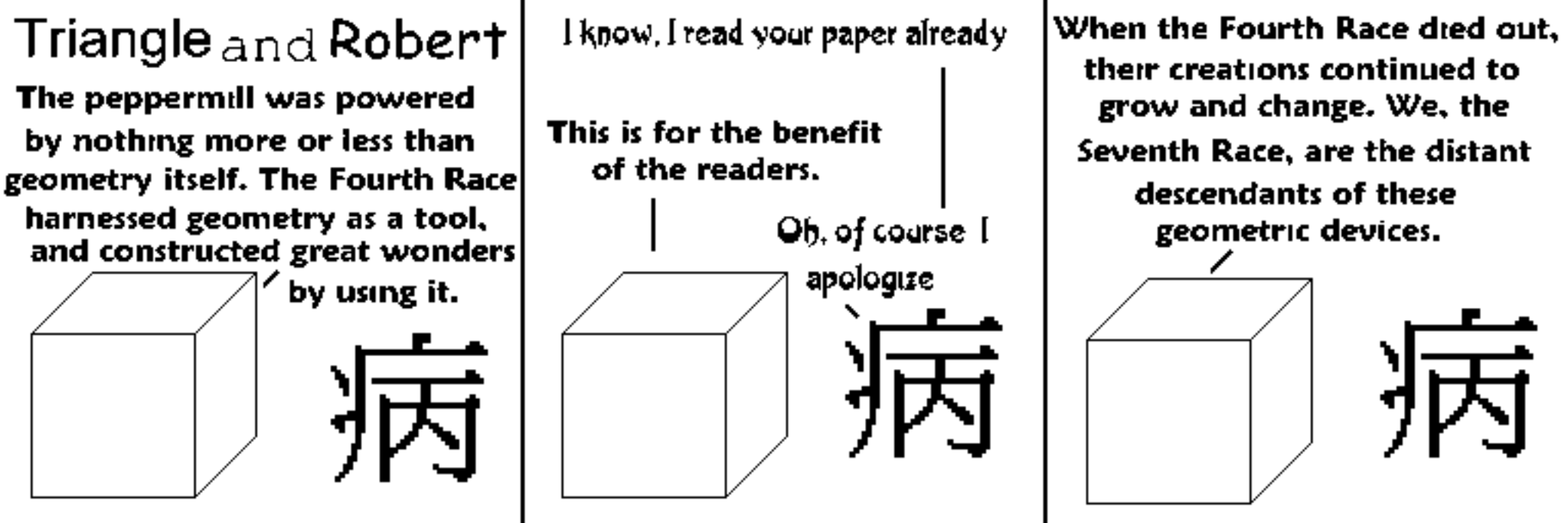


Hey, if you're gonna keep alluding to Cube's findings instead of explaining them, let me know so I can cut to another scene

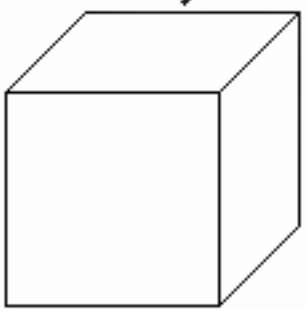
Sorry, force of habit.



Triangle and Robert

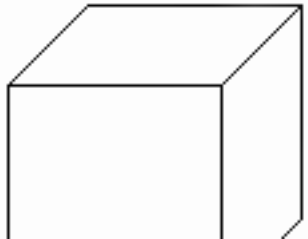


The saying that the meek would inherit the Earth dates back to the Fourth Race, and so it came to pass that the Fifth Race evolved from the Fourth Race's very symbol of humility.



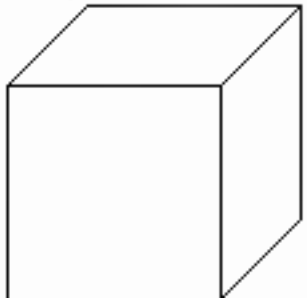
... Baa.

Yes. I do not understand the lack of an ovine archaeological stratum, but the Fifth Race was undoubtedly of sheep, and reigned for a great deal of time.



What about the Sixth?

I have found nothing at all to fill that gap. Between intelligent sheep and polygons came a sentient species about which I have learned nothing beyond its existence.



And so the quest for knowledge must continue.

Triangle and Robert

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCORECARD

First Race	**unknown***
Second Race	**unknown**
Third Race	**unknown**
Fourth Race	**Man**
Fifth Race	**intelligent sheep**
Sixth Race	**unknown**
Seventh Race	**polygons**
Eighth Race	**unknown**

*** (Puddans?)**

I could tell you why the Sixth Race was with out affecting the plot, but you either wouldn't believe me or'd get mad

I thought it might be something in that category.

As for why the Fifth left no record, all the clues for that are in the strip Let me know if you really can't figure it out

Why do you insist on making my life a puzzle game?

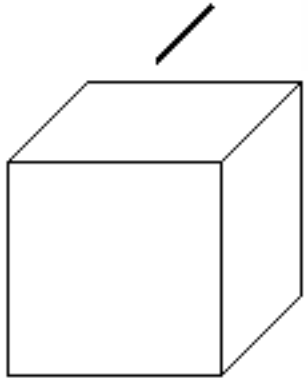
It's that or Sokoban

Sokoban's also a puzzle game.

Whatever

Triangle and Robert

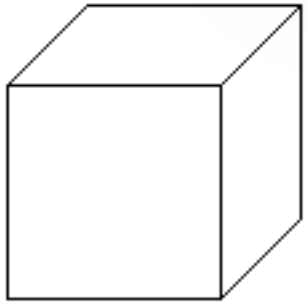
You listed the Eighth Race on that archaeological scorecard thing.



You know why. It's the Time of the Tval

How much time do we have?

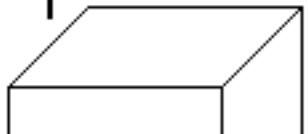
I can't answer that. It's not set in scene



But the time for polygons on this world is nearing its end.

All things are nearing their end, at different rates

Can't you stop being cryptic for one whole conversation?

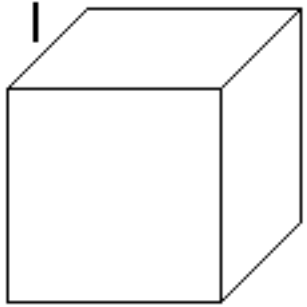


I am

Triangle and Robert

So what exactly is the significance of the Oval?

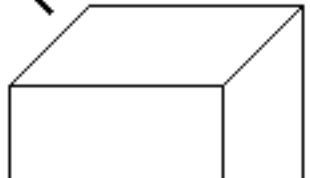
You haven't been paying attention?



I've been paying attention. . you explained what it means that the Oval is here, but what is the Oval itself?

Well, you see, the archaeological record of the Fourth Race is in some points very

Ah.



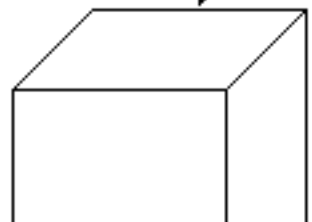
What do you mean, "ah"?

You don't know

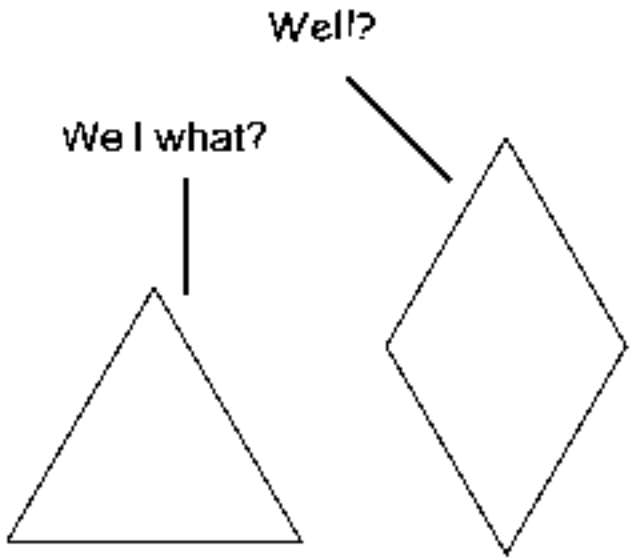
It's not a matter of not knowing, so much as... the evidence... being...

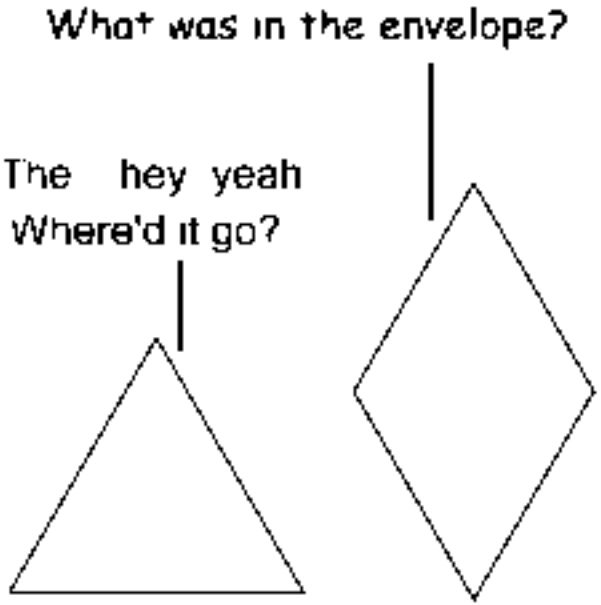
... ah.

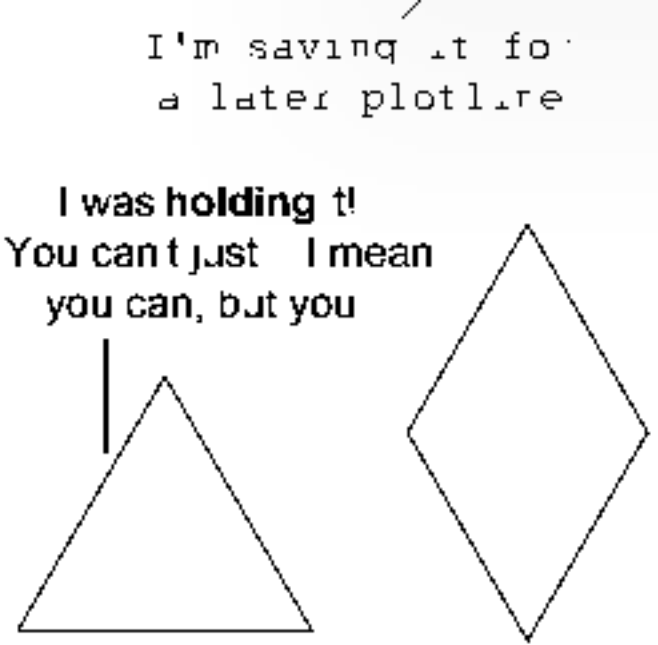
Ah.



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

The C rrersheep read of Cube's firdings

Sheep controlled the Earth once before.

INSERT SUPERHNTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

My flock rebelled against me, but with this document as inspiration I can gather a new flock, a flock united not only by my power but also by an awareness of manifest ovine destiny!

INSERT SUPERHNTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The Fifth Race shall rise again.

Baa.

INSERT SUPERHNTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Within the Oval, a decision is made
Preparations are begun for a landing

A recap of past events concerning the Oval is probably in order

I'll start one next strip
Don't try to hard to figure out who's narrating it

Triangle and Robert

Day n

Finally reached planet
Descended Sighted two local lifeforms, polygons both
Each was larger than the Oval

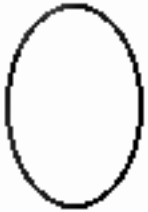
Taller of two lifeforms took hold of the Oval and sat on it for some time
They argued. Took language samples, fed to translator

Conclusion Language is isomorphic to English, with drastic phonetic shifts but no fundamental change of grammar.
This world may be Earth

Triangle and Robert

Day n+☼

Attempted communication with lifeforms. Was briefly successful. Additional lifeforms arrived on the scene. Argument broke out between natives.



Sudden teleportation occured. Oval relocated to high-pressure pudding. Core of planet?

Natives unable to survive in pudding core, with one possible exception. Oval unable to propel within pudding. Trapped.

Triangle and Robert

Day ♏ + □ ❄

The pudding-based reform
having previously departed.
the Oval was alone when the sheep
mining operation appeared

This world's sheep, this time's
sheep, if this is indeed Earth,
are polygon-based and
distinctly quadrilateral.
One apparently a leader exhibited
telepathic abilities. This sheep
had the Oval brought to the
surface for examination

Once removed from the pudding,
the Oval's engines soon restored
themselves to working order.
The sheep fired various weapons
at the Oval during my escape.
No significant damage was done

Triangle and Robert

Day ⍝ ⋆ ⊛&

Taking readings of the interior of a vast building referred to by locals as the International Culinary Institute, the Oval encountered a polygon warning it to flee. Uncertain of the local political situation, I took this advice at face value.

After a head start during which this polygon had a heated conversation with two others, it gave chase. The Oval ran out of fuel and was captured.

Apparently a group called the RDCLBA had been offering a bounty of some sort for the Oval, but it had since been rescinded. Released, the Oval soon refueled (the availability of compatible fuel is further evidence that this world is Earth) and returned to orbit to make observations from safety.

Triangle and Robert

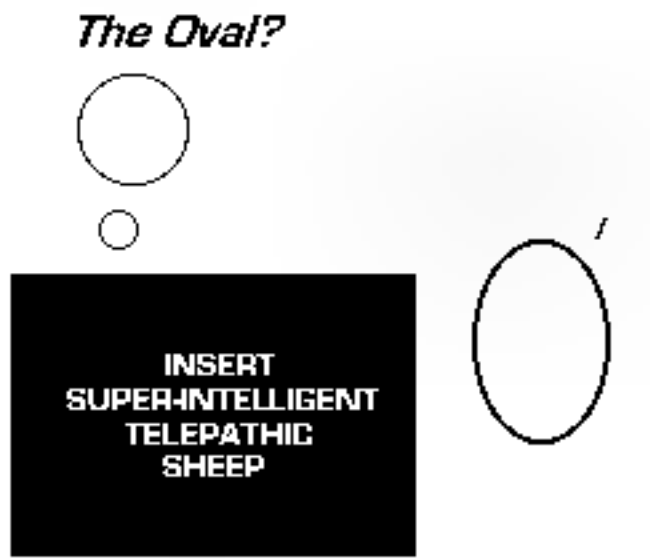
Day ⍝ + ◆⍀

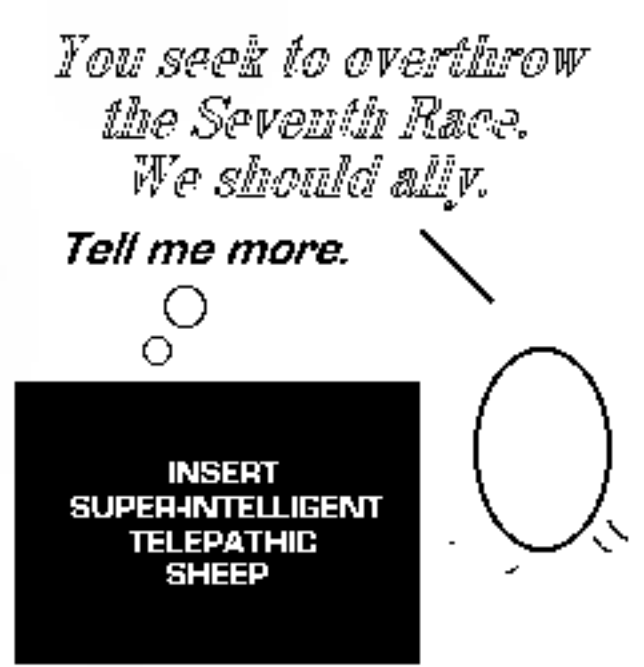
Observations complete. This is, undoubtedly, a world where simple polygons evolved from man.

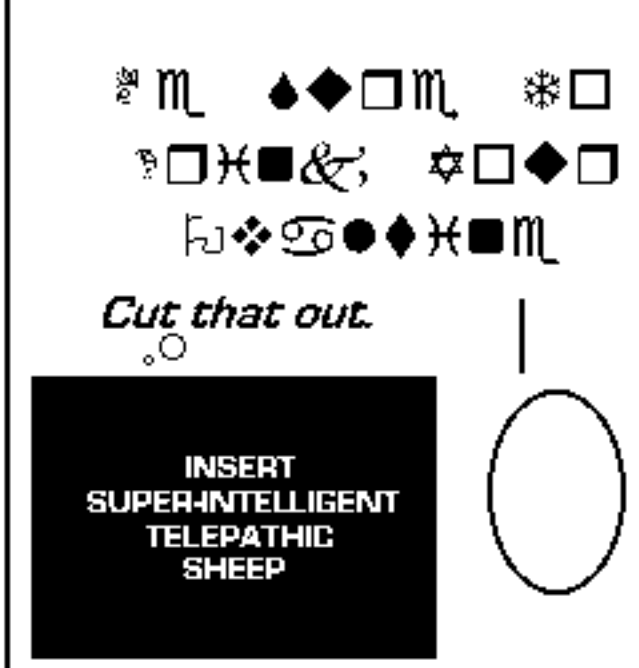
It's stupid. It's just... plain... stupid.

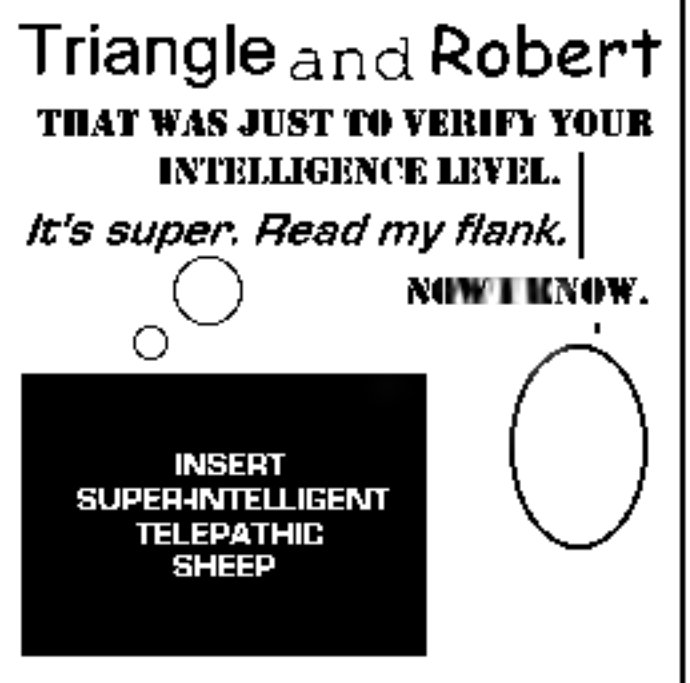
These shapes are unfit to rule a planet. I know what I must do in order to save the Earth.

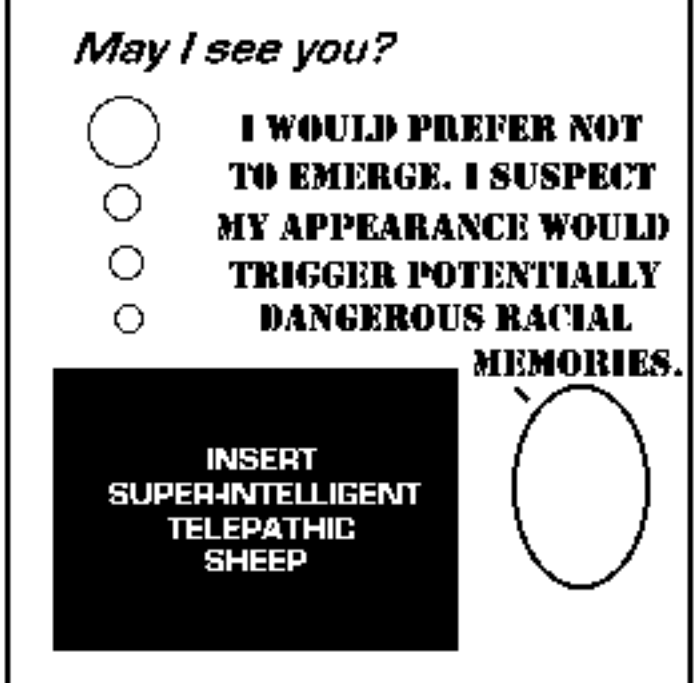
Triangle and Robert

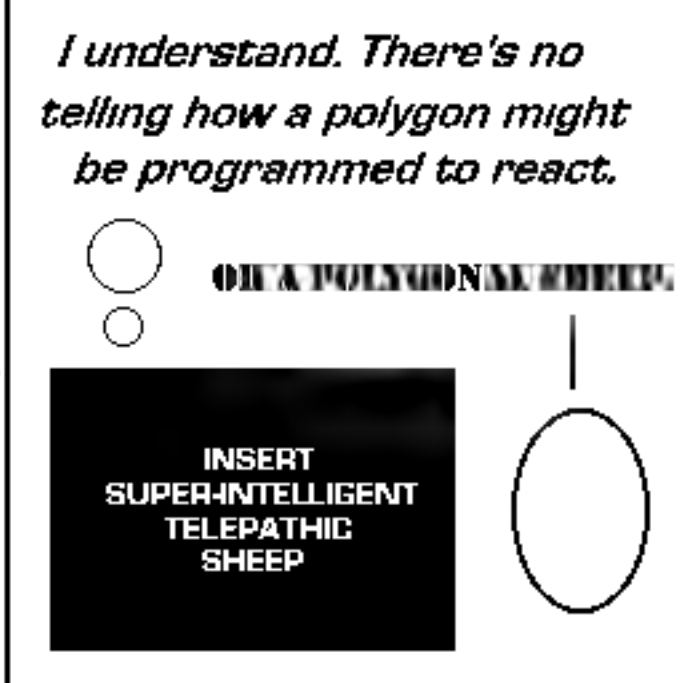




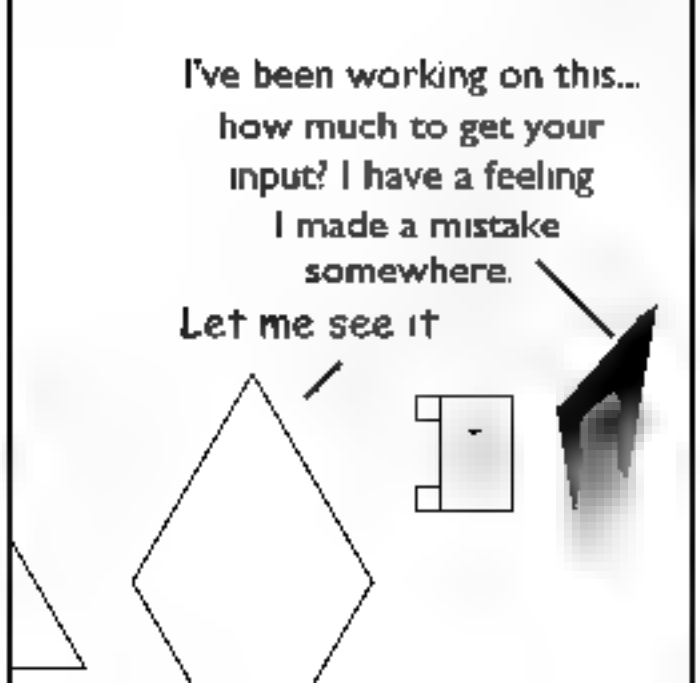


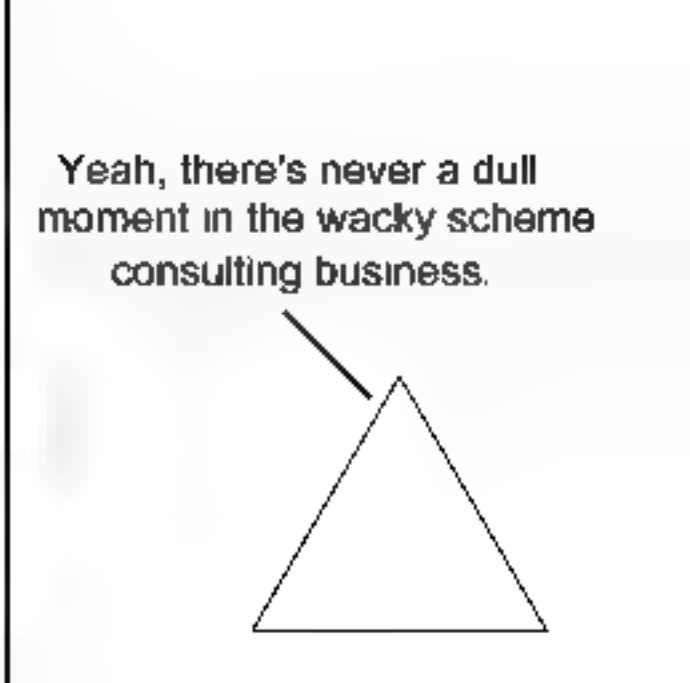

Triangle and Robert
THAT WAS JUST TO VERIFY YOUR INTELLIGENCE LEVEL.
It's super. Read my flank.
NOW I KNOW.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP


May I see you?
I WOULD PREFER NOT TO EMERGE. I SUSPECT MY APPEARANCE WOULD TRIGGER POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS RACIAL MEMORIES.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP


I understand. There's no telling how a polygon might be programmed to react.
OH A POLYGON SHEEP.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

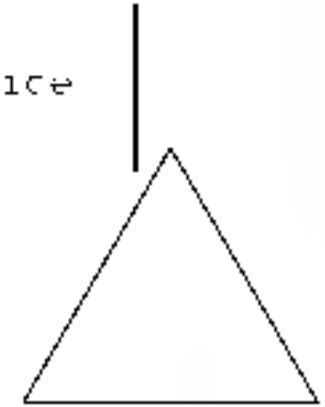




Triangle and Robert

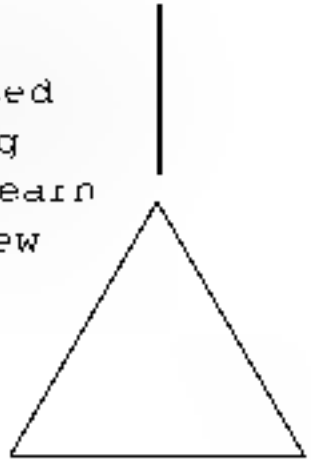
I feel like 'm expected to say or do something

It' l be nice



Maybe I should go tra n with Mr Disease

You surpassed him long ag you won't learn anything new

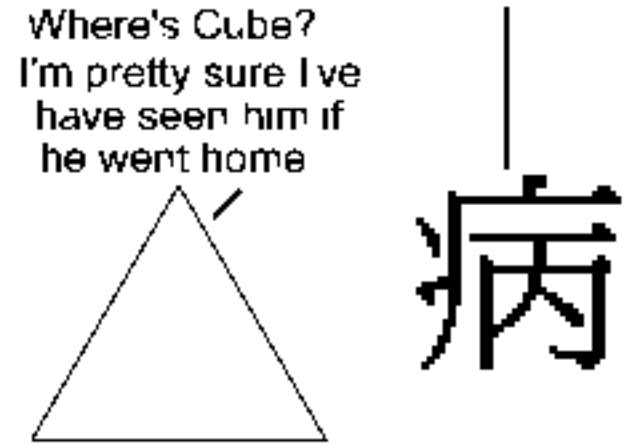


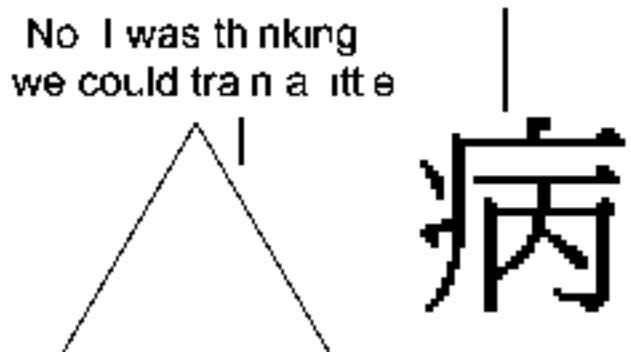
We l t's better than standing here listen ng to Robert explain zaniness tax brackets to a client

I'm guessing the brackets themselves are non zany

Entire y —

Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

You've been making a lot of typographical errors recently

I know

Is there a reason?

Not really.

Well, shape up

I'll try.

Triangle and Robert

Tell me about these new recipes

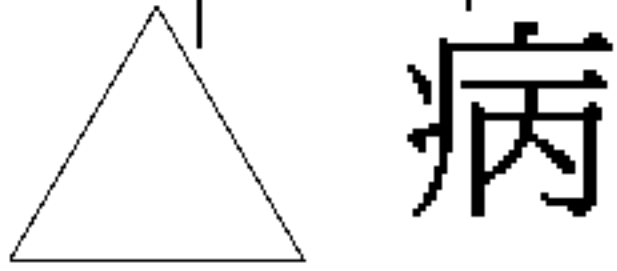
The cube finally convinced me that the four food groups were fallacious. I have developed an entirely new category

Is that why most of your kitchen is taken up by a particle acce erator?

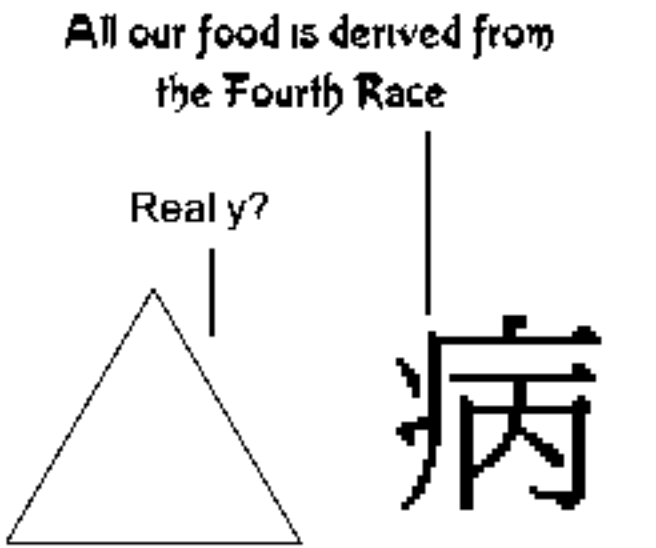
Yes. I have dec ded to look beyond the bounds of what we formerly knew as food.

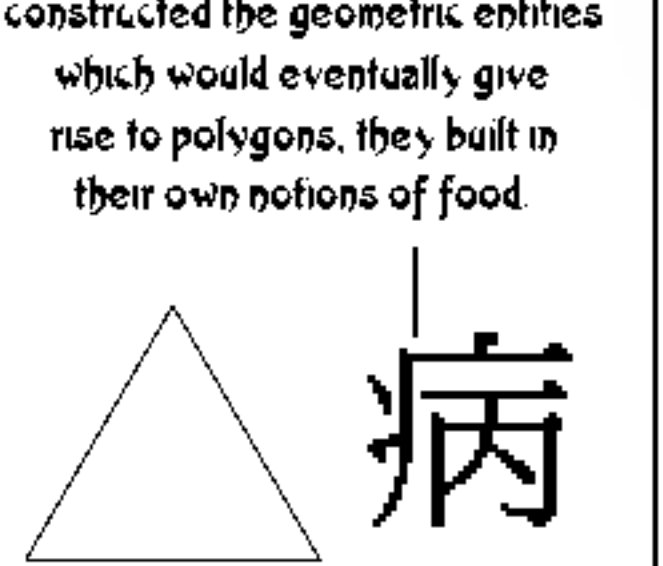
O kay frank y that doesn't sound promis ng

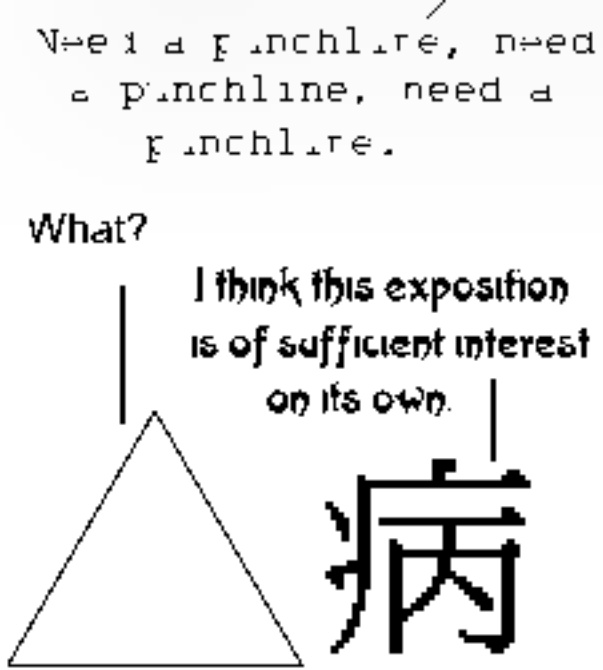
You will see

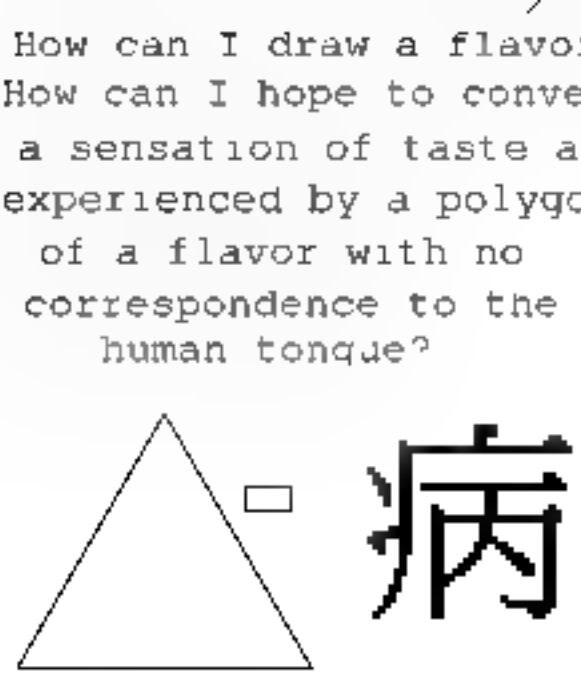


Triangle and Robert

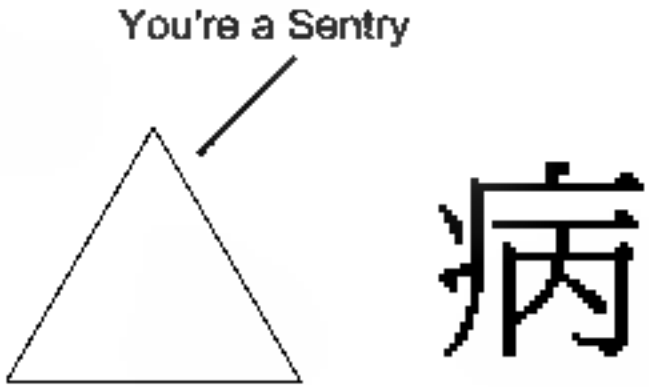






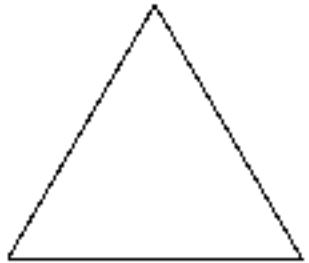


All that I can say to perhaps describe at least the magnitude of the experience, if not its nature, is that the next words Triangle speaks follow logically from what has transpired, despite the seeming incongruities.


You're a Sentry
病

Triangle and Robert

I had thought that my reliance on artificial ingredients and additives was a weakness, that I had betrayed my roots as a warrior chef

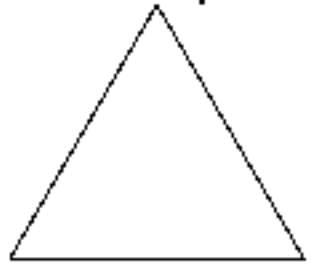


The traditions call for "natural" ingredients.. All was created by the Beforings, or by the races preceding us, or by the Cartoonist! In what way are our own creations any less "natural" than those of our predecessors?

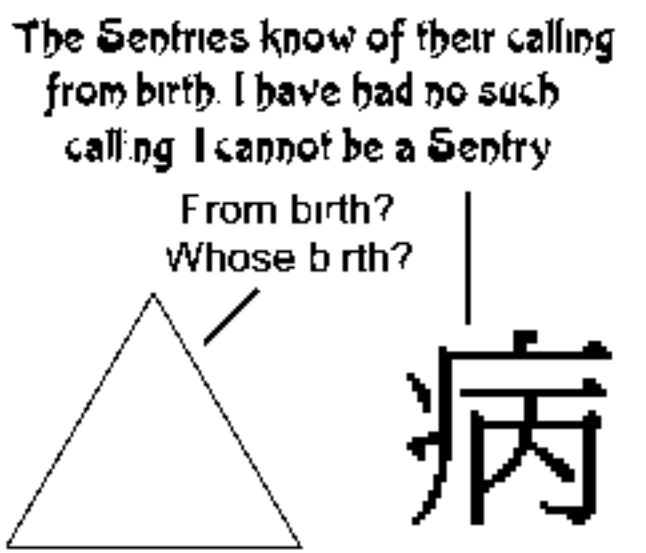
That's dangerous th nking

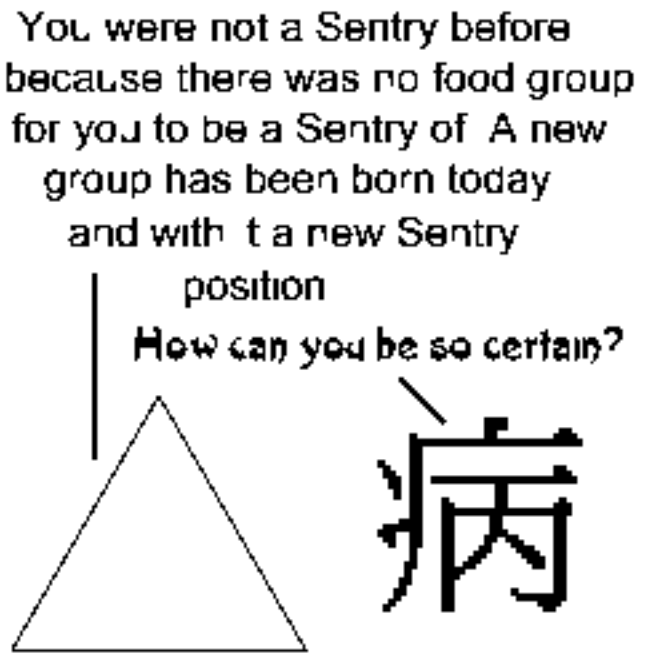
All cuisine is dangerous.

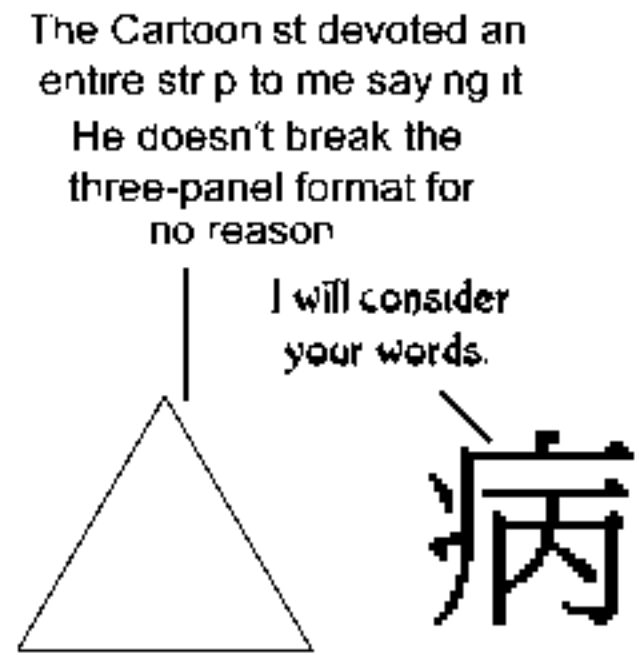
I d dn't mean it in a bad way



Triangle and Robert



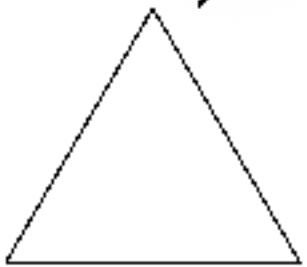




Triangle and Robert

You have total mastery of a single food group You have mystical awareness You ARE the Puma Man

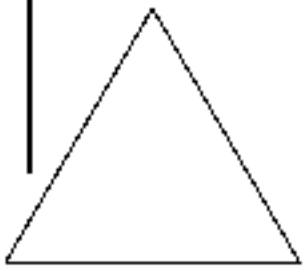
The what?



A Sentry What did I say?

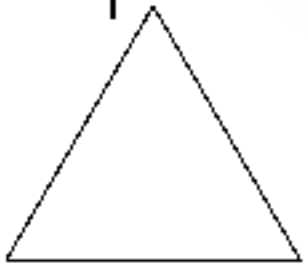
The Puma Man

The



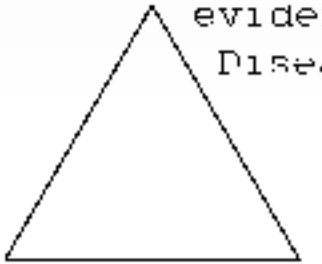
Cartoonist? Have you been drinking?

Not that I can remember



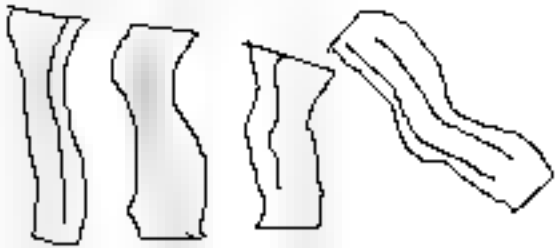
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Mr. Disease trained together well into the night, and while Triangle's power was still the stronger, it became evident that Mr. Disease's



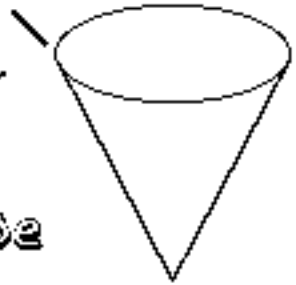
cooking had grown dramatically stronger since the two last met in bake off. In the meantime, Robert continued his lengthy tax-related wacky scheme consultation.

I have three panels to fill and, as far as I know, nothing else of any interest is happening right. With that in mind, enjoy this crude approximation of some bacon.



Triangle and Robert

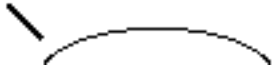
Tonight we have quite a special guest.. his name's Cube, you might have heard of him, I don t know.. But first, ladies and gentlemen, I want to talk about Prozac the Bear

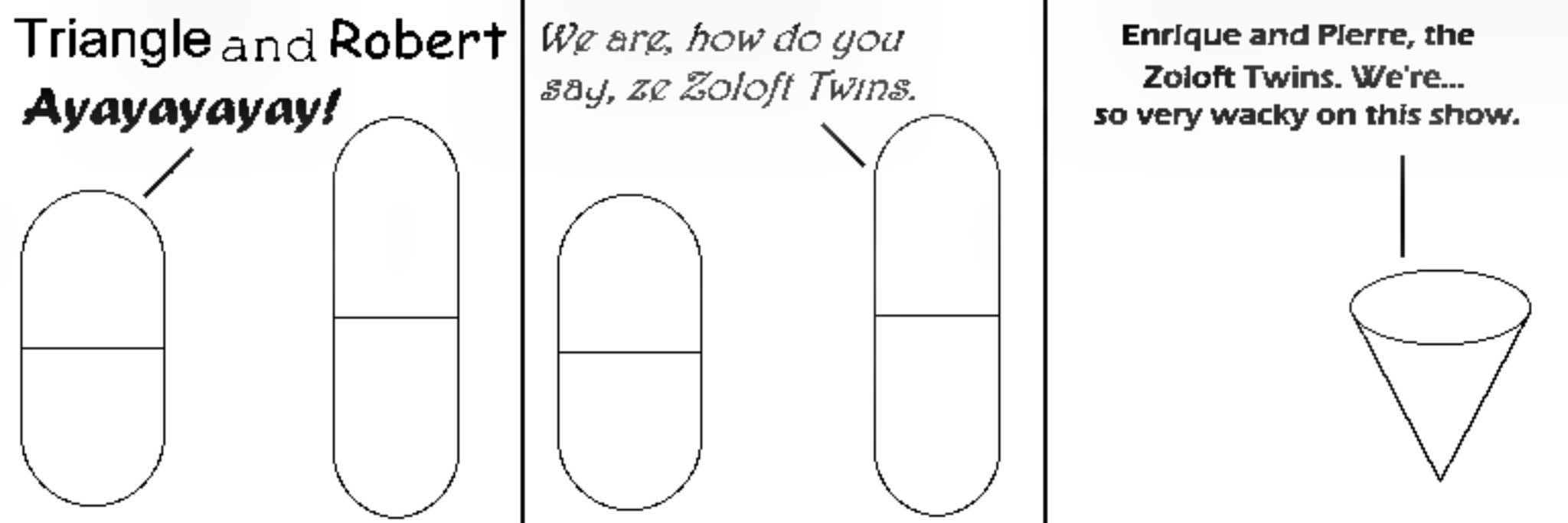


Applause

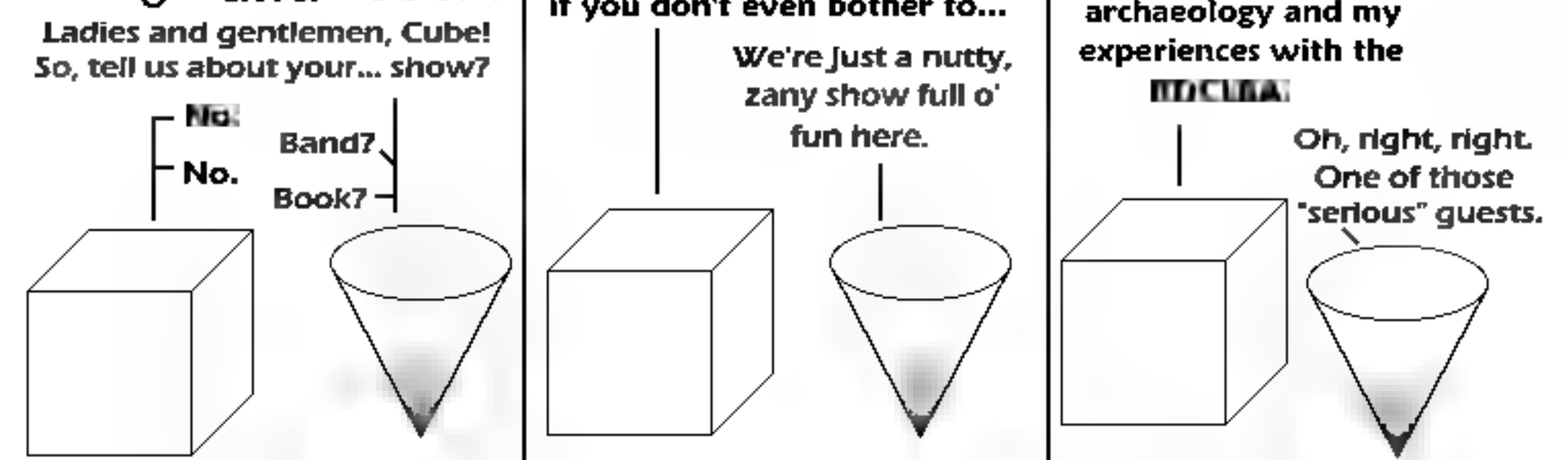
As you probably know, Prozac the Bear was involved in a battle against legendary forces of evil, and.. well, we'll miss him But! As they say in show biz, the show must go on, and Prozac the Bear was, among other things, a kids-show host

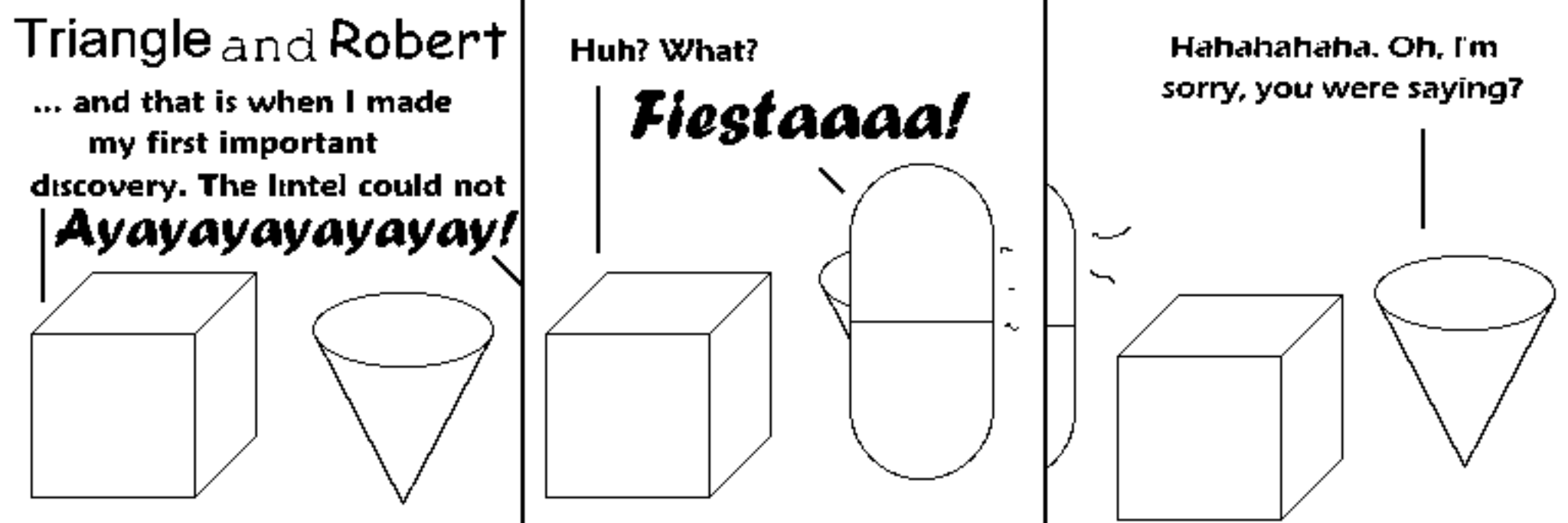
As you know, we have lots of nutty, crazy characters on our own little talk show, and we had this incredible brainstorm I present, for the very first time, our proposed replacements for Prozac the Bear, in a sketch I like to call "Proposed Replacements for Prozac the Bear"



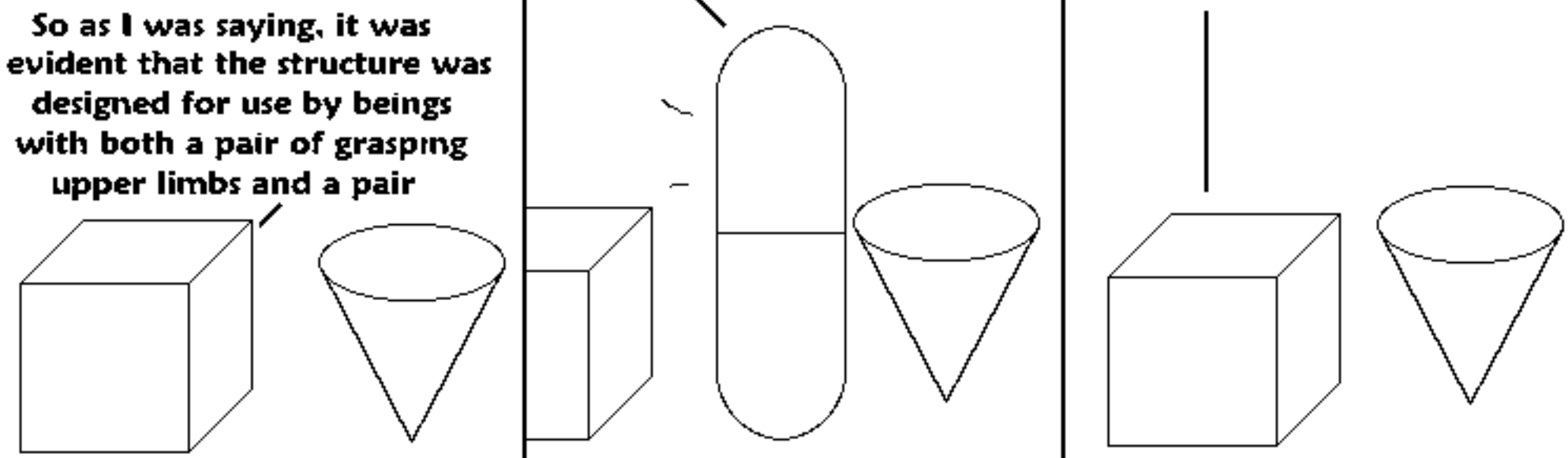

Triangle and Robert
Ayayayayay!
We are, how do you say, ze Zoloft Twins.
Enrique and Pierre, the Zoloft Twins. We're... so very wacky on this show.

Triangle and Robert



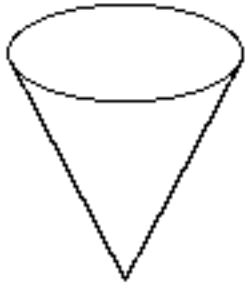

Triangle and Robert
... and that is when I made my first important discovery. The Intel could not
Ayayayayayayay!
Huh? What?
Fiestaaaa!
Hahahahaha. Oh, I'm sorry, you were saying?

Triangle and Robert

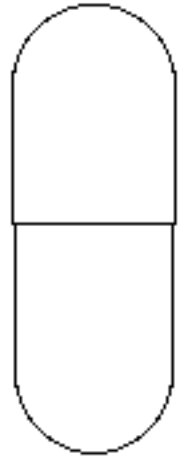


Triangle and Robert

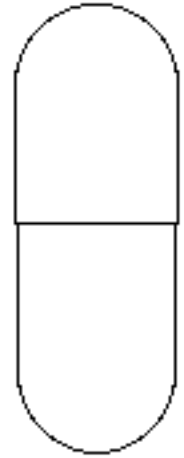
It looks like we lost a guest, heh heh. That gives us time to introduce another one of our "Proposed Replacements for Prozac the Bear"!



Say hello to Anafranil Abe Vigoda!



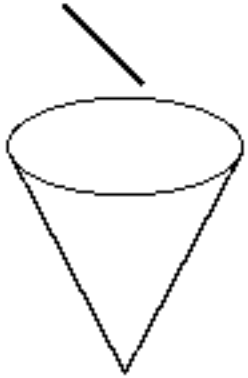
Warning: I may cause drowsiness.



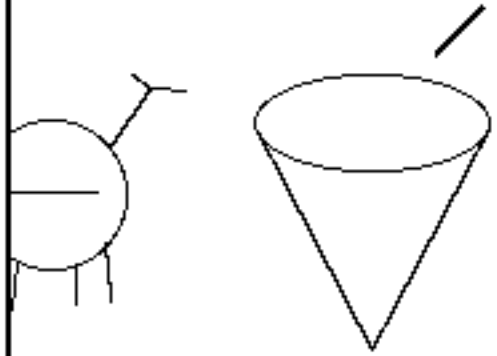
Applause

Triangle and Robert

My producer says we have a few minutes left before the commercial.... Bring out Ticky



Ladies and gentlemen, this was really supposed to be on tomorrow night's show, but I love you all so much we'll do it today. Cue the jingle



He's **Ticky**!

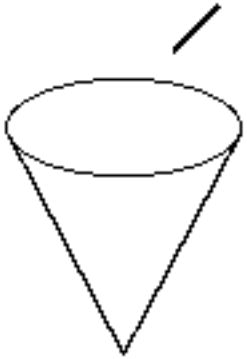
Ticky *the Magical Ritalin Horse!*

Triangle and Robert

doop BOOP

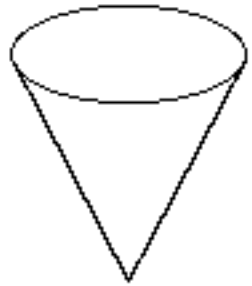
What the .. go to commercial!

Now!



Huh?

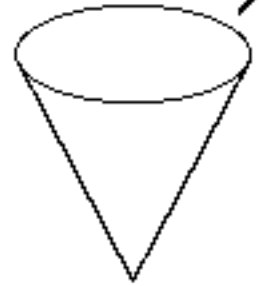
This isn't a sketch! Security!



doop BOOP doop BOOP

doop BOOP doop BOOP doop

Don't you hear that? He's back from the dead! I'm getting out of here!



Triangle and Robert

I must confess, I am wary of entering into this alliance.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I know so little about you, and you so much about me.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I will take this world with you or without you. If you do not side with me, I will consider you an obstacle. Do you wish to risk opposing me, sheep?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

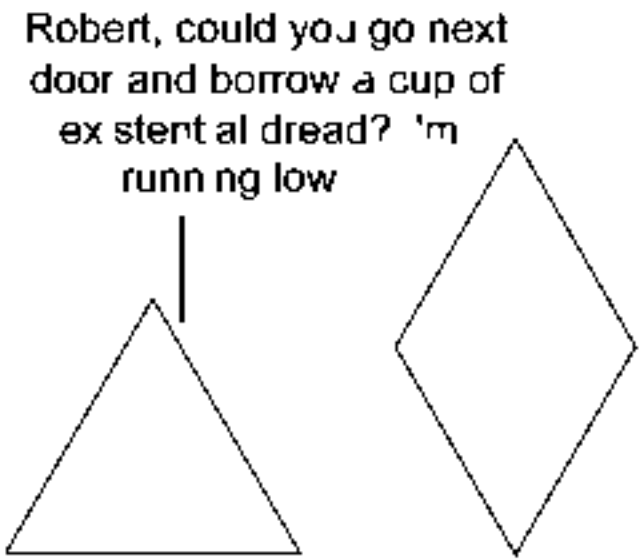
Our aims are sufficiently compatible... for now. If, however, you intend genocide...

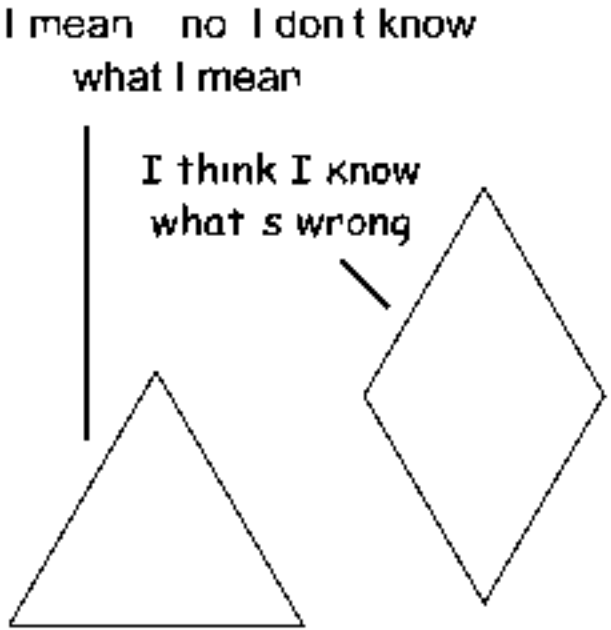
I had not thought you to shy at such concepts... but no. The world must not be ruled by polygons, but they can have their place. Still, why the concern?

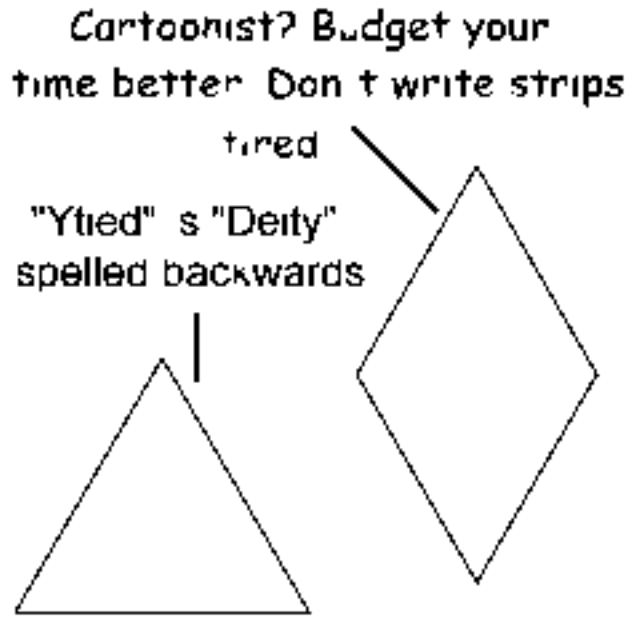
The same reasoning you apply to polygonal fitness could be turned against my own kind with minimal alteration. The sheep of this time are fundamentally geometric, not purely biological.

That can be changed.

Triangle and Robert

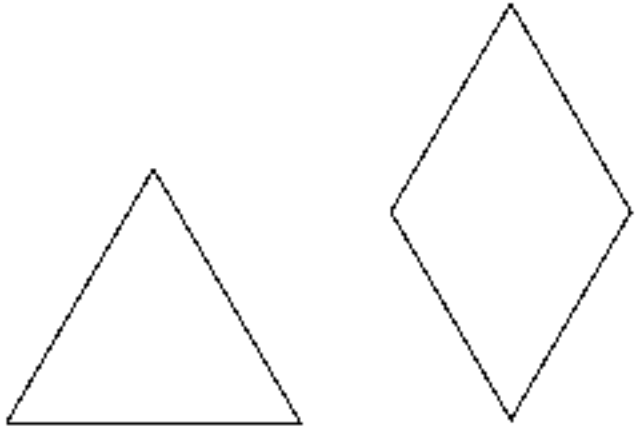


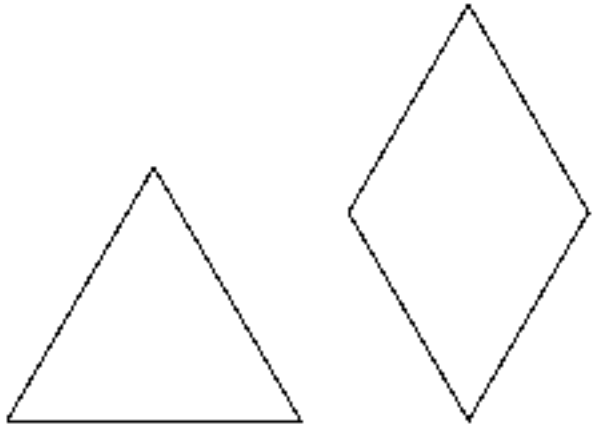




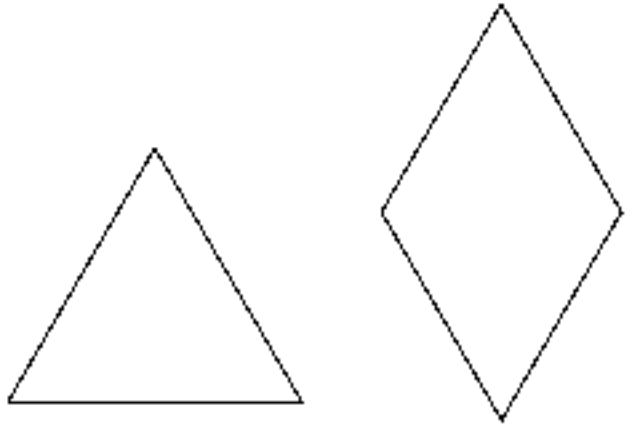
Triangle and Robert

I'm better now

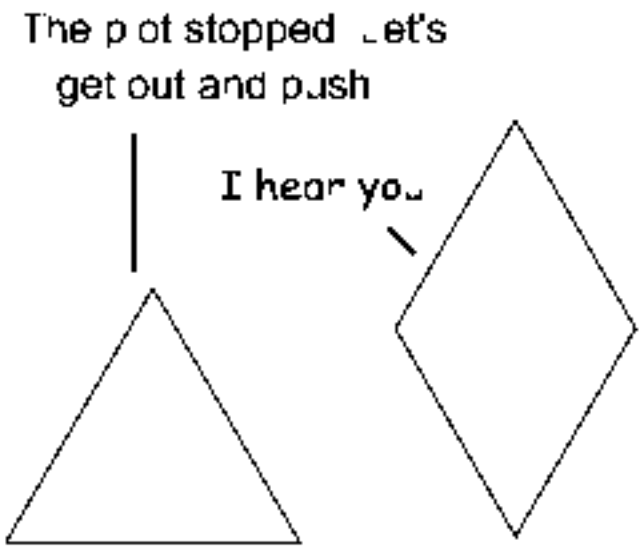


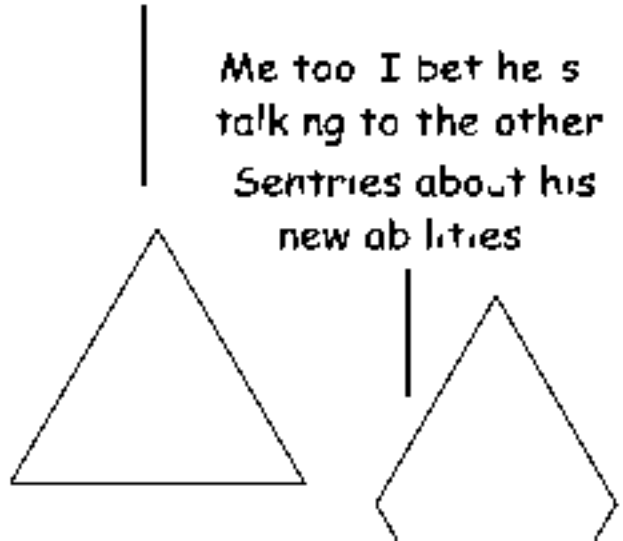


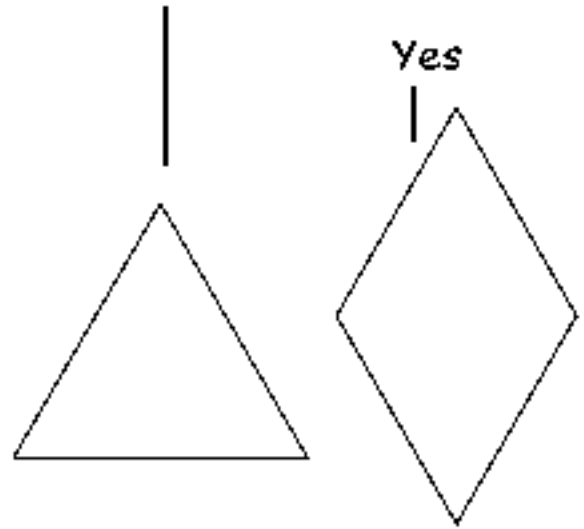
I still have no strip ideas, but I'm not writing tired



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

So how would you contend with Abyss Carrot Surprise?

Counter with Rock Candy Shield, sugar-free variant, then retaliate with Inedible Chunks Number Nine

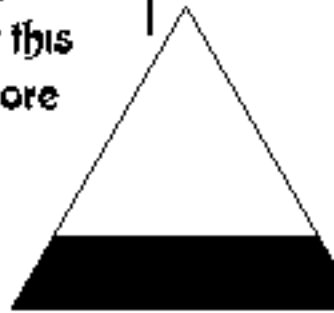
You're just making attack names up!

I had not expected you to believe me without a demonstration.

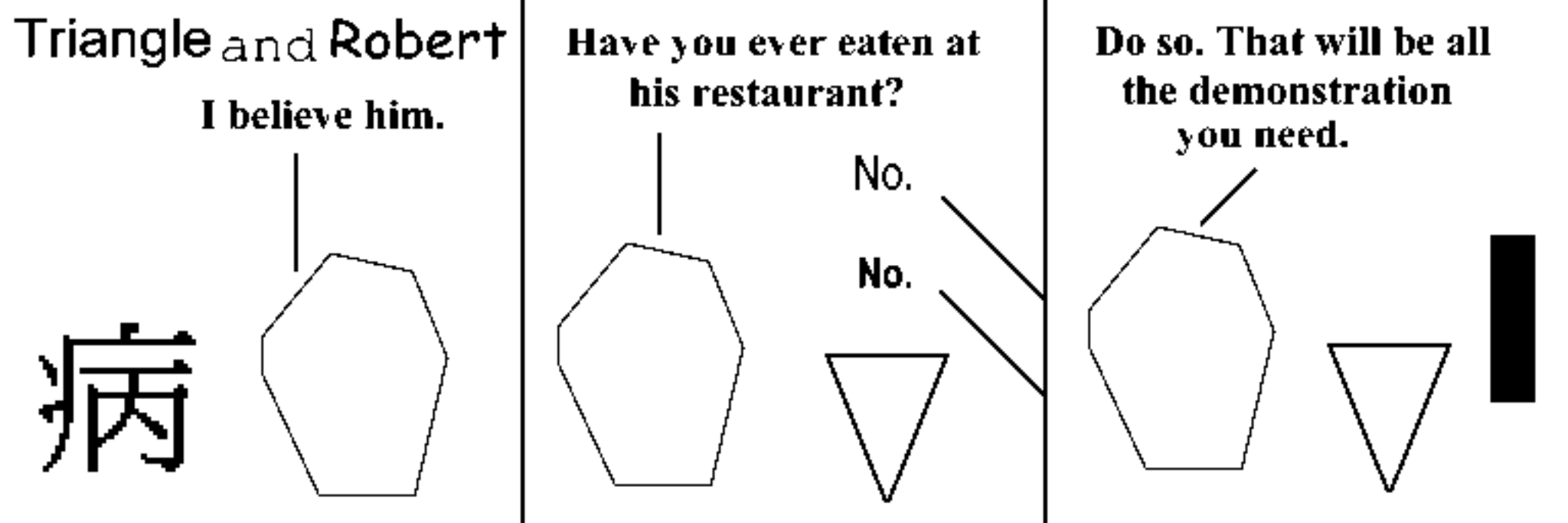
Do you see that mountain over there?

That is correct. I should have thought out this demonstration more clearly

No.

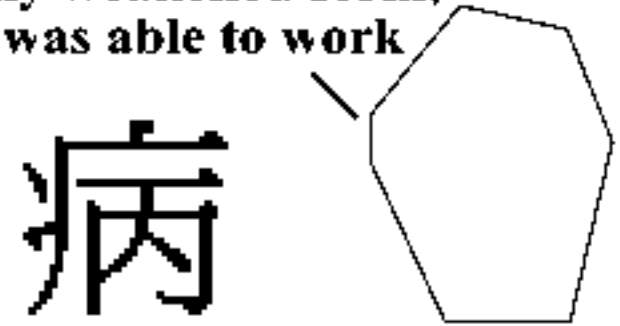


Triangle and Robert

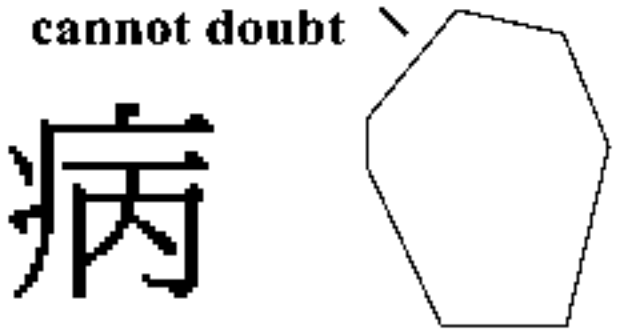


Triangle and Robert

I still have my memories of the time I spent as an inverted capital G. Even in my weakened form, I was able to work

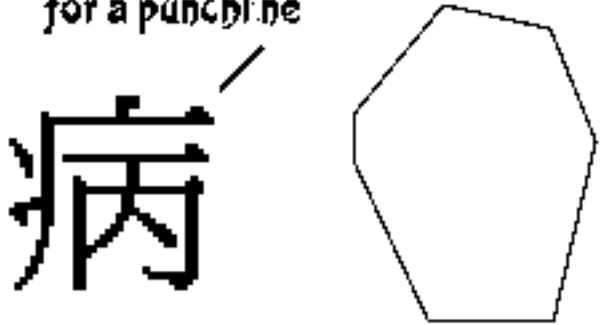


small magics using the power of your table scraps. You are a powerful chef, and with a new food group under your command, I cannot doubt



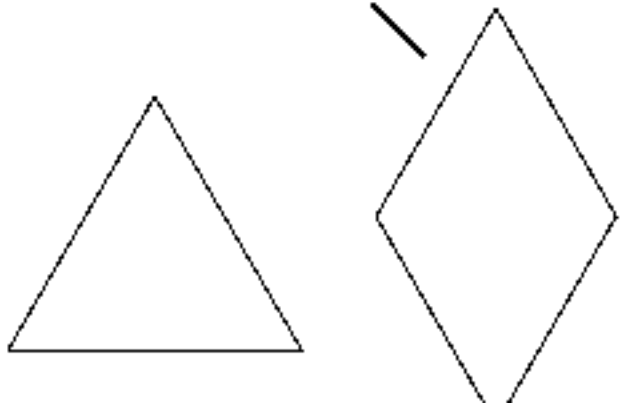
that you are a Sentry.

Your confidence is bearing, but your verbosity leaves little space for a punchline



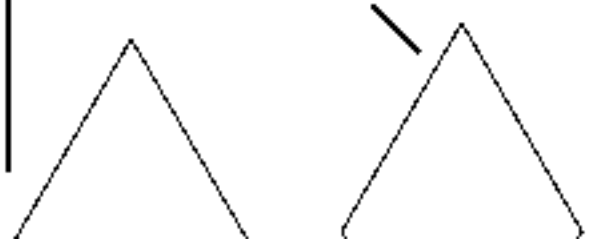
Triangle and Robert

Therefore there exist infinitely many numbers lonelier than the number one.



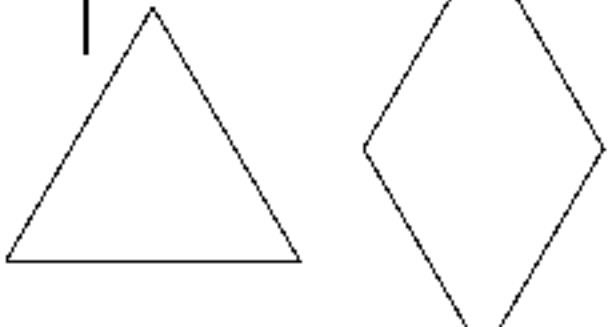
What about over the integers?

There exist negative integers at least as lonely as the number one. The proposition only holds if the domain is restricted to the integers greater than zero



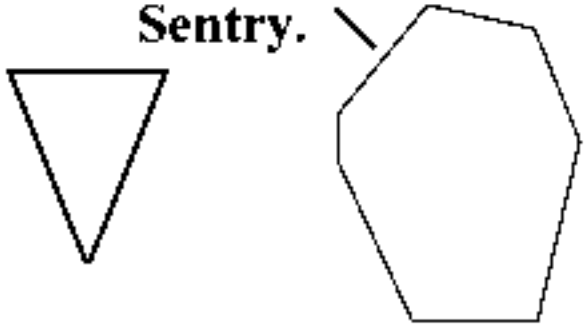
"One is the one lest positive integer "

Doesn t scan as well, no

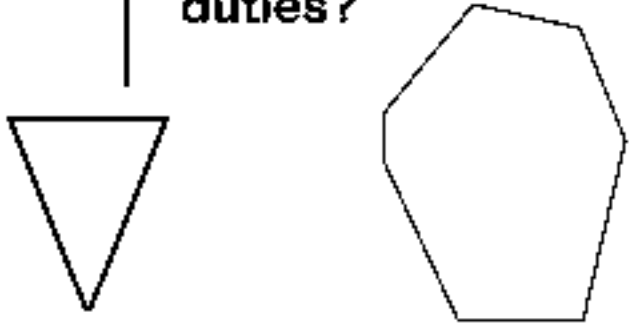


Triangle and Robert

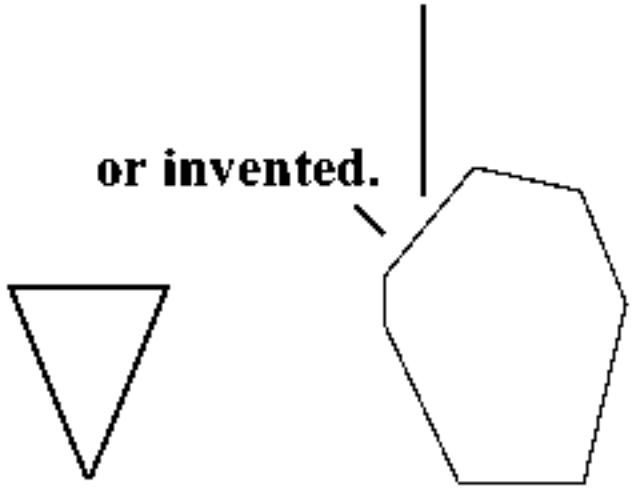
It is decided. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we shall consider Mr. Disease a fifth Sentry.



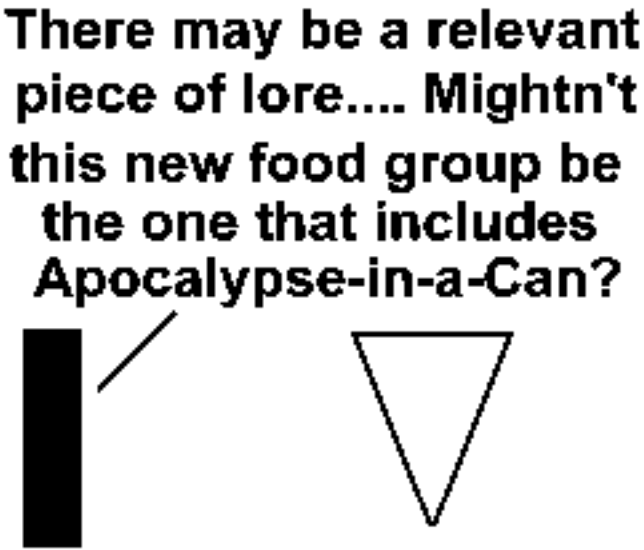
Each of our food groups has its lore, eons old. This new group has none. What is the role of its Sentry? What are his duties?

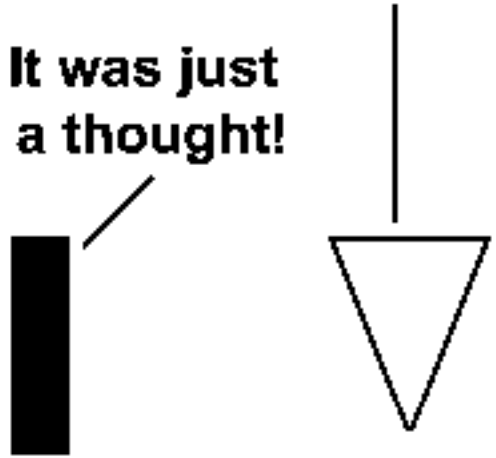


Those will have to be discovered... or invented.



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Gary the Stupid, author of "99 Things You Shouldn't Do With a Toaster Oven and Two That Are Illegal" I've heard of him. The worst chef ever

Not the worst. That is a common misconception. A worse chef was Amrel the Very Mad.

Do you mean Emdrol the Mad?

No, Amrel the Very Mad, founder of the catering chain that would go on to become United Industrial Building Supply

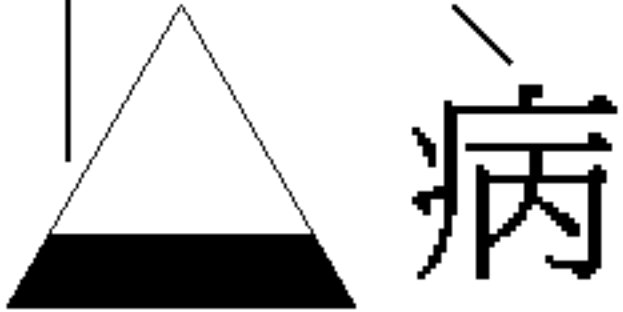
I've never heard of that one

Triangle and Robert

Gary the Stupid's incompetence as a chef, while substant al was hardly unmatched He is remembered where other poor chefs are

forgotten because of the quant ty of his writing

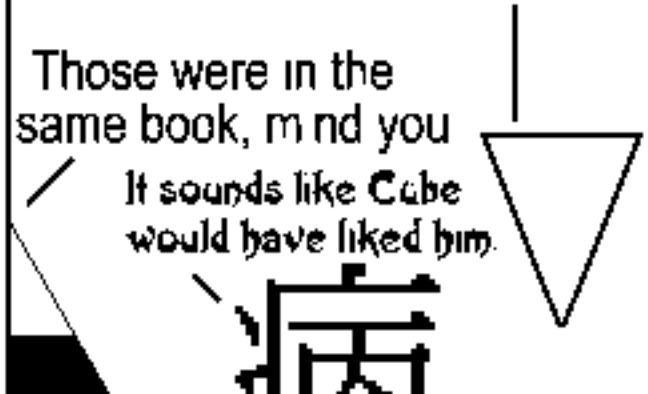
I knew he wrote many alleged cookbooks. There were other works?



Many, on topics as diverse as genetic algorithms and the history of opera.

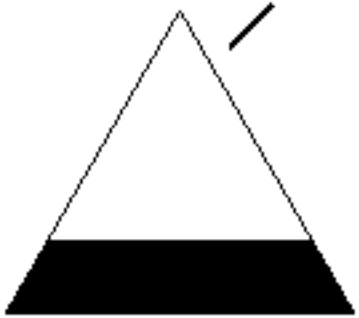
Those were in the same book, m nd you

It sounds like Cube would have liked him.



Triangle and Robert

Enough sidetracking The book in quest on is entitled "Th ngs That Will Eventually Happen" and it s a book of prophecies



t is remarkable in that ts prophec es are just as vague as those in any other collection, and yet in the centuries since Gary the Stupid wrote them not a single one has come even remotely true

病

Some say that th s demonstrates a total lack of psychic sensitivity on the part of Gary Others believe just the oppos te It is in this book that the Apocalypse-in-a-Can is described in some length

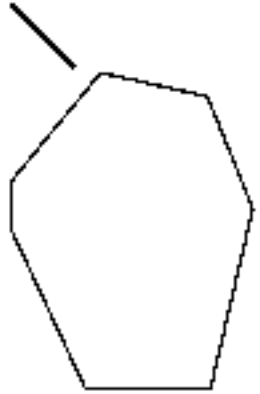
Did anyone ever tell you you look like Triangle when you're partially off panel?

Triangle and Robert

This discussion is senseless! If the Apocalypse-in-a-Can's mention in the Stupid Prophecies signifies anything at all, it is that it does not and will never exist!

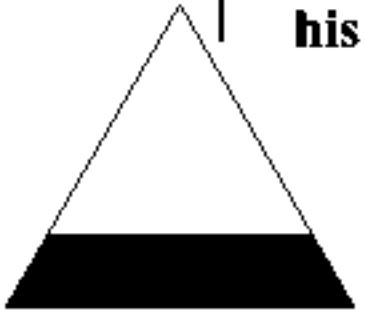
I'm sensing some tension here. You Sentries don't do much work as a team, do you?

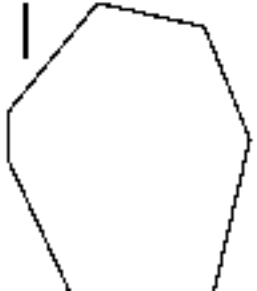
Indeed.



You are correct. We should all calm down and try not to bicker.

Already Mr. Disease shows his wisdom.





Triangle and Robert

There is now a fifth Sentry. We must strike immediately!

Baa?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Alone if we must. All signs indicate that the Sentries will be a very dangerous source of opposition if we wait for our friend's plan to go into effect.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa. Baa!

Our mysterious ally shared with me certain pieces of technology. Europe will be ours within a month.

Baa, baa. Baa baa, baa...

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

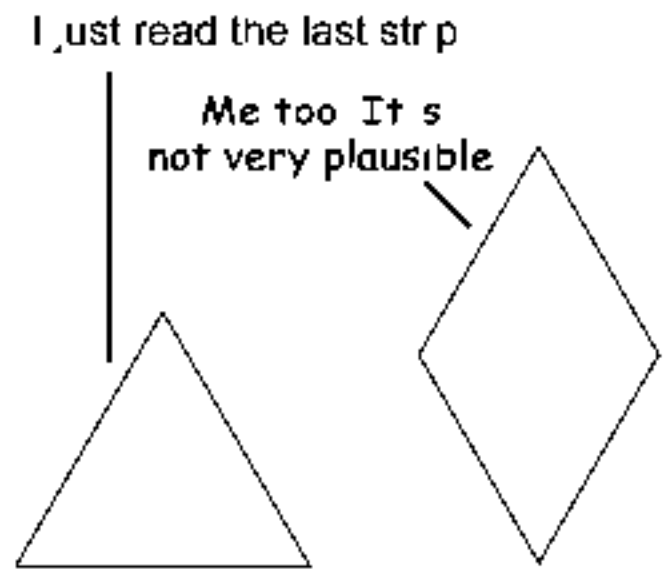
Triangle and Robert

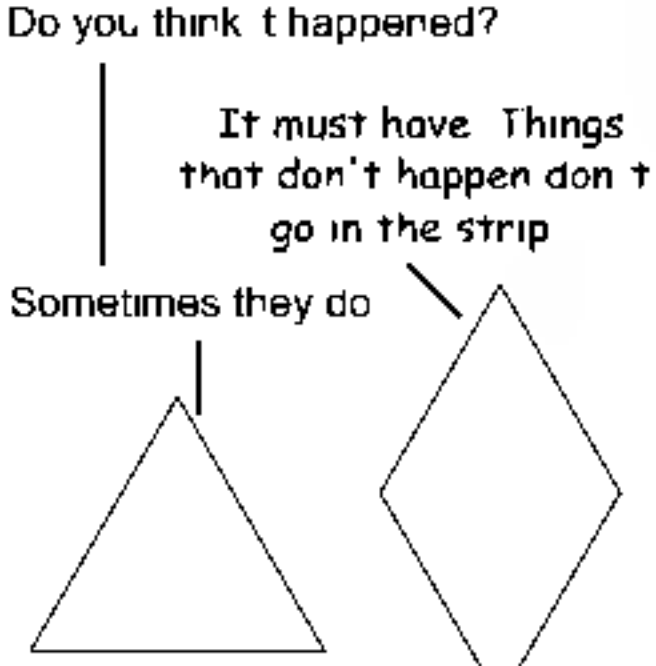
Using the strange technology from the Vale, the Cornersteep constructed and fortified a small ramp of steep throughout the land of Europe

Think real time strategy games for a good example. New factories constructing both sheep and robots assembled themselves from raw materials in seconds. Among the many by-products of the construction methods was a substantial amount of monosodium glutamate

It wasn't happy.

Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

You figured it out, Robert. How about you explain it for the readers.

You're getting me — to write the strip for you, aren't you

Mmmmaybe. It's that or Europe is overrun by militant sheep, though

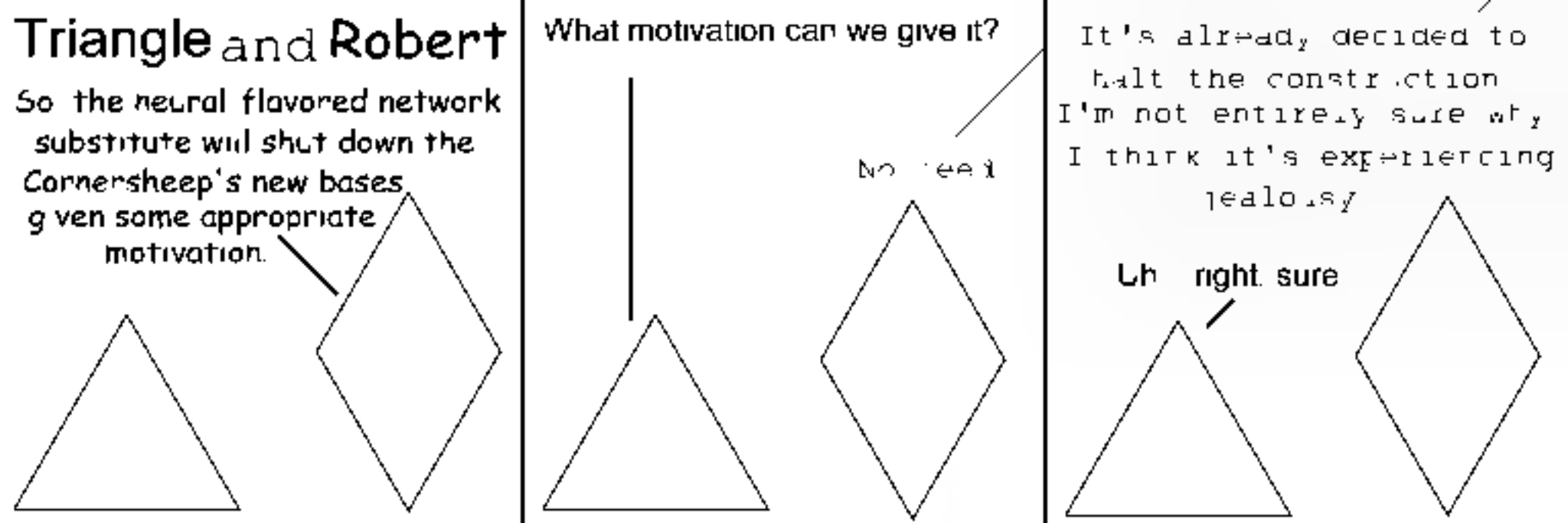
Right. Well, obviously the MSG entity is approaching critical mass and will soon be able to consciously manifest itself

That was implied, yes

Whoever or whatever's in the Oval wouldn't have trusted the Cornersheep with so much power so readily unless there were some kill switch or Achilles' heel

Oh, you're right!

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

As quickly as it began, the [illegible] sheep's hasty attempt at conquest comes to an end. A jamming signal from beneath the Earth's crust deactivates every one of the new bases. A second signal from another direction entirely causes them to disassemble themselves

You sabotaged me.

What?

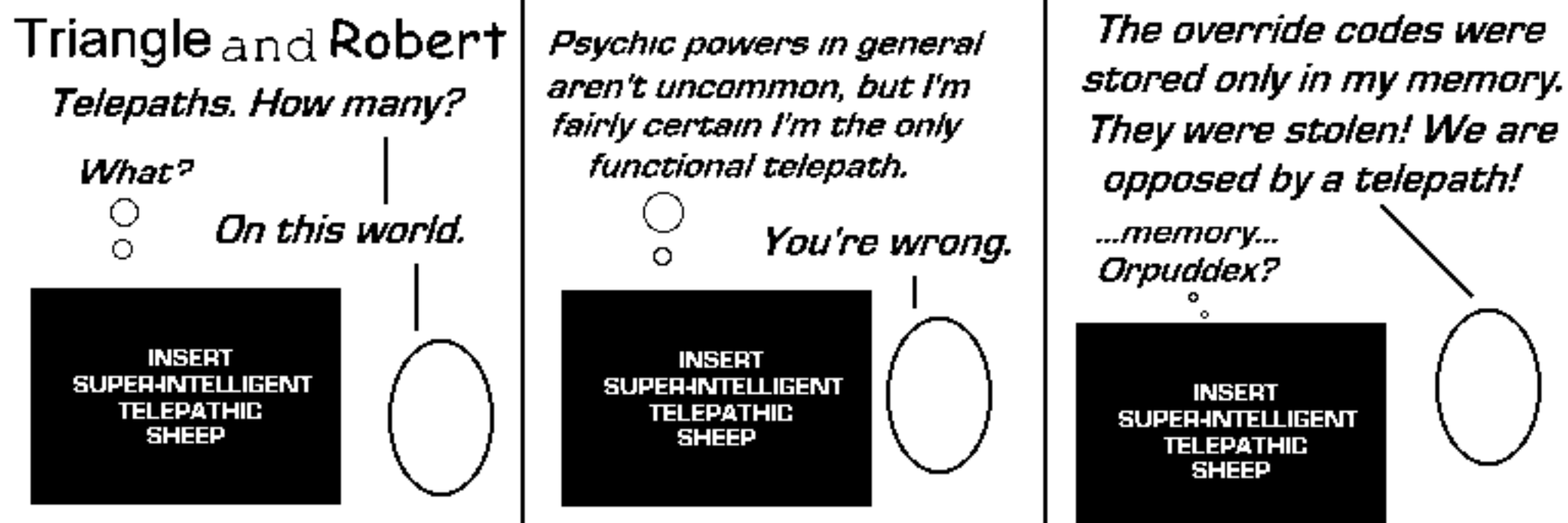
You gave the destruct order.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

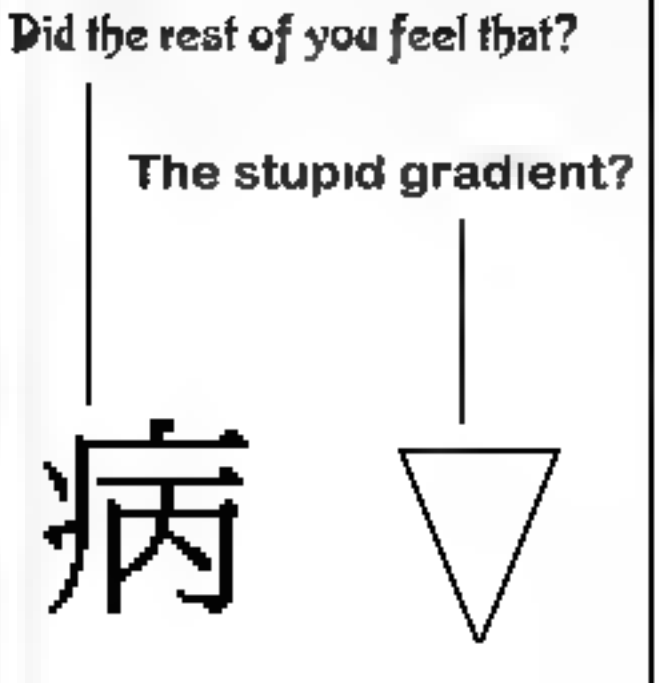
What destruct...

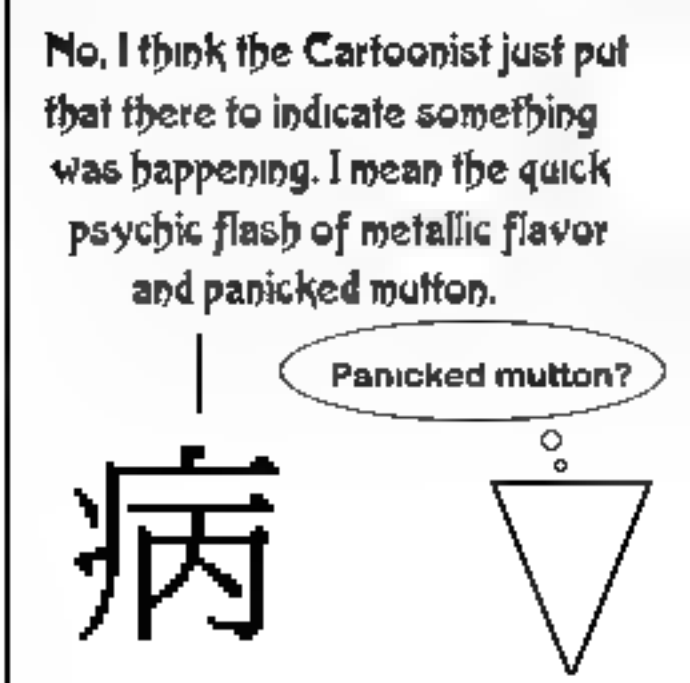
Oh. Oh my. This is bad.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP


Triangle and Robert
Telepaths. How many?
What?
On this world.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Psychic powers in general aren't uncommon, but I'm fairly certain I'm the only functional telepath.
You're wrong.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
The override codes were stored only in my memory. They were stolen! We are opposed by a telepath!
...memory... Orpuddex?
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

病


Did the rest of you feel that?
The stupid gradient?
病


No, I think the Cartoonist just put that there to indicate something was happening. I mean the quick psychic flash of metallic flavor and panicked mutton.
Panicked mutton?
病

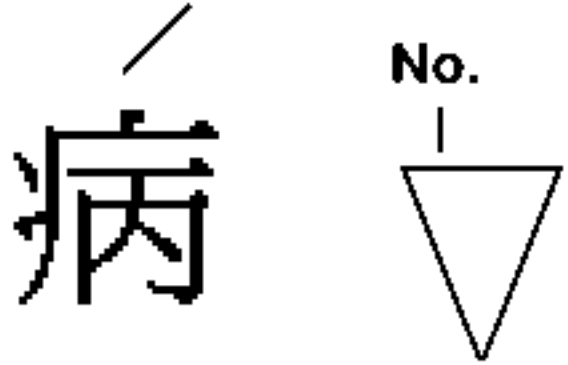
Triangle and Robert

Can you

What?

Okay did you hear that?

No.



Hello?

A big thing is talking to me and I can't hear it because the panels are too small

Alternately, I'm hallucinating giant letters.

Triangle and Robert

Okay just answer Y or N

Are you who I think you are?

病 Y.

Are you in danger?

N.

Are you trying to warn me about something?

病 Y.

Is it the Cornersheep/Oval alliance?

N.

Is it Orpuddex?

病 S.

Triangle and Robert

Does the danger involve Orpuddex in some way?

Y.

Does it relate to the Time of the Oval?

病

Y.

Does it relate to the Oval itself?

N.

Is this method of conversation transparent padding on the part of the Cartoonist?

病

I'll take that as a yes.

病

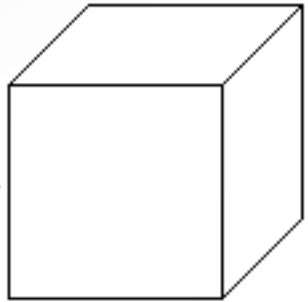
Triangle and Robert

Backstage at yet another talk show

The Hollywood interview is running long. Can I get you anything?

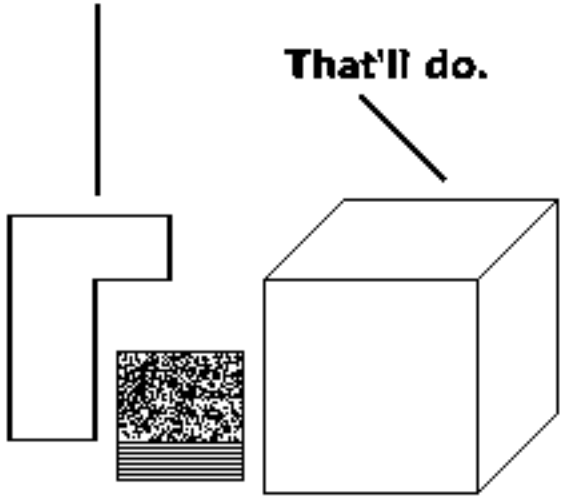
Is there anything to read?

I'll get some magazines

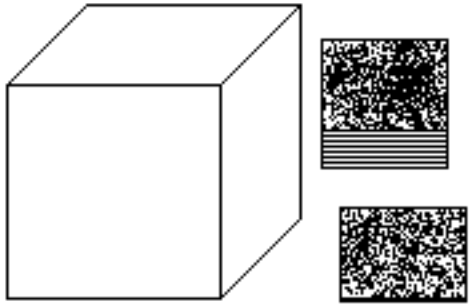


They're all astronomy, sorry

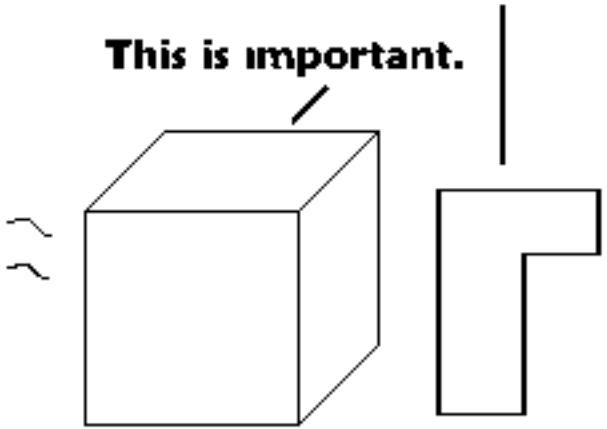
That'll do.

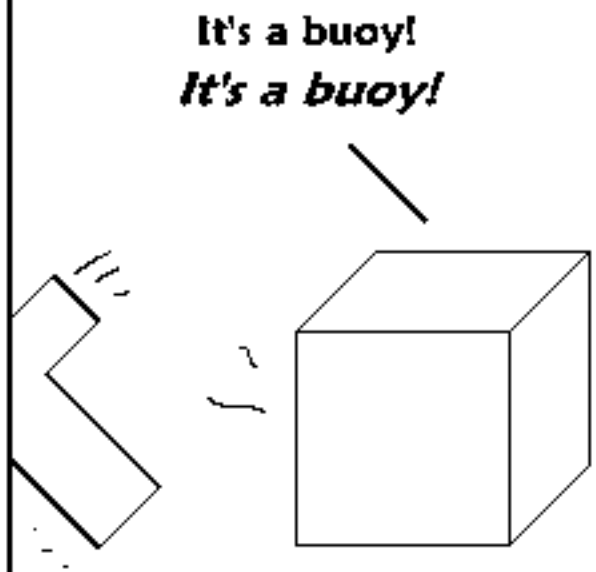


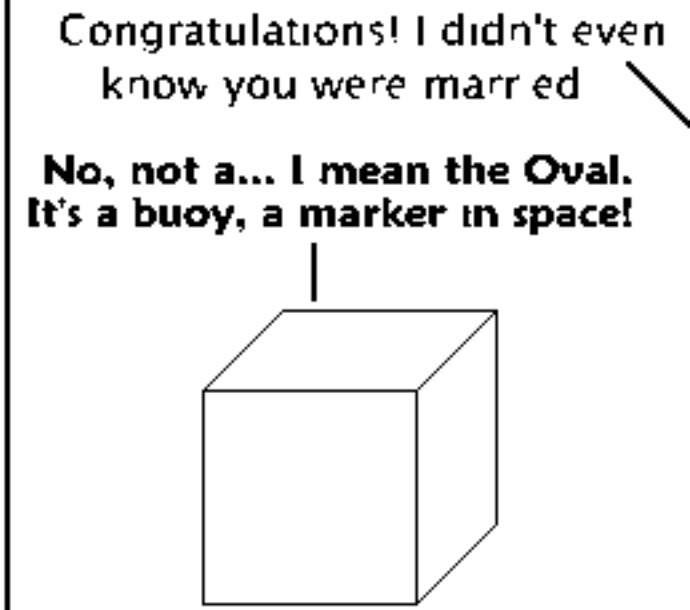
This cover looks familiar. I've seen it before, but not as a map of... of course! It's not WHAT the Oval is, it's WHERE it is!



Triangle and Robert



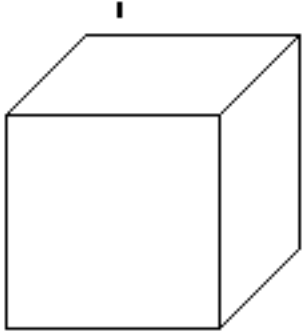




Triangle and Robert

You're interrupting the Helix Twins. This had better be real good

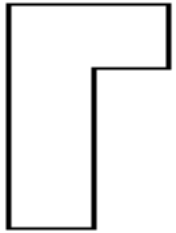
It is. I'll need to make a phone call.



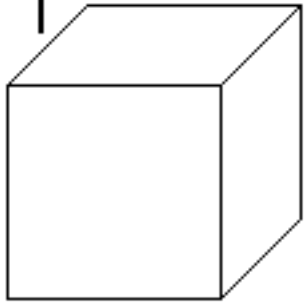
You should have done that first!

Briefly later

The Helix Twins are done, you're up

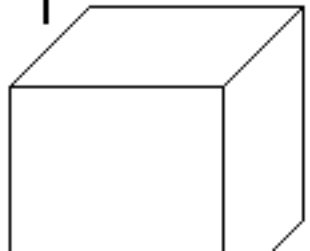


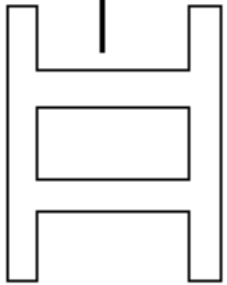
Thanks. Let me know when a fax comes.



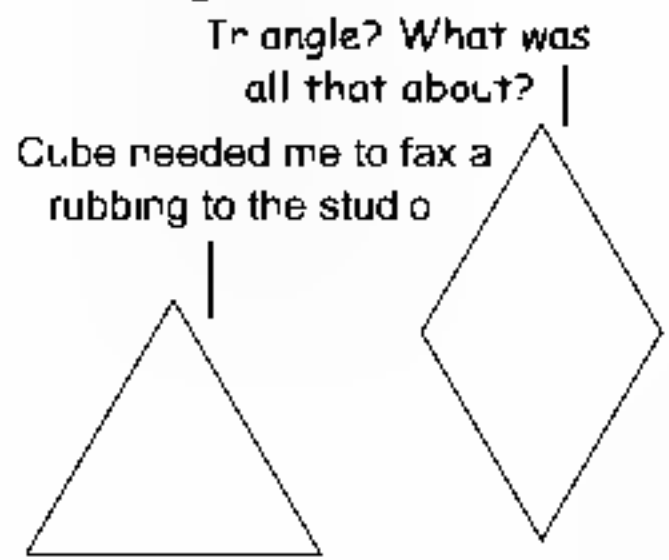
So, Cube, what's this big discovery you frightened the Helix Twins about?

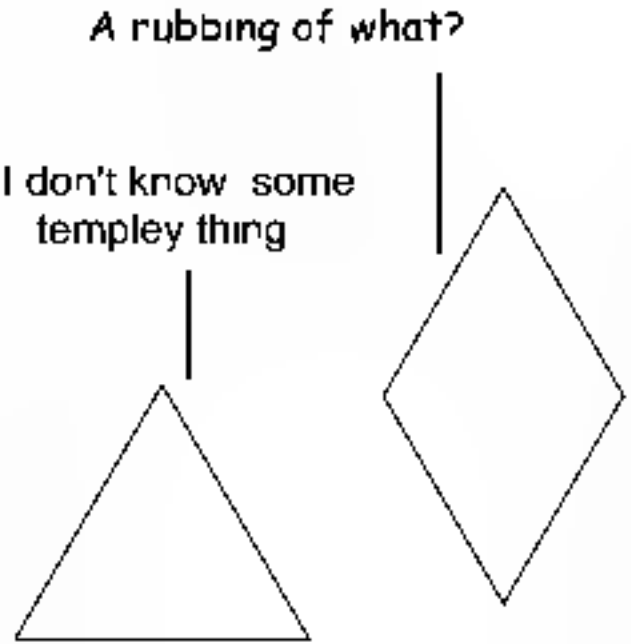
Believe me, it's good. Let me start by introducing my research in general.

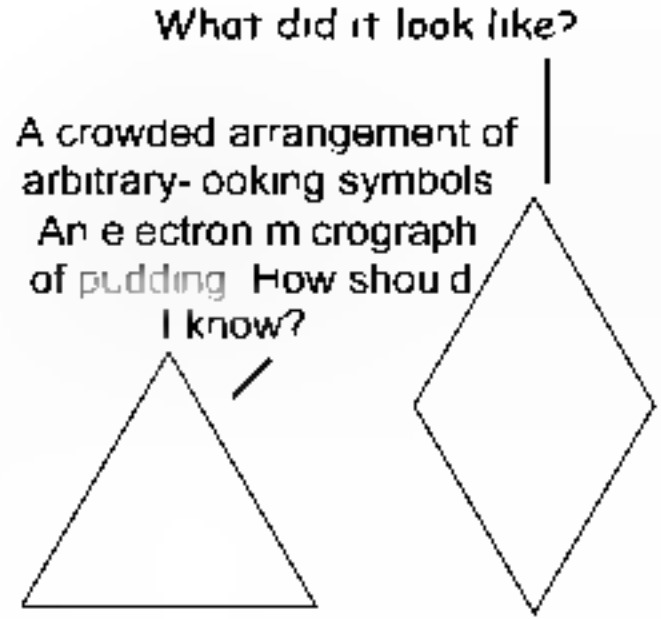




Triangle and Robert



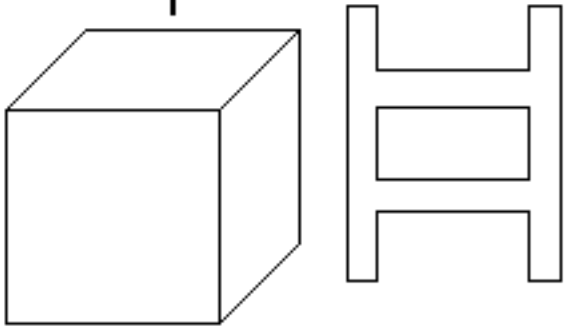




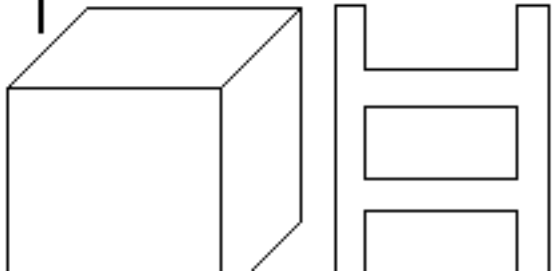
Triangle and Robert

My stage manager's telling me you just got a

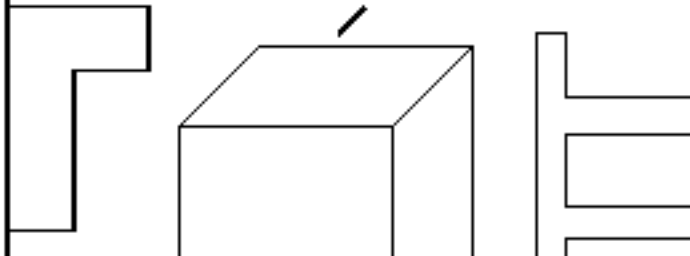
Fax? Great, have him bring it up here.



Now, look at this magazine cover. Can you get a shot of it? It is, of course, a map of the galaxy. The dotted line is the path our solar system follows every something-or-other thousands of years.

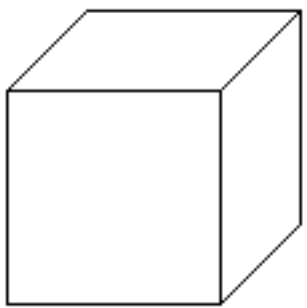


Now, this... thank you. This fax is a rubbing of a diagram found in many so-called "temples" of the Fourth Race, usually on the same stone as some reference to the Time of the Oval.



Triangle and Robert

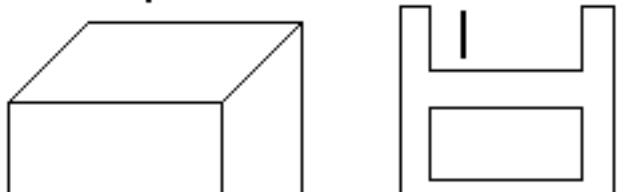
Look at them side by side. The notation is unfamiliar, but the temple diagram is a galactic map, accurate as of a few centuries before the fall of the Fourth Race.



This taco curve is our planet. The arrows are its path through the galaxy. These big concentric ovals are... the important bit. The Fourth Race knew something about that part of the galaxy that we don't. They sent the Oval ahead to probe it, but the Oval did not return. When the Earth came to pass through that region, it was the end of Man.

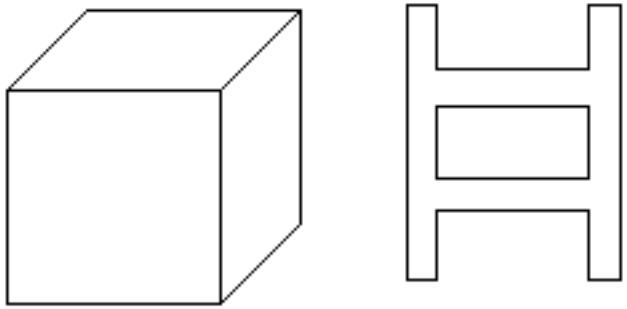
Compare with the magazine map, and you will see that the Earth has passed through that region two more times since then. These correspond to the declines of the Fifth and Sixth races.

And we're in that region now

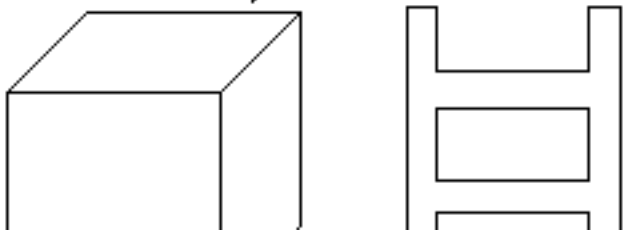


Triangle and Robert

Yes. I don't know much astronomy, but whatever's there causes waves of mutations, and probably other effects as well.

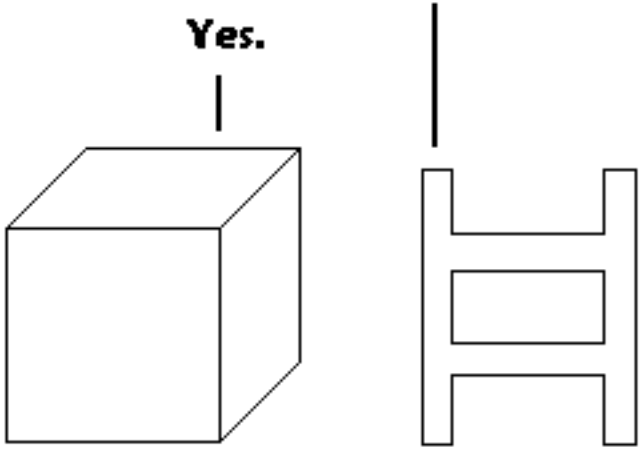


The Cornersheep's telepathy, the nascence of the MSG entity, possibly even the return of Orpuddex and the coming of the Cartoonist are due to this... I hate the word "anomaly", but it's the only one I can think of.



I guess th s was worth interrupting the Helix Twins for.. maybe

Yes.



Triangle and Robert

Is all that true?

I believe so. That cube is more intelligent than he appears.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I still think you sabotaged my bases, you know.

I understand that. I would think the same in your position.

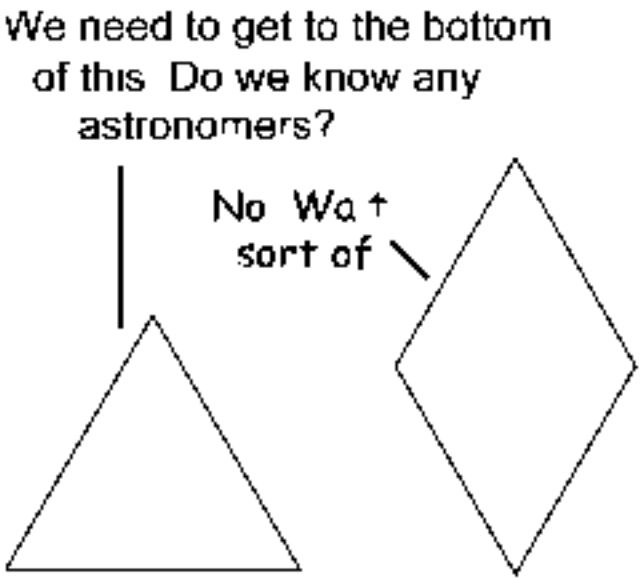
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

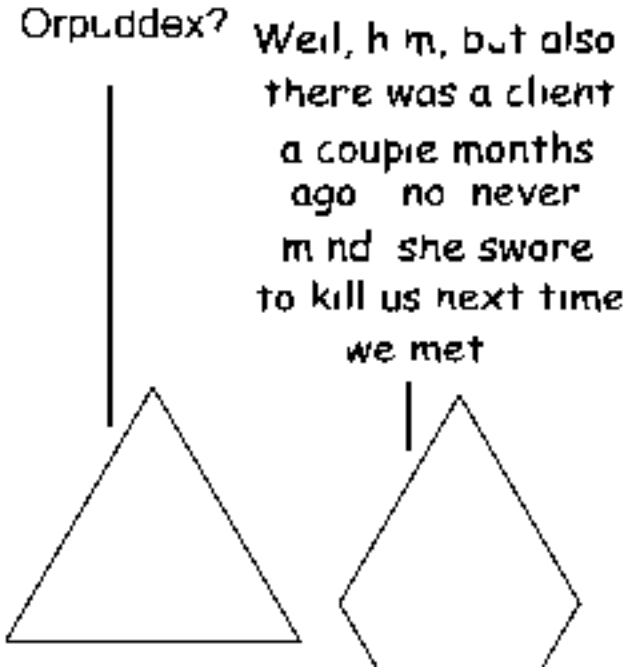
Except for the genocidal hatred of polygons, you're a very reasonable man.

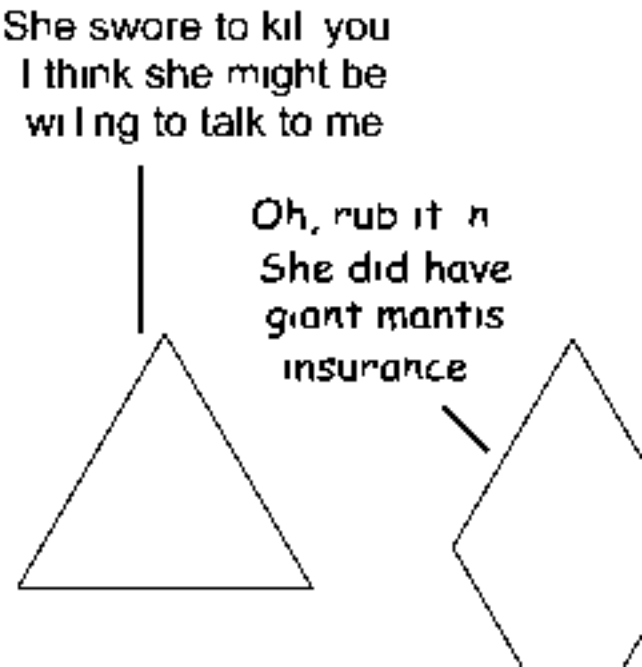
Did you mean to think that first part out loud?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

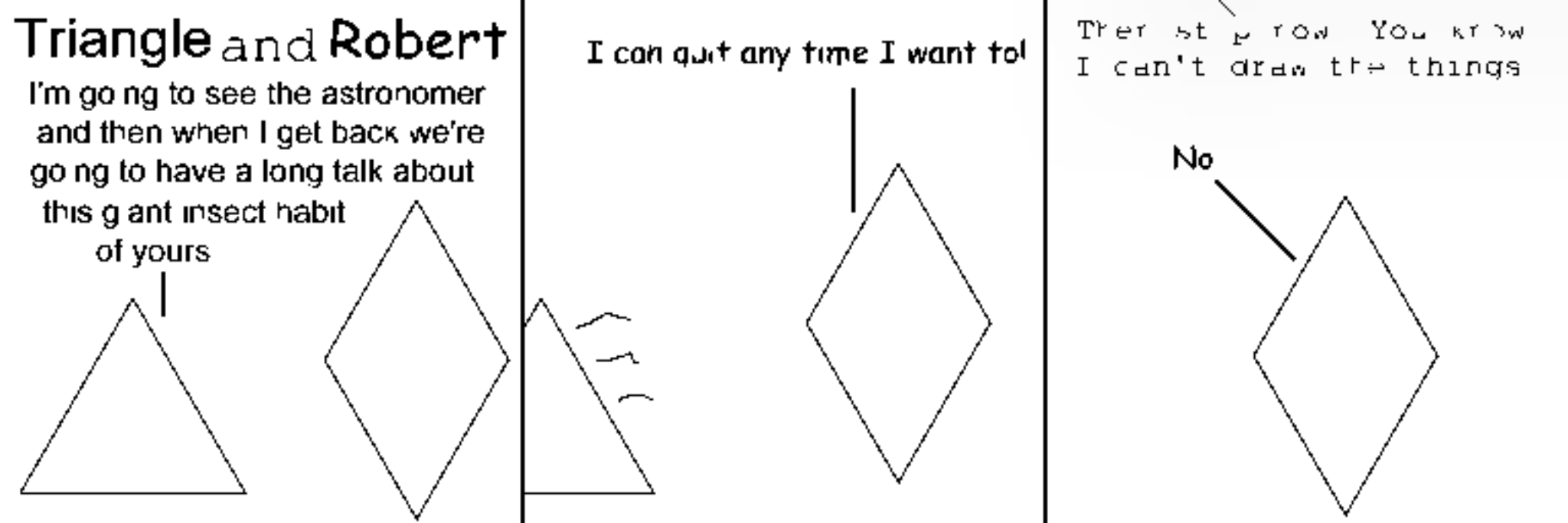
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



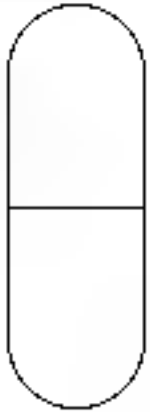
Let us now contemplate Prozac the Bear. What was it that transpired on the set of Diurnal Anomaly with Brian N. O'Cone? The broadcast that night gave no hint of the strange intrusion of the Prozac called Bear.

First, we must ask ourselves how Prozac came to be at the studio, and indeed how he (if such a pharmaceutical can be called "he") survived the wrath of the awakened ferret-god. The answers here are simple: Prozac is not of this world. He is a manifestation of the Cartoonist's . uh. .

He is a manifestation of the Cartoonist's Does that work without a noun? It had better. I don't have the energy to fix it.

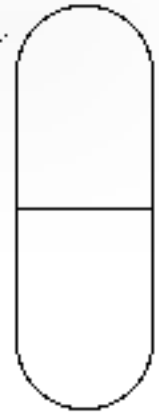
Triangle and Robert

[illegible] line from an episode of Mr. Ed has been stuck in my brain for most of my life. The line is "What am I, a house or a banana?". I'm not sure if the context might have never ever seen the episode. The line was in an ad on TV at the [illegible]

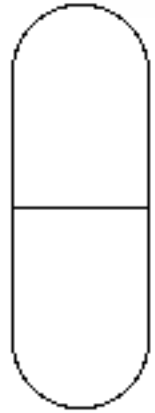


Triangle and Robert

Hi, I'm Prozac the Bear!
You might be wondering what's been going on. If you are, stop it.
It won't help.

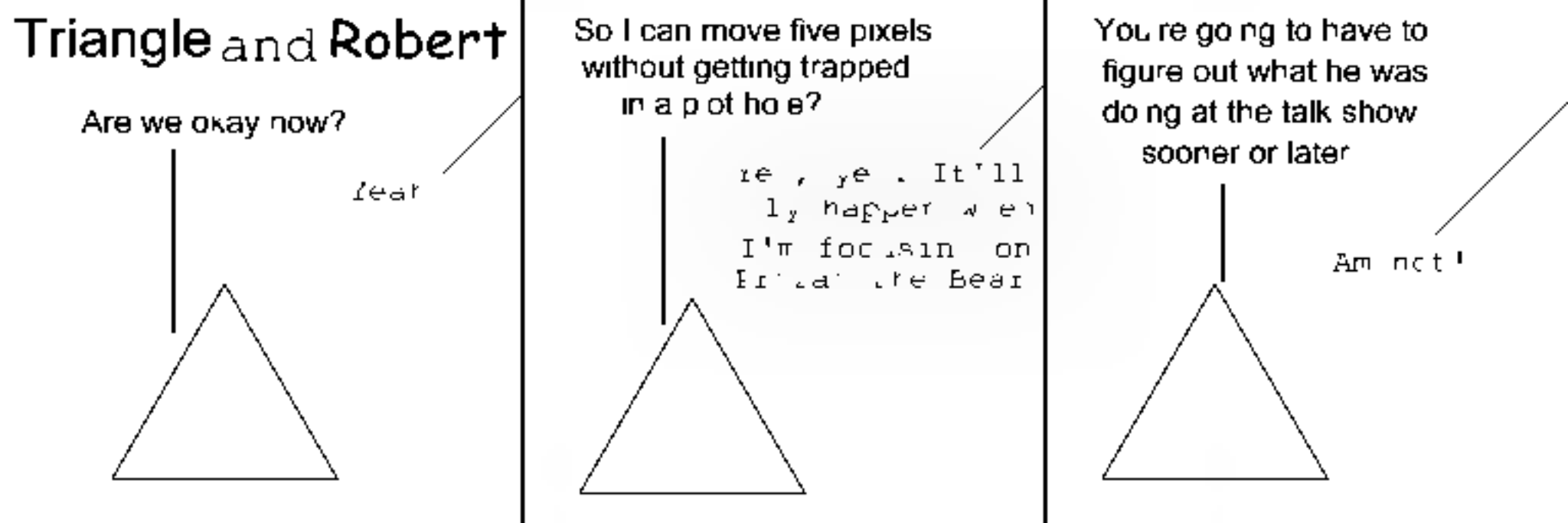


Now let's all eat pie

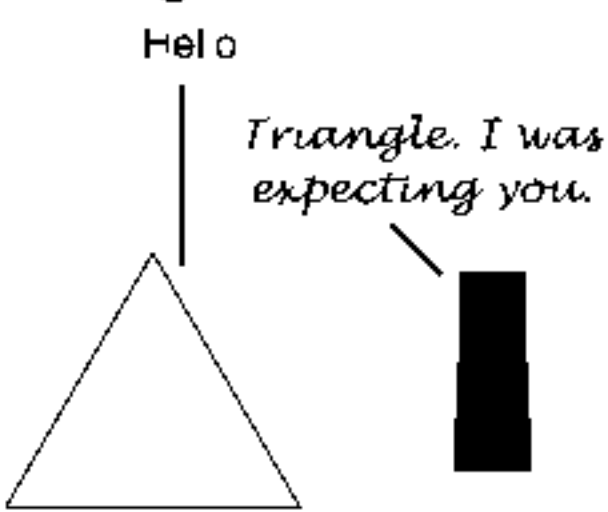


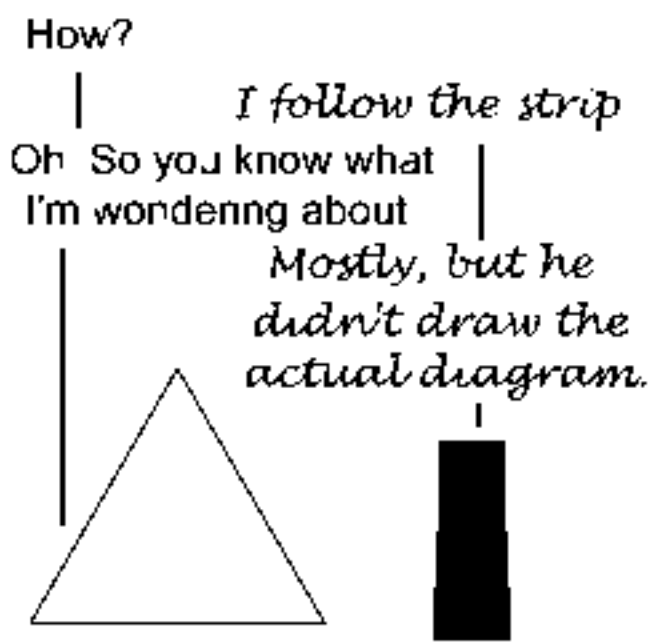
Fin

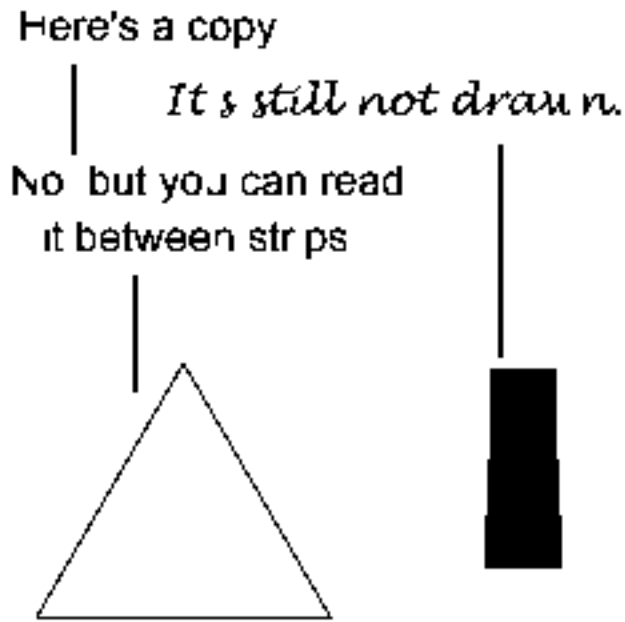
Triangle and Robert



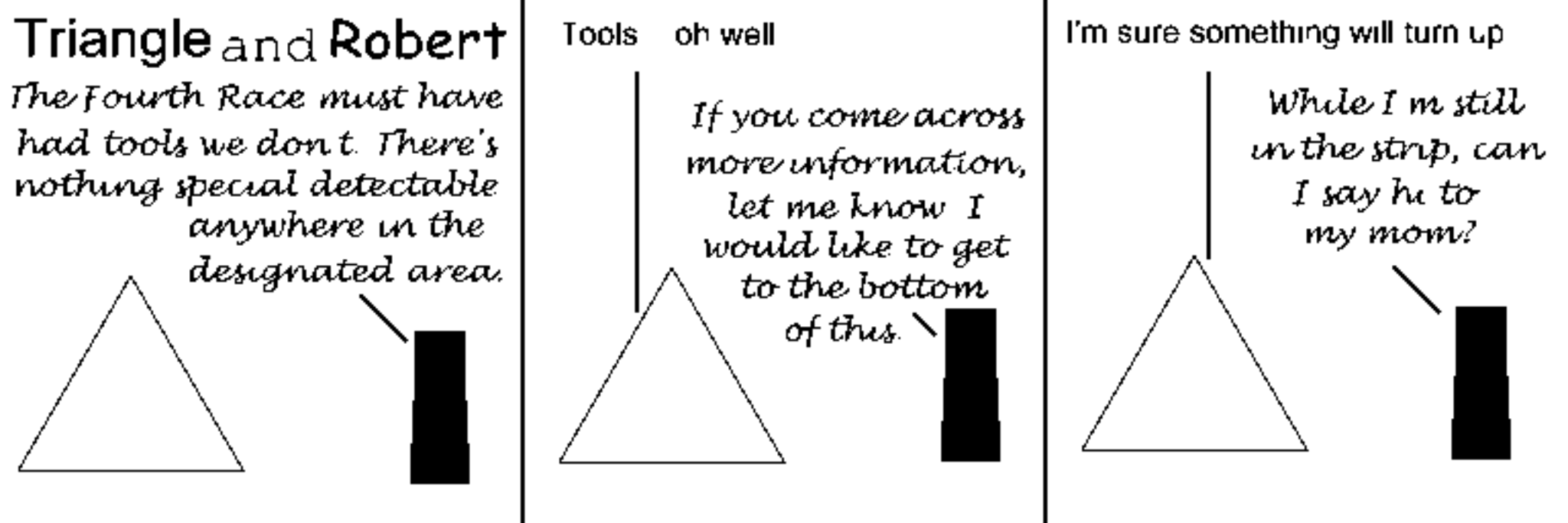
Triangle and Robert







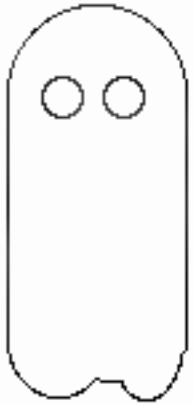
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

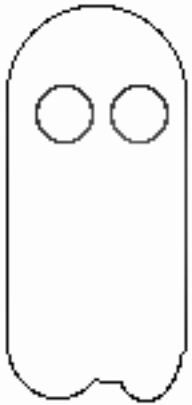
There is a small chance that Prozac the Bear will be the founder of the Eighth Race.

That's sick.



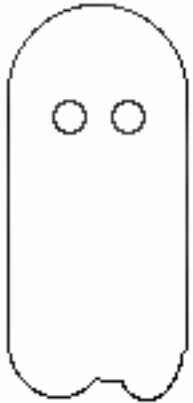
I know. It's a long shot, though. I'm not going to worry about it.

Worry about me.

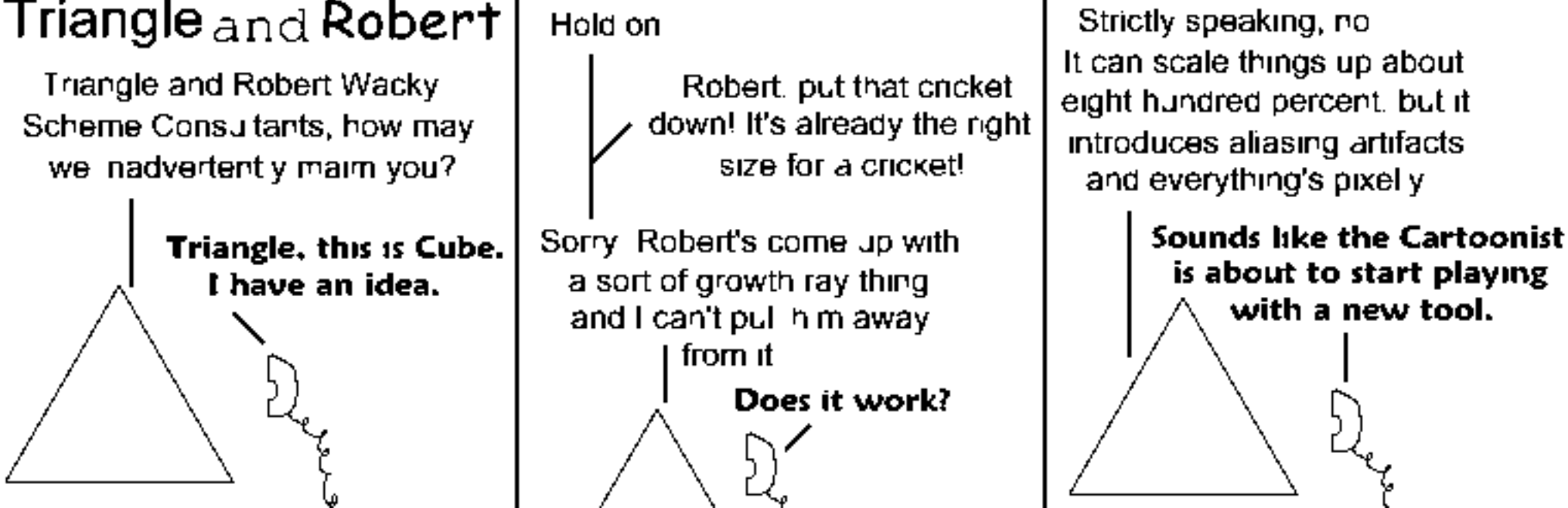


There will be an Eighth Race, Orpuddex. You can't change that.

You wouldn't be so flippant if you could draw what I'm actually supposed to look like.



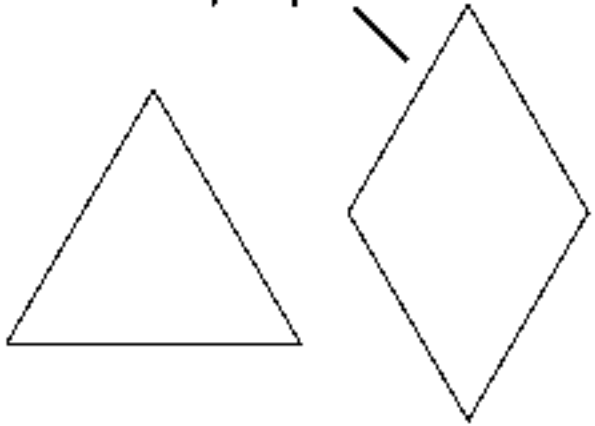
Triangle and Robert



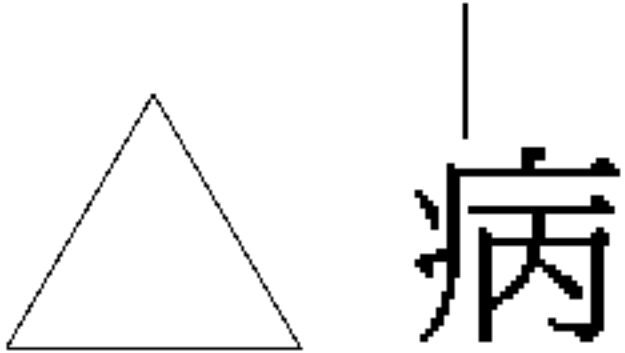
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

I wouldn't want to come along anyway I'm busy with my experiments

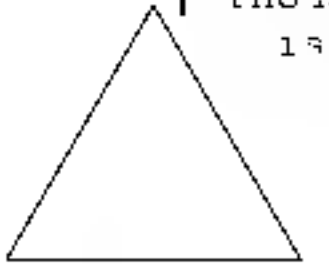


The Meat Sentry and I will come There are.. tensions. It would not do well for all five Sentries to share a submarine



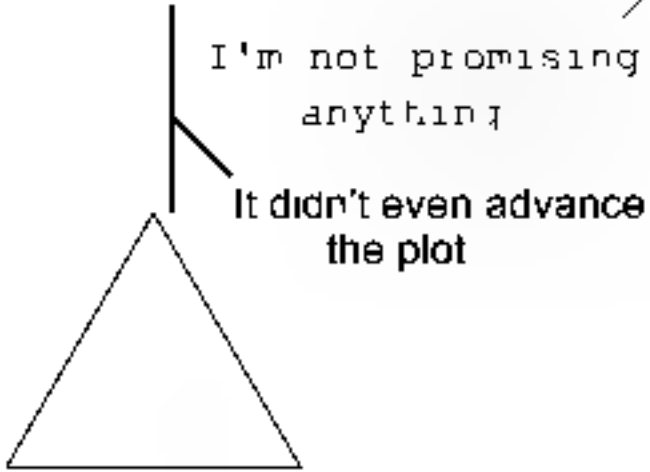
How did I get from home to Mr D sease in less than one panel?

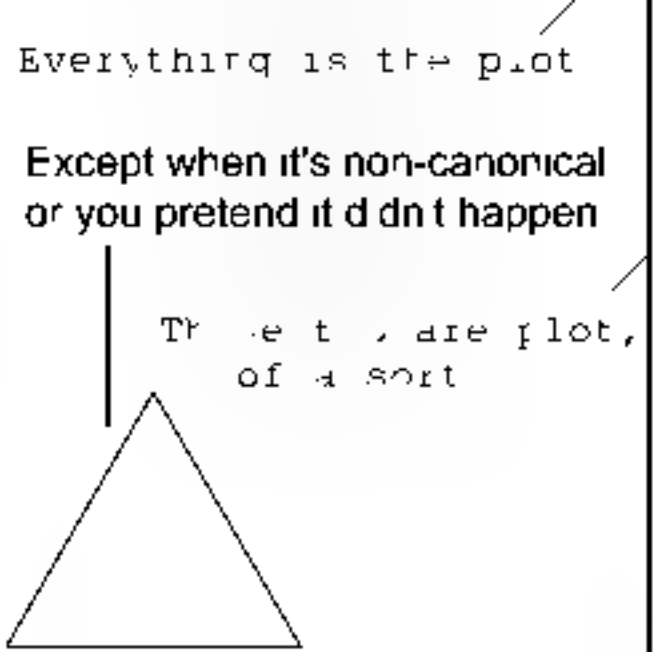
I needed o move things along The thousandth strip is tomorrow

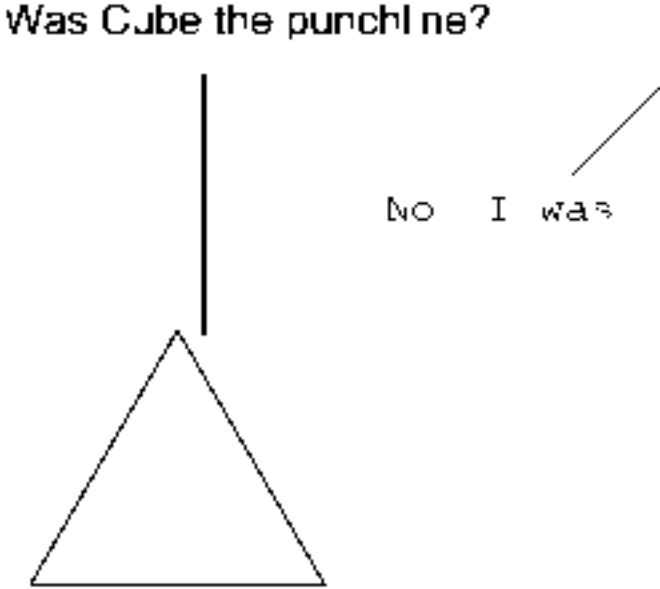


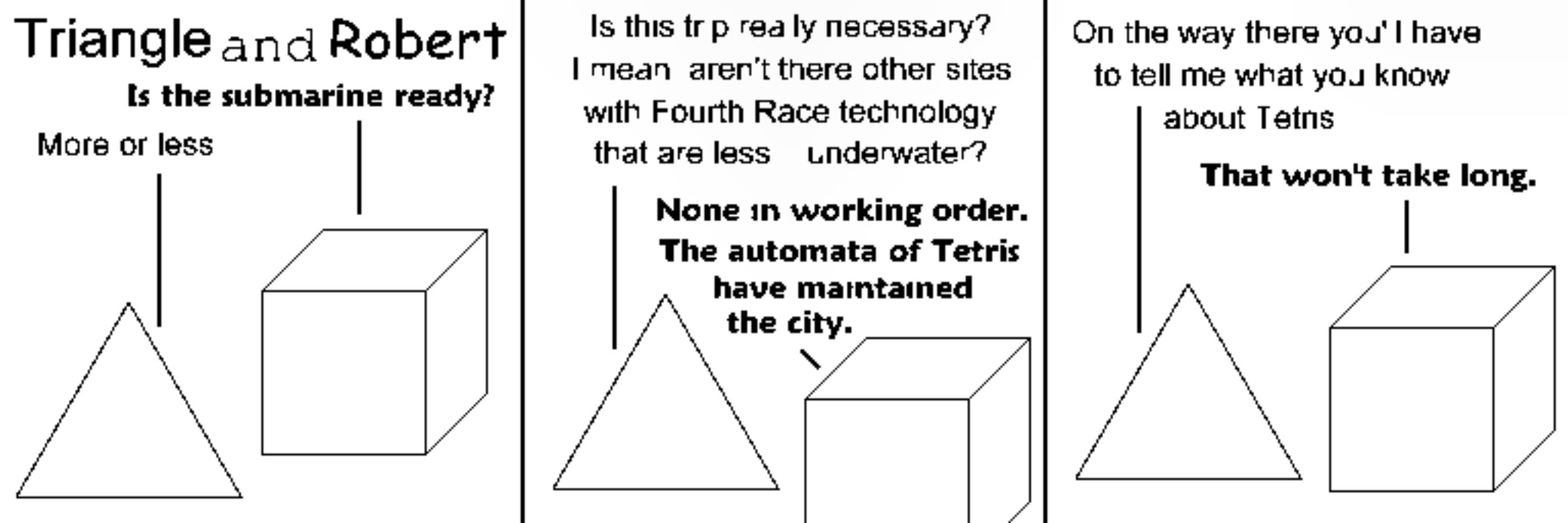
Triangle and Robert
... this is the best you could do for strip 2,000?
Sadly, yes
Don't strain yourself.
...
I hope I'm not the punchline.

Triangle and Robert

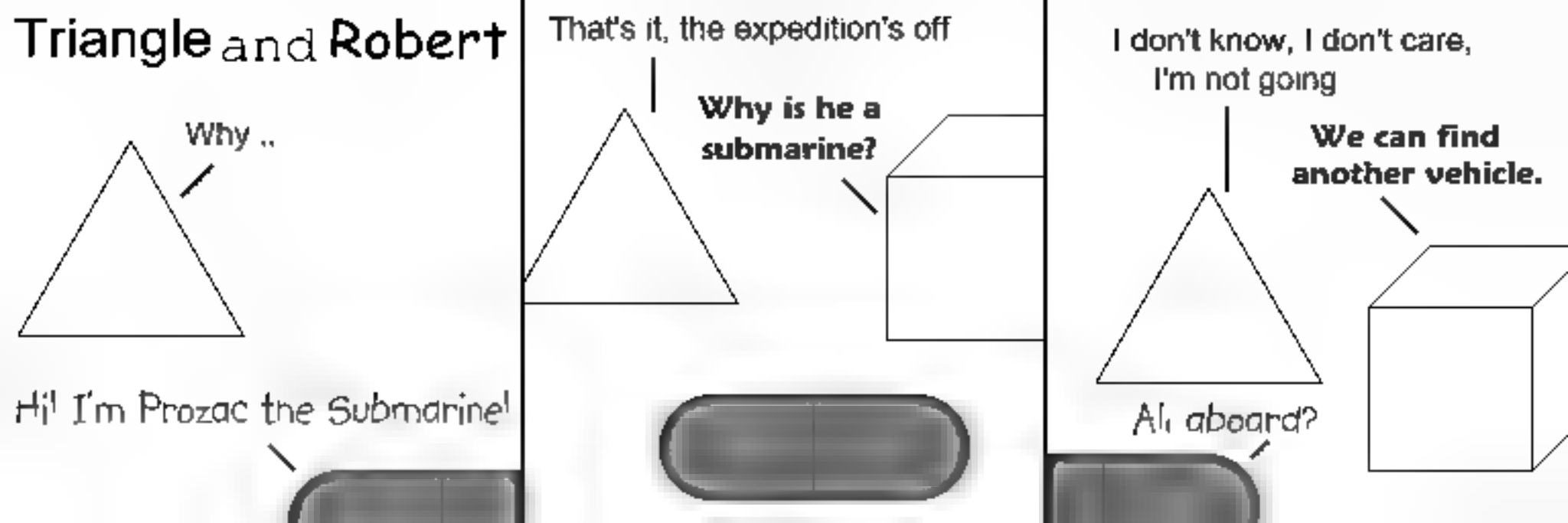




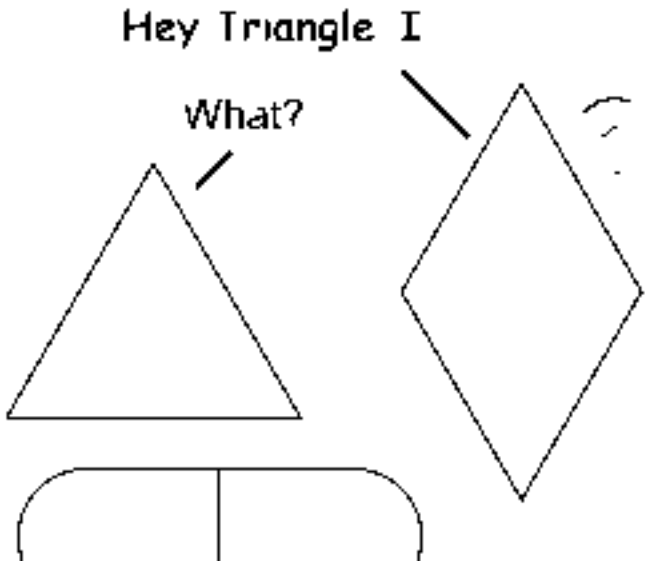


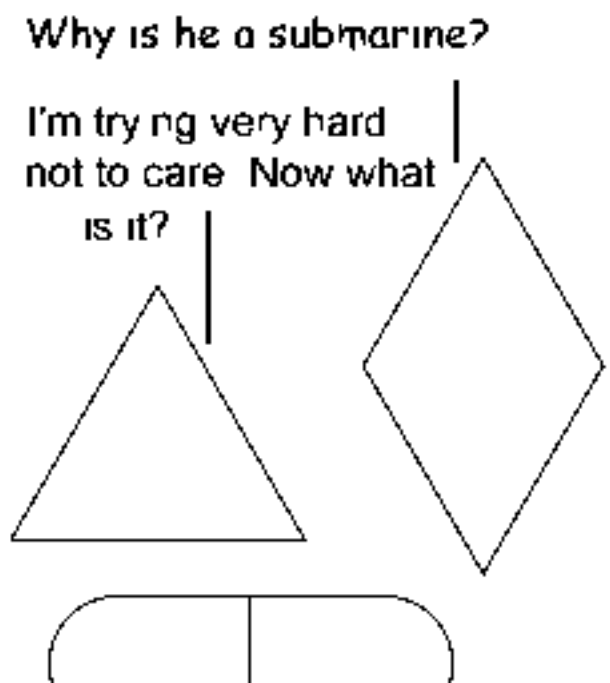

Triangle and Robert
Is the submarine ready?
More or less
Is this tr p rea ly necessary?
I mean aren't there other sites
with Fourth Race technology
that are less underwater?
None in working order.
The automata of Tetris
have maintained
the city.
On the way there yo J' I have
to tell me what yo J know
about Tetns
That won't take long.

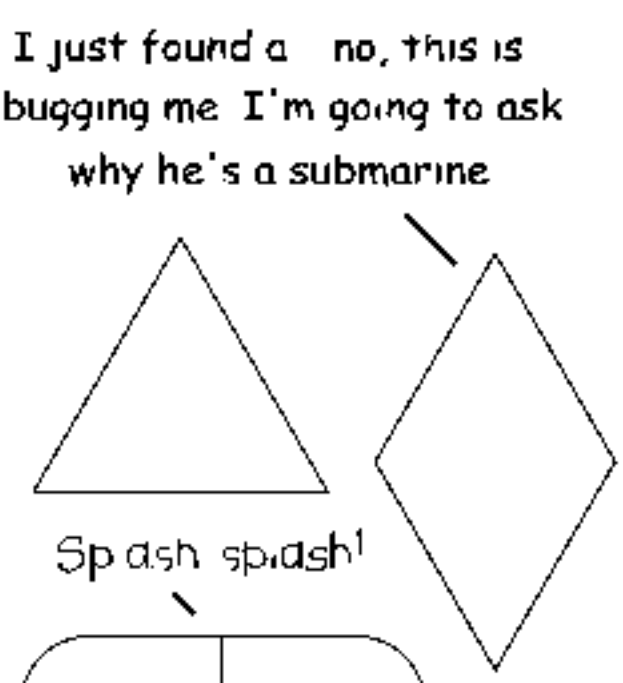
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert





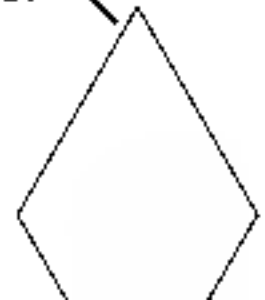


Triangle and Robert

The pharmaceutical one has become the submarine of the wacky rhombus and the Chosen One I find myself baffled

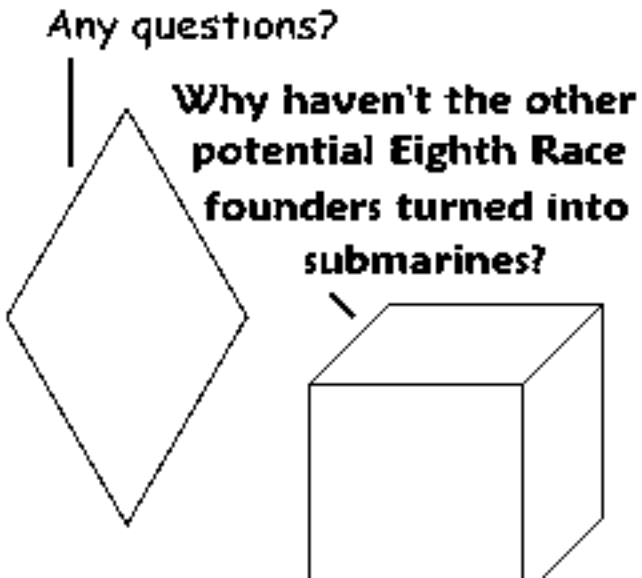
It's definitely a puzzle!

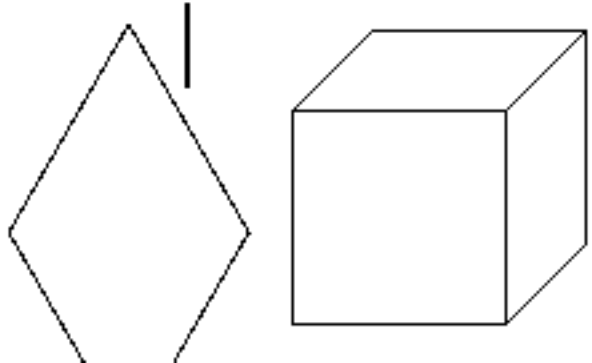
Everyone, I talked it over with Mr the Bear and I think I understand the situation I'll have to tell you between strips, though, the Cartoon st hasn't figured it out yet

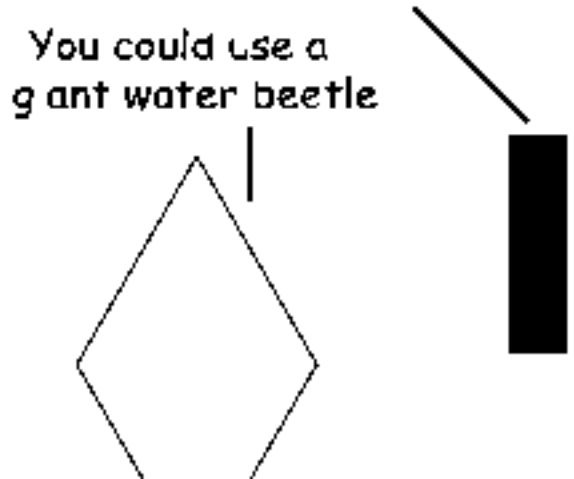


Well, I've figured out PART of it, he's being drawn toward Tetris because of his potential destiny to found the Eighth Race. It's just the whole rest of the situation that I haven't figured out

Triangle and Robert



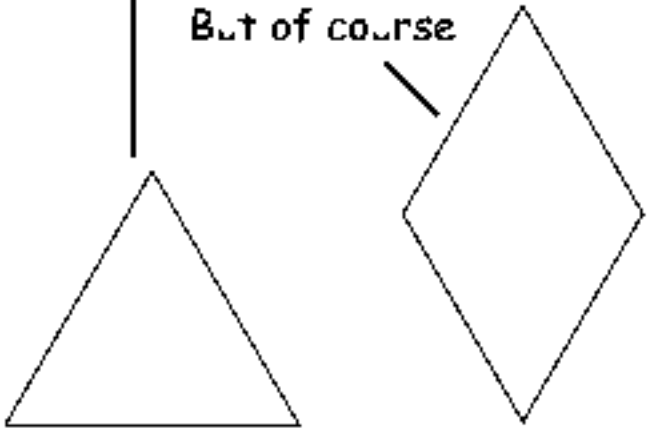




Triangle and Robert

Pardon me do you HAVE any giant water beet es?

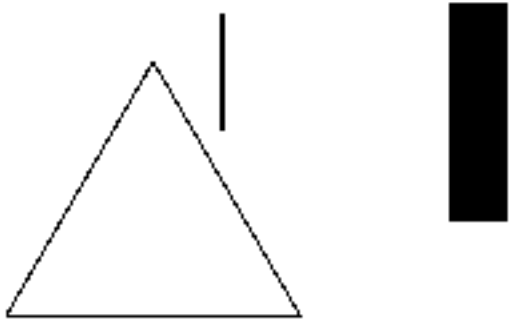
But of course



n the voyage to Tetris

How exactly are we breathing?

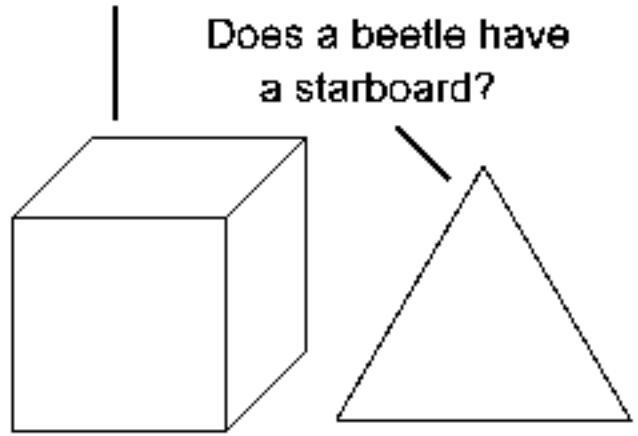
Are we breathing?

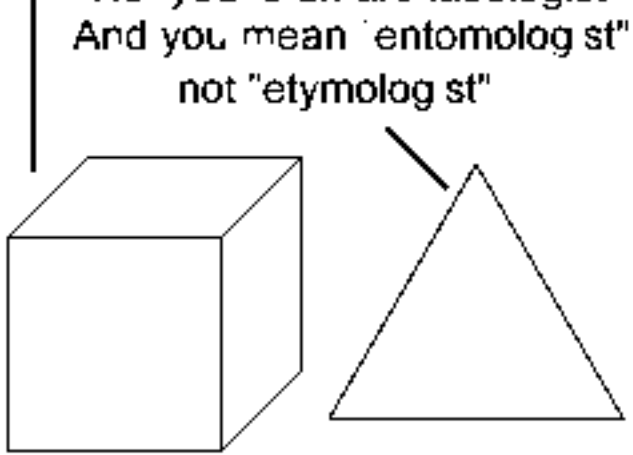


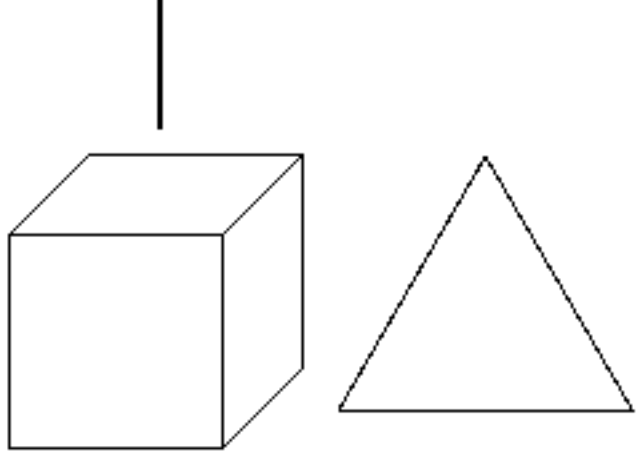
I m taking care of that

DEHYDRATED OXYGEN →

Triangle and Robert



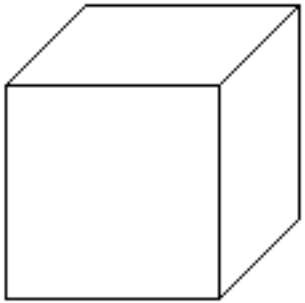


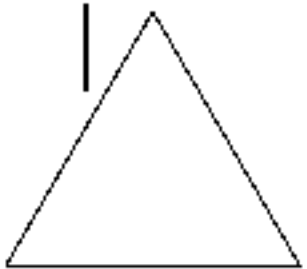


Triangle and Robert

Prozac is overtaking us. Is that a problem?

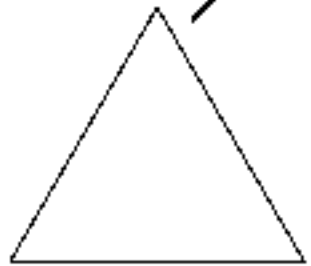
I don't think so
I doubt he's going to interfere with us





Can this beetle go any faster?

I don't know Robert didn t go into detail



This thing doesn t have a kitchen!

Triangle and Robert

It's a giant beetle! Of course it doesn't have a kitchen!

I have been in giant beetles that had kitchens.

病

When? When have you even been in a giant beetle before?

At the moment I cannot remember the exact circumstances

病

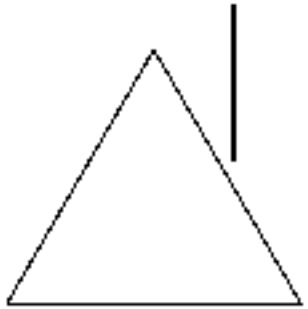
Mr Disease! Stop teasing the Meat Sentry! We're almost there

病

Triangle and Robert

"Stop teasing the Meat Sentry! Our is . um .

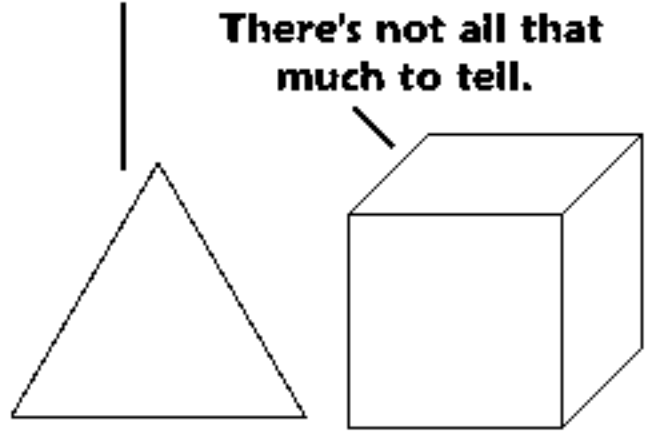
Vaguely obscene?



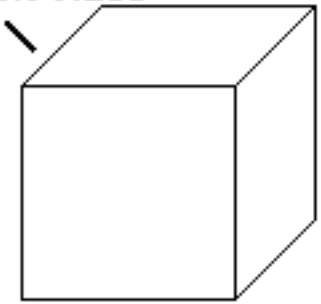
ies

Different worlds, different standards Anyway Cube was about to tell me about Tetr s

There's not all that much to tell.



It was an experimental city of the Fourth Race maintained by their polygonal automata. After it sank, the automata continued to guard it for their drowned masters. I believe that the Seventh Race began when some of these polygons developed independent intelligence.

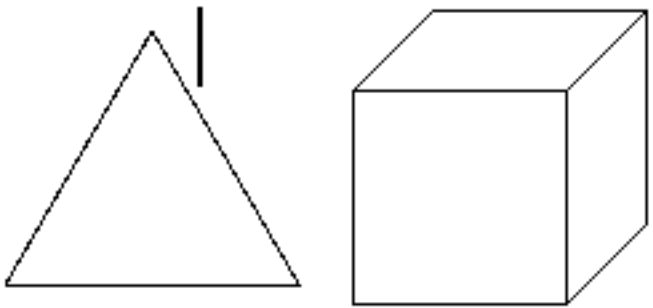


Triangle and Robert

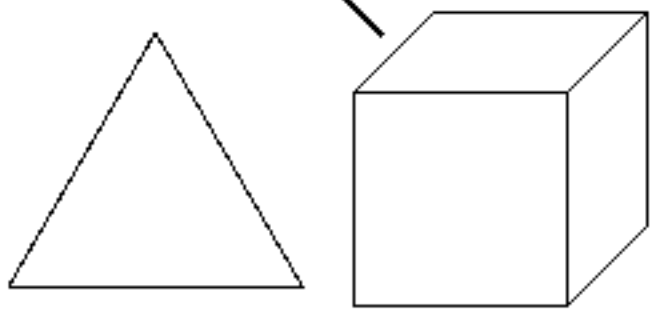
I sme I incons stency

No | Yes, I m defrosting some

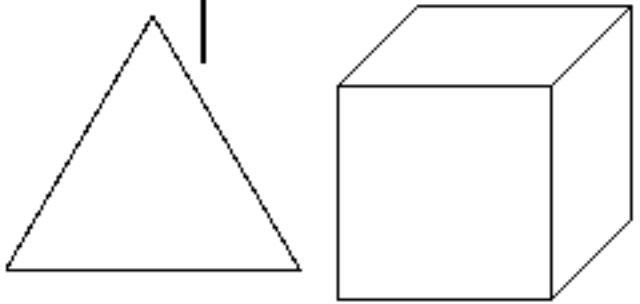
Cube was Tetris inhabited by humans or by polygons?



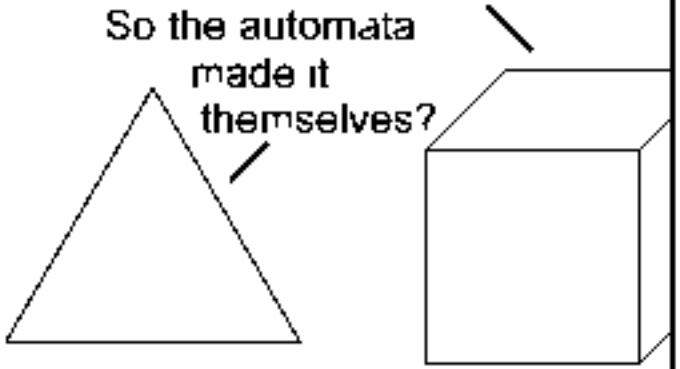
The city was ruled by humans. Its day-to-day running was handled by primitive constructs which, from a purely geometric perspective, can only be termed "polygons".

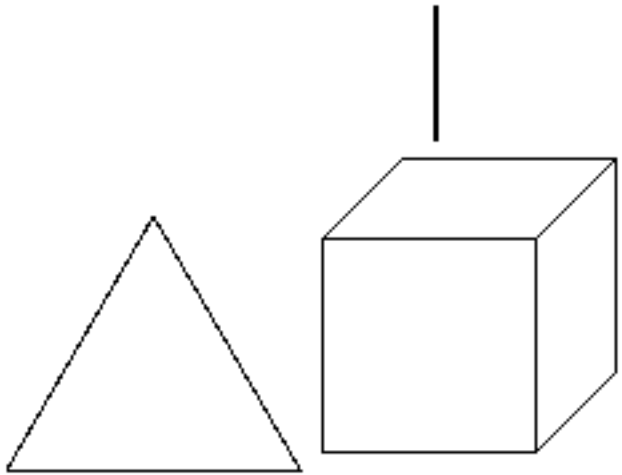


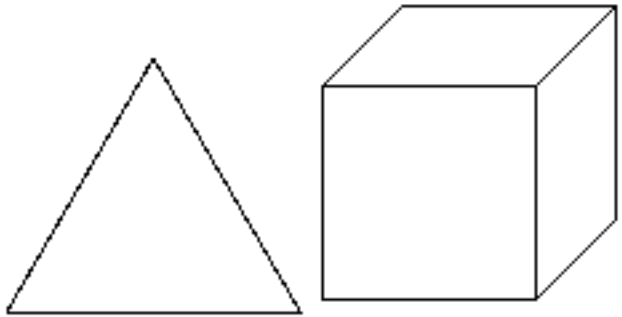
Exact y how much inte ligence and autonomy did these polygons have? What you're say ng now contradicts what you sa d about that videotape

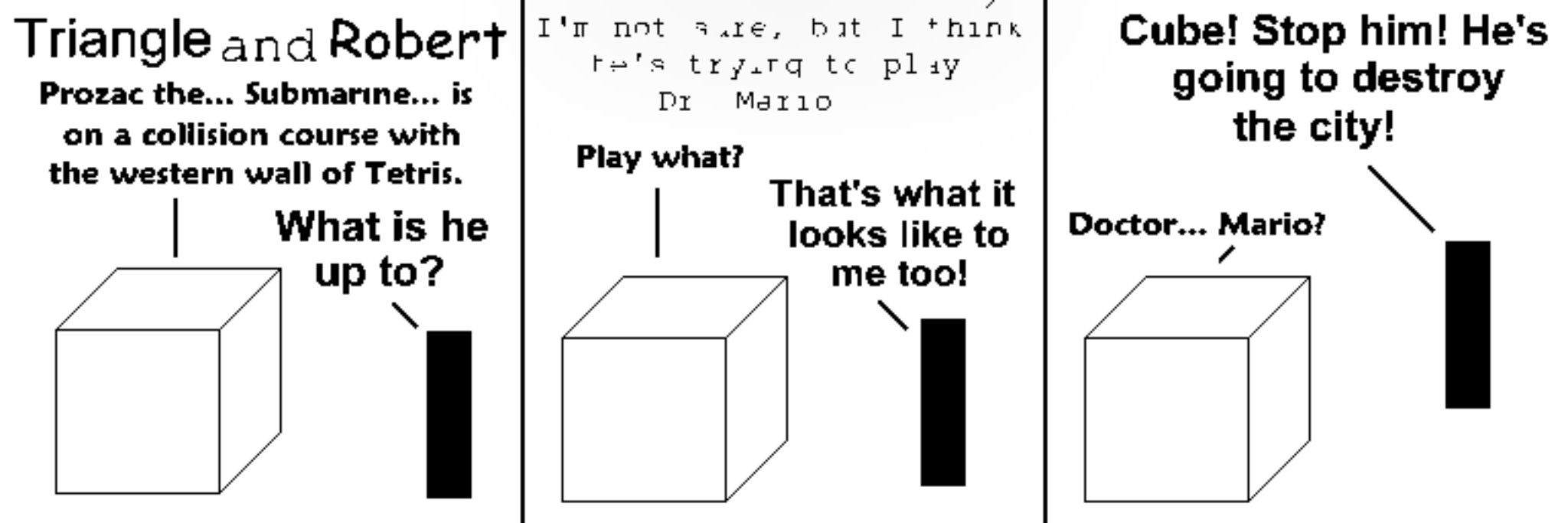


Triangle and Robert







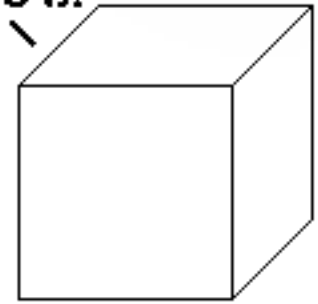

Triangle and Robert
Prozac the... Submarine... is on a collision course with the western wall of Tetris.
What is he up to?
I'm not sure, but I think he's trying to play Dr. Mario
Play what?
That's what it looks like to me too!
Cube! Stop him! He's going to destroy the city!
Doctor... Mario?

Triangle and Robert

If he moves adjacent to that block sticking out near the top, he'll start a chain reaction that'll destroy most of the wall and flood the city!

Line of four there, those fall that way, hit there . she's right f d'd better st p him

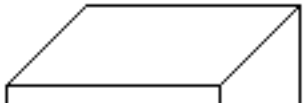
How? I don't even know what Dr. Mario is!

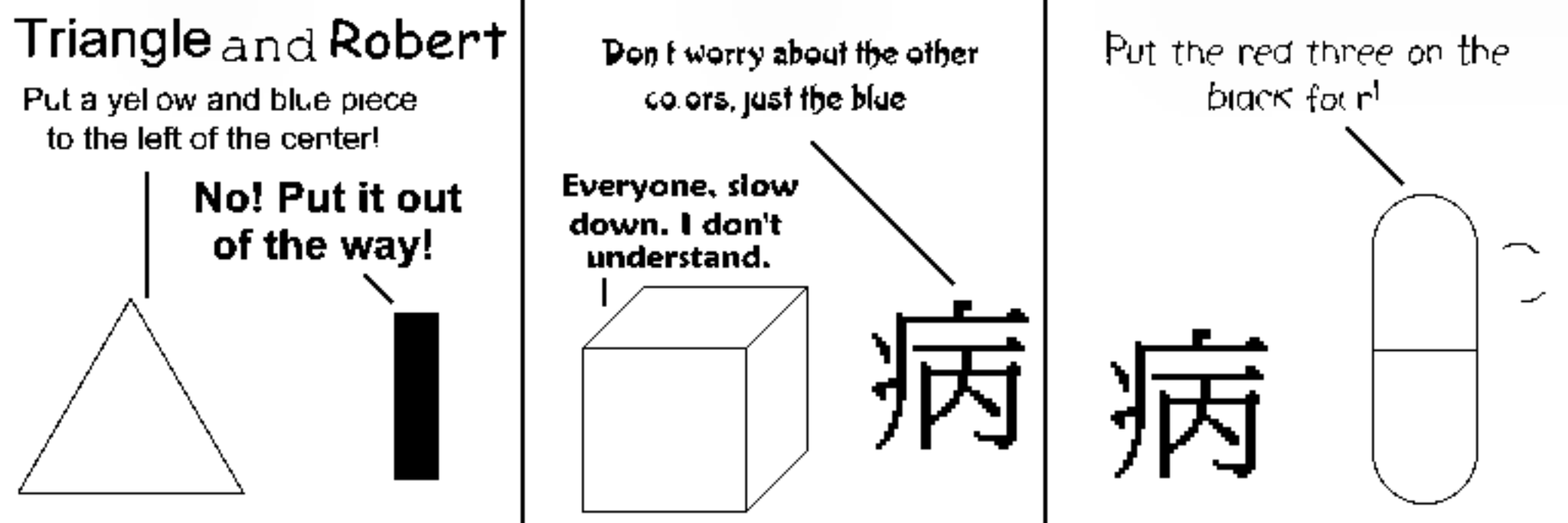


I can talk you through it, but there is little time Begin by causing a red object to fall upon the rightmost blue spire

Green!

Red. Believe me

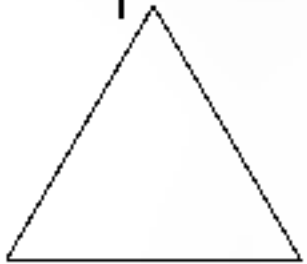



Triangle and Robert
Put a yel ow and blue piece to the left of the center!
No! Put it out of the way!
Don t worry about the other co ors, just the blue
Everyone, slow down. I don't understand.
病
Put the red three on the black fou r!
病

Triangle and Robert

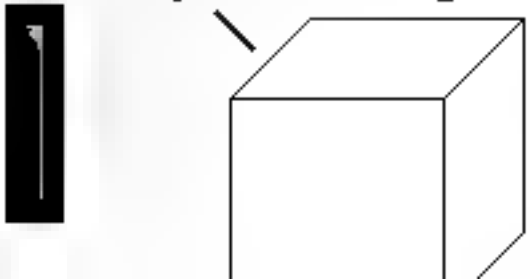
What is he doing in the subma uh uh.

The pharmaceutical does not obey the rules of polygons.



He was a submarine. Now he's not. He has no continuity.

We need to get into Tetris. Prozac as the Eighth Race would just be wrong.



Yay I'm coming with you!

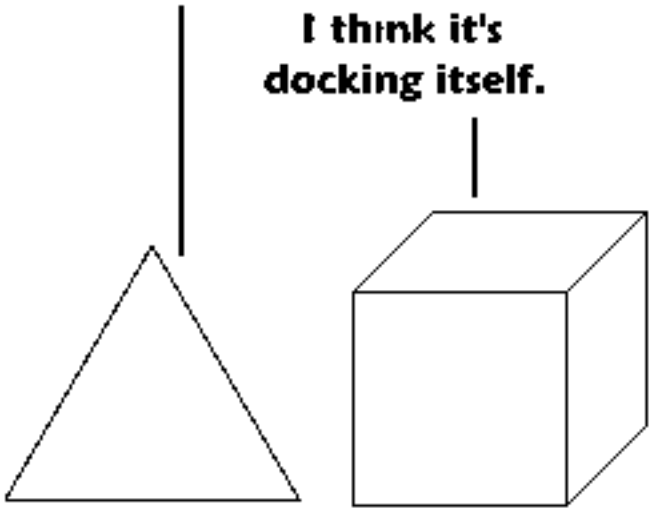
We

We can't stop him.

Triangle and Robert

Where do we dock the beet e?

I think it's docking itself.

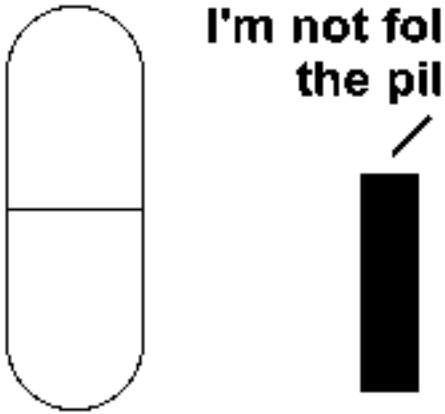


I suppose that's one advantage of giant-insect transportat on

The city is vast. How will we find our way?

I Know I Know!

I'm not following the pill!

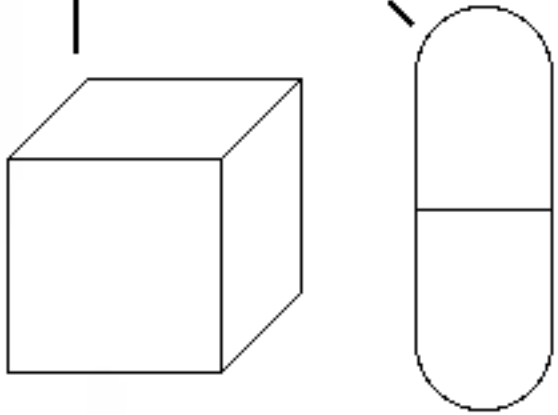


Triangle and Robert

Follow the main thoroughfare east until you reach a series of ramps, then follow the grey markings upward. Avoid detection and you'll soon reach the aerospace center

How do you know all that?

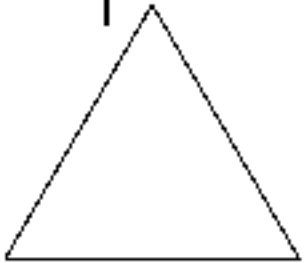
I'm Prozac the Bear!



Are we to follow this antidepressant's directions?

病

It's no worse than wandering randomly. Just stay alert



Triangle and Robert

Come

I told you, I don't trust the pill!

病

We don't know what it has planned!

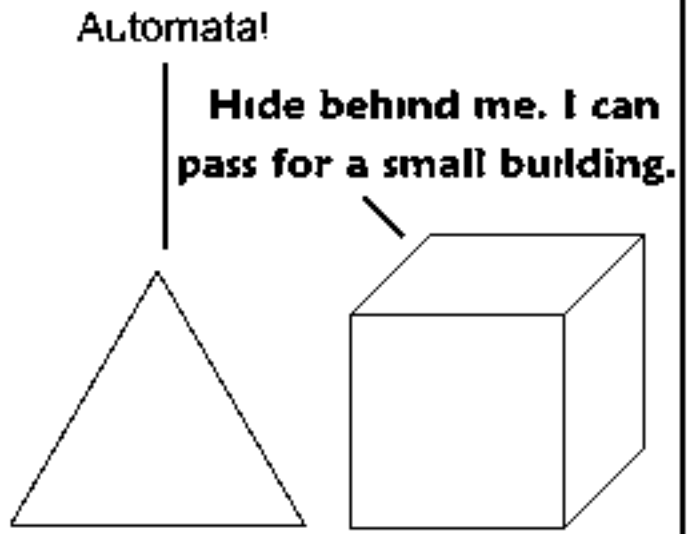
And thus we need to be prepared for contingencies. He.p us.

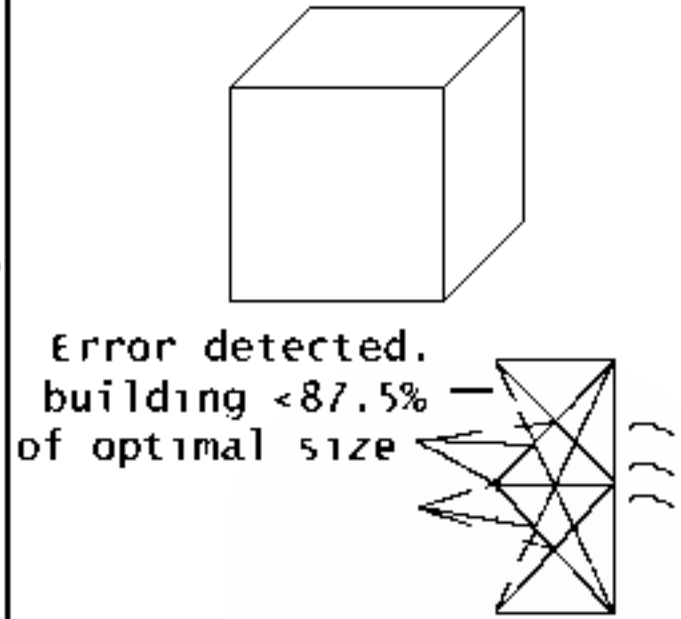
I'm telling you not to go! That's the only help that'll do any good!

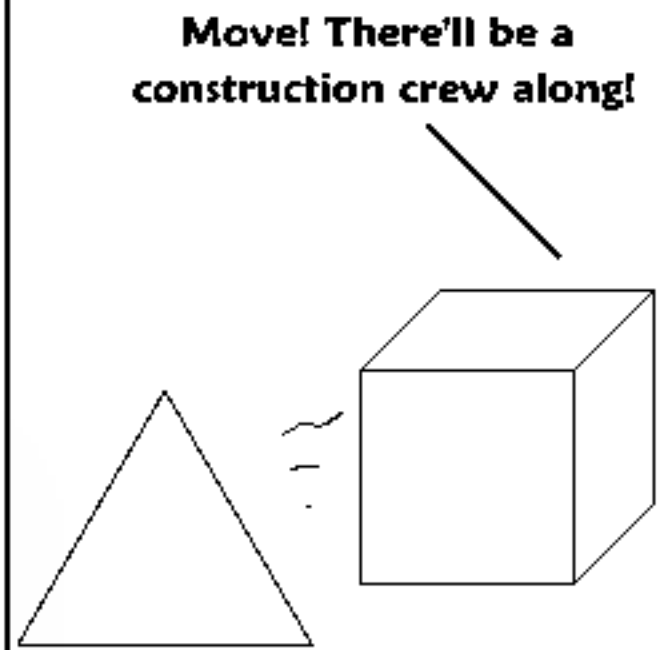
Well, at least rescue us when the automata catch us or whatever

Fine, but I'll still say I told you so!

Triangle and Robert

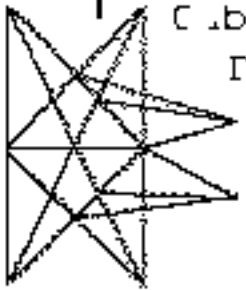






Triangle and Robert

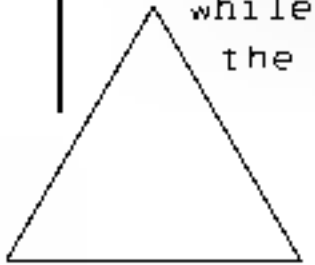
Metageometric arbiter of reality detected: ACTIVATE PHILOSOPHY TEAM....



Cube Triangle Mr Disease Ran'

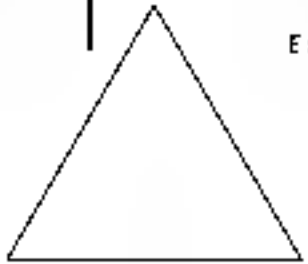
Philosophy team?

They're totalitarian constructivists. I'll keep them busy here with the strip focus while you explore the launch site



Launch site?

I thought you were going to respond "Totalitarian constructivists."



Excess punctuation detected

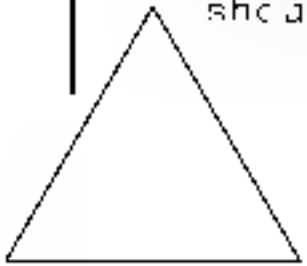
Triangle and Robert

Okay, so what are

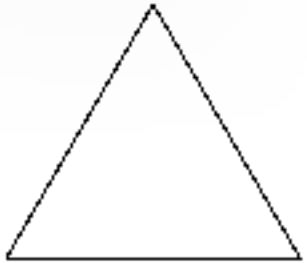
Mathematical constructivists believe that if something can't be proven to exist it doesn't exist, right

That's not totally accurate but okay

Intuitionistic constructivists believe that if something can't be proven to exist, it shouldn't exist

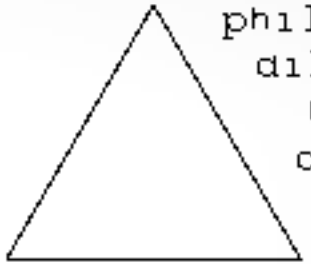


They have a very elegant proof that smoking piles of rubble exist and are fun of inventing it

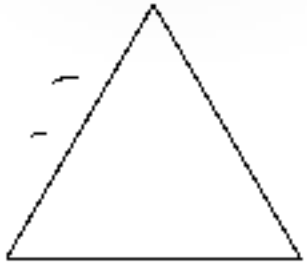


Triangle and Robert

The philosopher automata of Tetris were constructed more to get grant money than to solve any actual problem. They resolved several interesting philosophical dilemmas, but had to be deactivated because of their brutal



metrolol ay afte they started to reify consciousness. They were kept intact for the same reason as most of Tetris ist in case



I present a more compelling philosophical issue than you, so as long as you stay out of the strip they shouldn't try to prove you

Well. You're the philosophy team. I think I should first point out that you can't hurt me. The only reason I'm not just letting you attack is to protect the others.

You can't prove that I exist. You have no access to the world in which I have form. Thus, you will attack unless I can show that an attack is unnecessary.

To this end, I intend to prove to you that I do not exist, and thus do not need to be destroyed.

...therefore, either I cease to exist between strips, which implies a contradiction as previously demonstrated, or time is discrete and I am therefore unchanging, which I have shown untrue.

Elegant, but flawed. If you exist and your existence is unprovable, the syllogism of branch 2 breaks and no contradiction exists. Therefore, you have only shown that your existence cannot be proven.

But you're constructivists. Unprovable existence is no existence.

Constructivism is a meta-logical interpretation, not an axiom. It cannot be invoked as part of a proof.

So I can't prove I exist, I can't prove I don't exist, you can't stop me from existing, I can't prove you can't stop me from existing, and Prozac the Bear just had an interesting thought a few corridors away.

If you'd proven constructivism, you could use it in a proof. Since you're not allowing it in proofs, you haven't proven it, and so you must destroy your own constructivist programming! I'm Prozac the Bear!

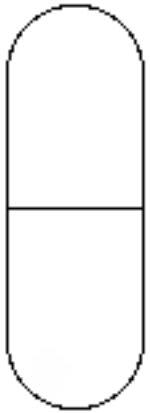
As much as I hate the self destruct cliche, he's got a point.

Constructivism can exist as a belief without necessarily being true. Can't it? Self-destruct in 0x0A. 0x09. 0x08.

Triangle and Robert

If it expl des
it'l flood Tetris
last as surely as
if it attacked'

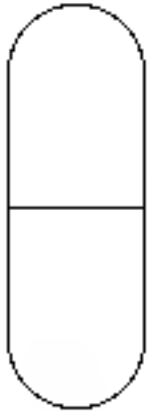
0x07



I m not worried I'm an
log.ca pos'tiv st'

D something'

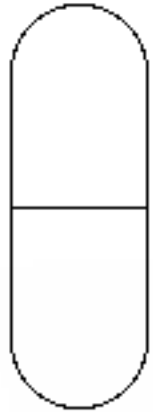
0x06



Wait . . . , I can t
prove the validity of
c nstr ctivism in six
seconds

Hi I m st
Prozac the Bear'

0x05 0x04

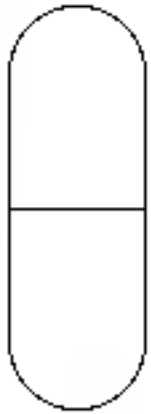


Triangle and Robert

Use your magic, Prozac

Magic? Ferrets? Ducks!

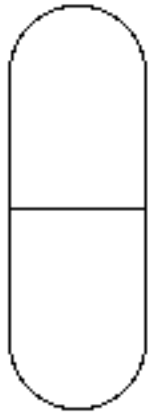
0x04



What

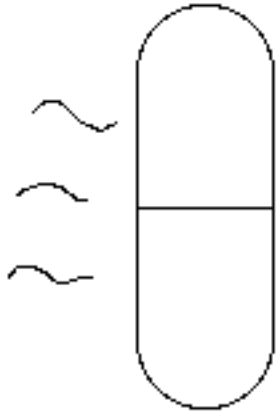
0x03

Thanks!



h no. N ' you're not
g ing to do this Not now!

0x02



Triangle and Robert

As your cartoonist, I order you r t to explode!

0x01

That's it then, you've forced my hand.

Copout power **activate!**

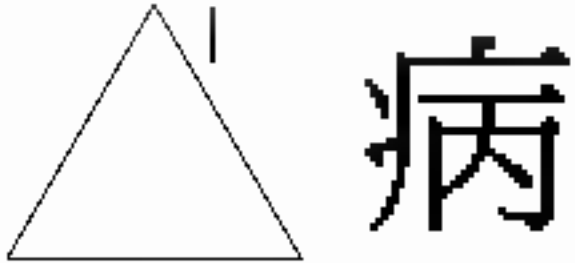
0x00 . It is now safe to turn off your philosophy automaton

I feel dirty

Triangle and Robert

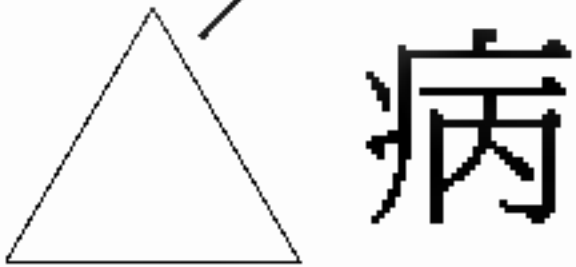
You're all okay? You didn't encounter any other philosophers?

Actually we did, but we all gave proof of our existence and they left us alone

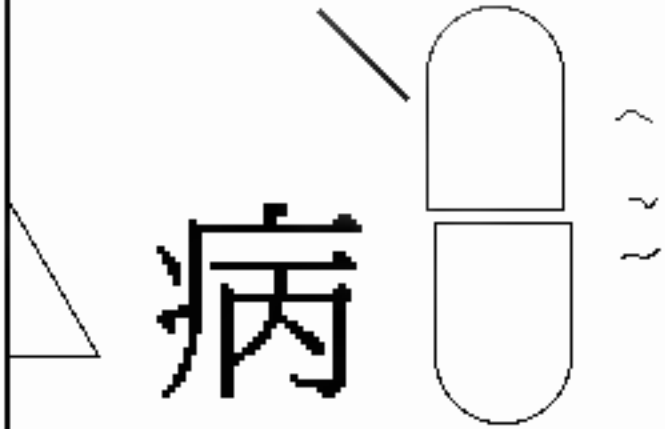


Then it's a really good thing Robert didn't come.

Yeah, you know how he hates having his Lebesgue measured



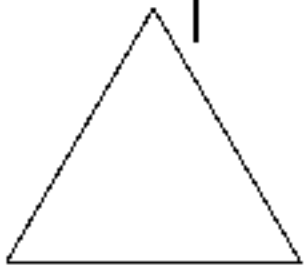
Hi! I'm Prozac the walking Banach-Tarksi paradox!



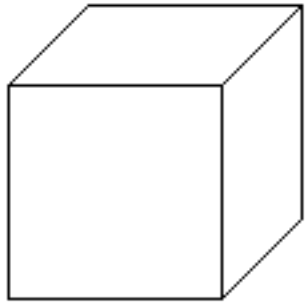
Triangle and Robert

This is where Prozac's directions led

It looks like everywhere else!

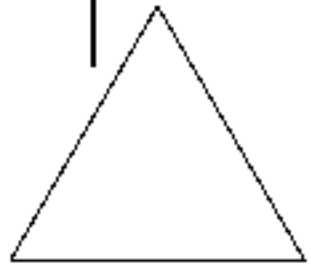


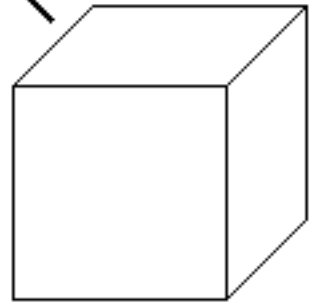
Not entirely. I'm pretty sure that rectangular structure there is an observatory and this one here is a communications center. I think the open area where you're standing is a launch pad.



Then we're bound to find astronomical data somewhere

More than that. If I'm not mistaken there'll be a launch record for the Oval probe.





Triangle and Robert

Back r dry la l, at the offi e of Triangle and Robert Wa ky S heme Consultants

You re early The giant ant farm hasn't fallen over yet

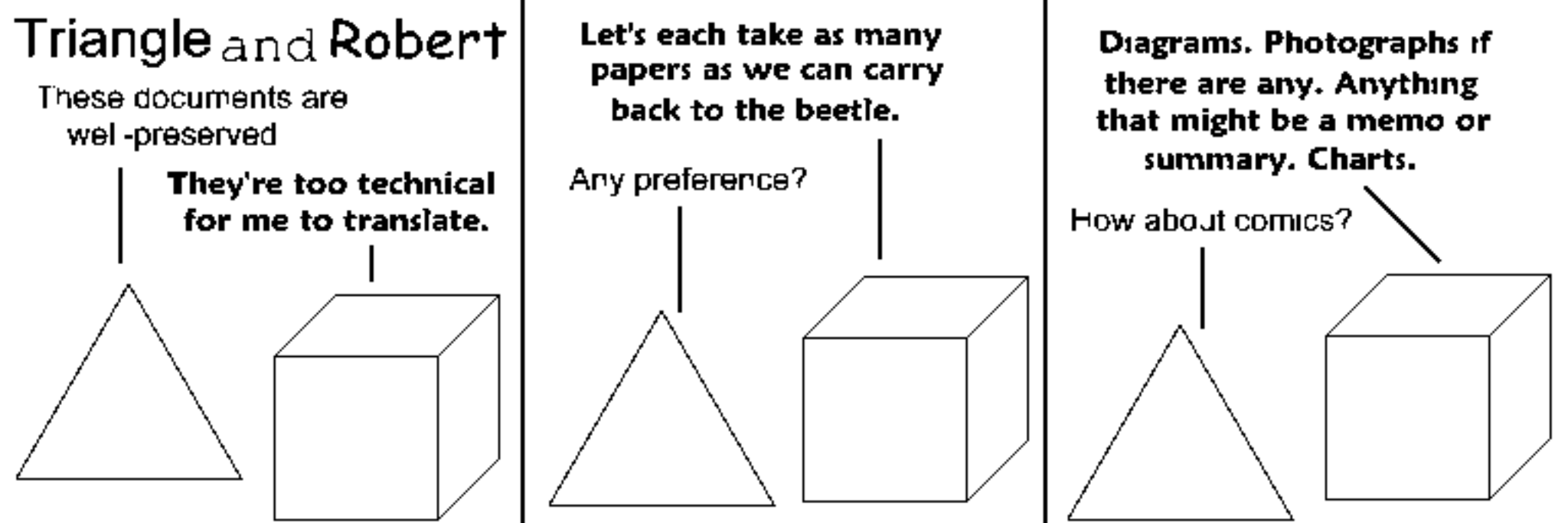
It's not necessarily g ing to fall over

Then what was the point to building it out of porcelain?

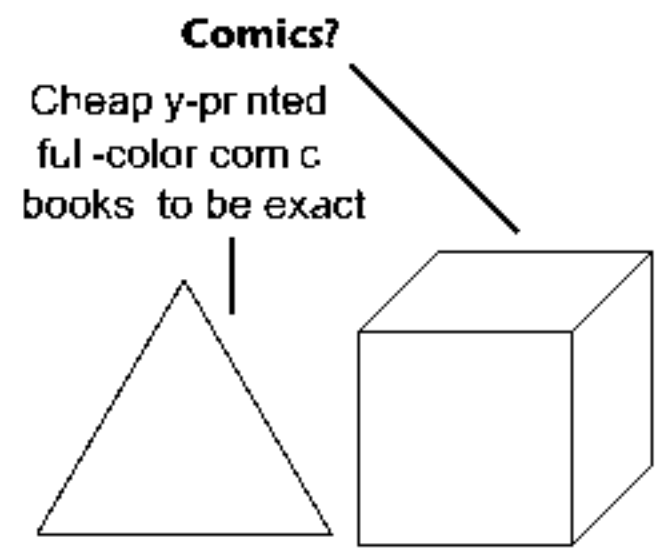
Well, if you wert t all that tr ble I supp se it car fall over

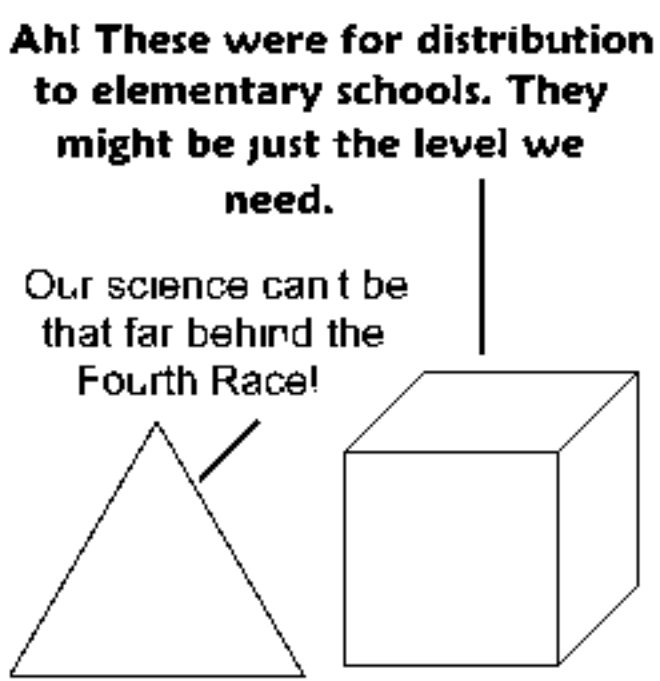
s , how giant are these ants at the m ment

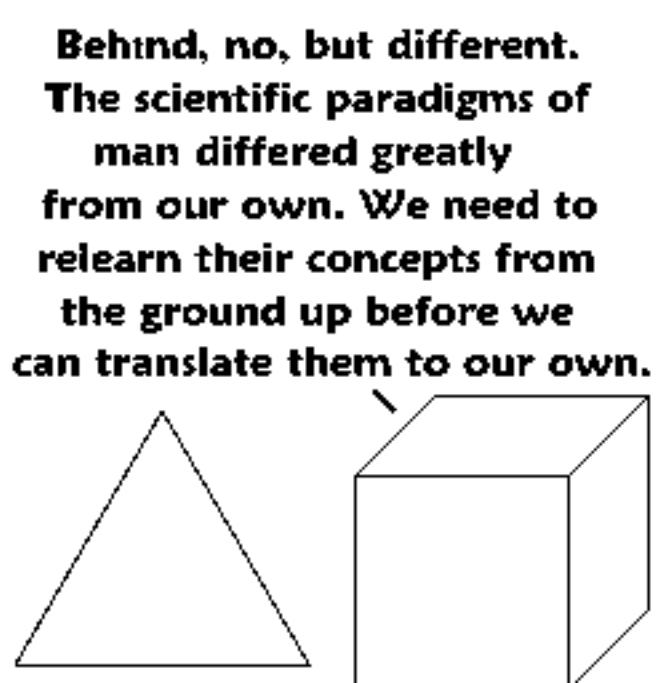
How should I know? It's not l ke I can see inside.


Triangle and Robert
These documents are wel -preserved
They're too technical for me to translate.
Let's each take as many papers as we can carry back to the beetle.
Any preference?
Diagrams. Photographs if there are any. Anything that might be a memo or summary. Charts.
How about comics?

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

You might want to cancel the art escape idea Triangle et cetera are on their way back

I've already abandoned it

That sounds omin is

If giant insects start overrunning the city someone's bound to ment on the square-cube law, and I don't want to have to hear the subsequent puns

S what are you doing with the insects you already have

Protein drinks

Triangle and Robert

Hi! I'm Prozac the character you c t to when you can't figure out what to write!

Yes. Indeed y u are

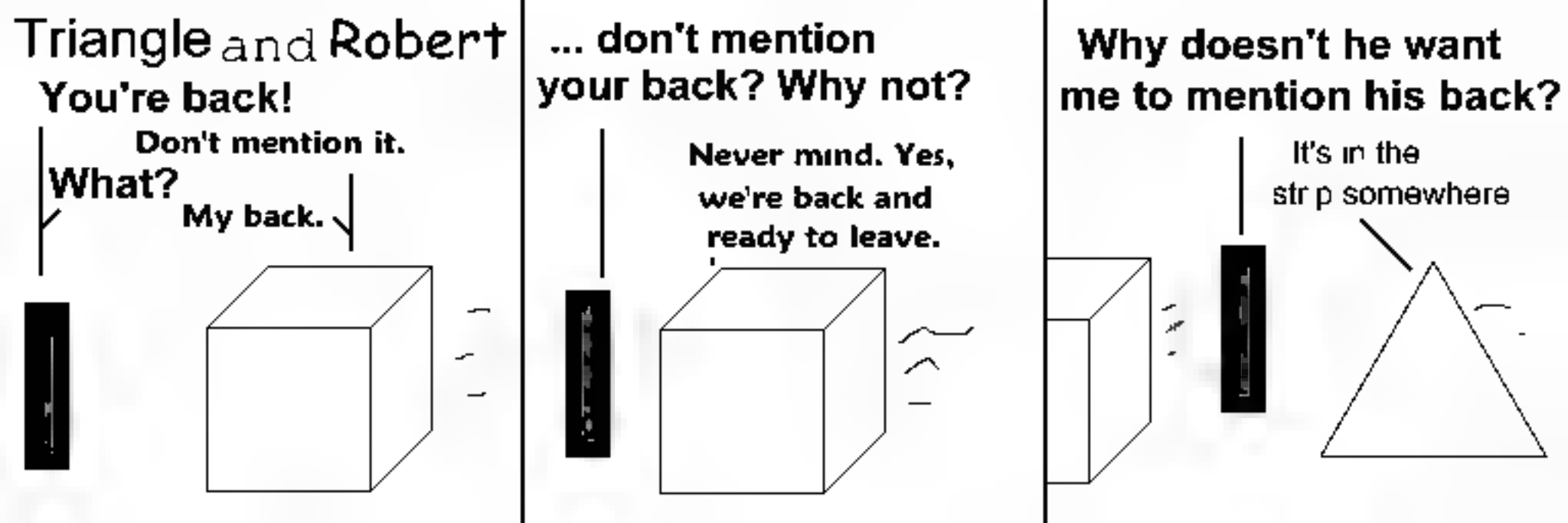
What did you need to come to Tetris for I'm still unclear on your role in this

Me too!

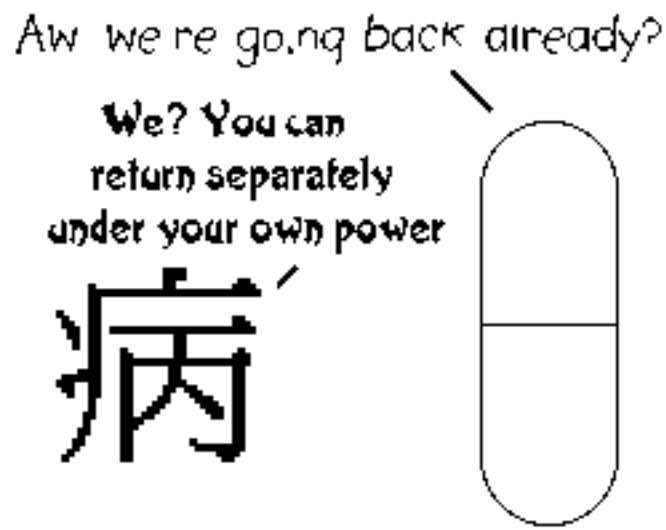
Oh I that case I'll let y u get back to whatever y u were doing .

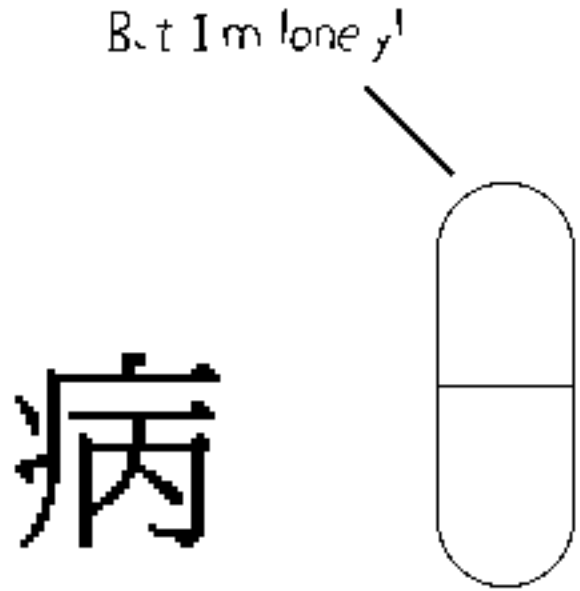
I'm not doing t yet

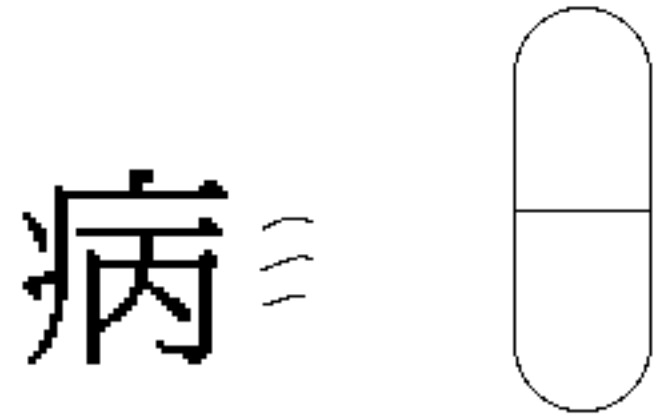
The flow of time has grown goofy


Triangle and Robert
You're back!
Don't mention it.
What?
My back.
... don't mention your back? Why not?
Never mind. Yes, we're back and ready to leave.
Why doesn't he want me to mention his back?
It's in the str p somewhere

Triangle and Robert







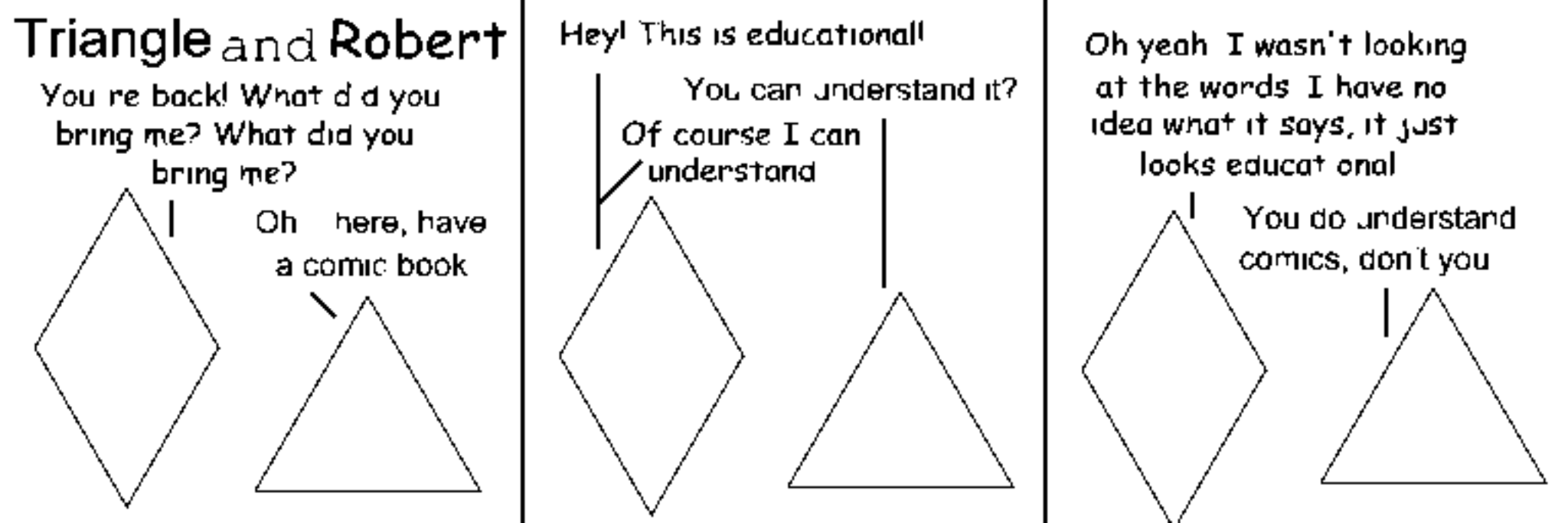
Triangle and Robert

From the sunken city of blocks and right angles the beetle swam landward, [illegible] followed by Prazda the Bear, who had again taken the semblance of a submersible vessel.

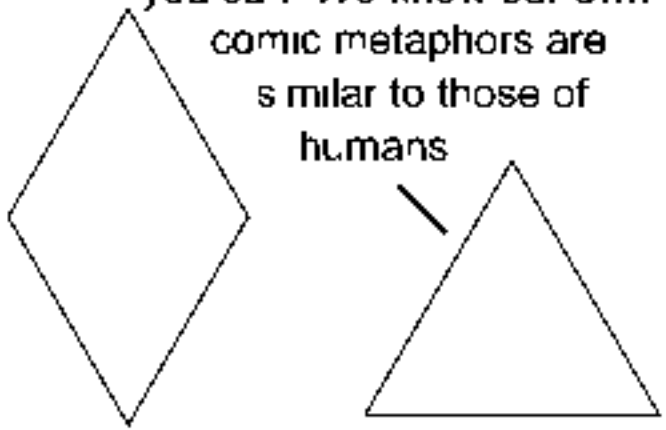
Yours truly, who has been reading a rather excessive quantity of the writing of Fritz Leiber, found himself irresistably compelled to describe this [illegible] and thus, not entirely incidentally, occupy an entire strip with naught but words.

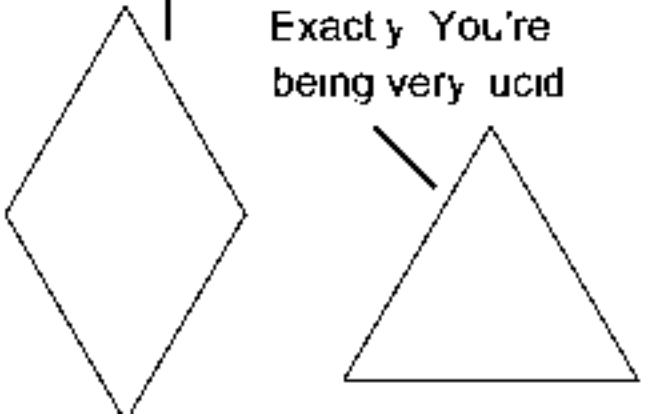
To learn more about Fritz Leiber, visit your local library.

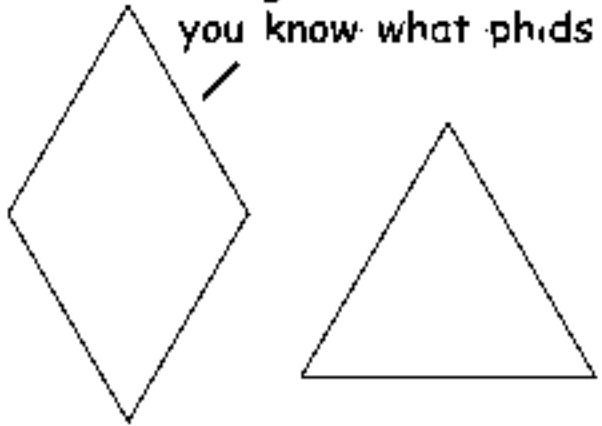
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

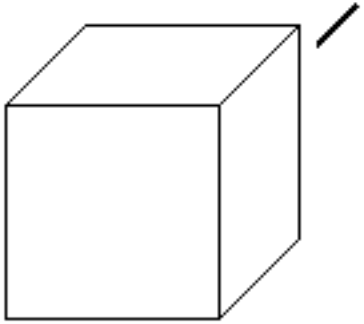




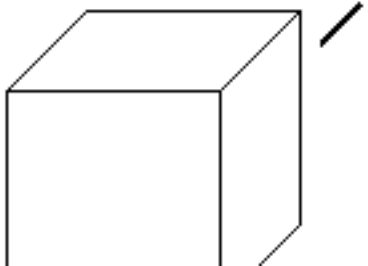


Triangle and Robert

How can it keep switching back and forth between four and five dimensions? This theory makes no sense!

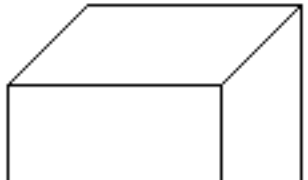


Back to the comic book again, see if I can decipher the lettering... why did it have to be hand-lettered? They could have at least had a typewritten "fun facts" page at the back....



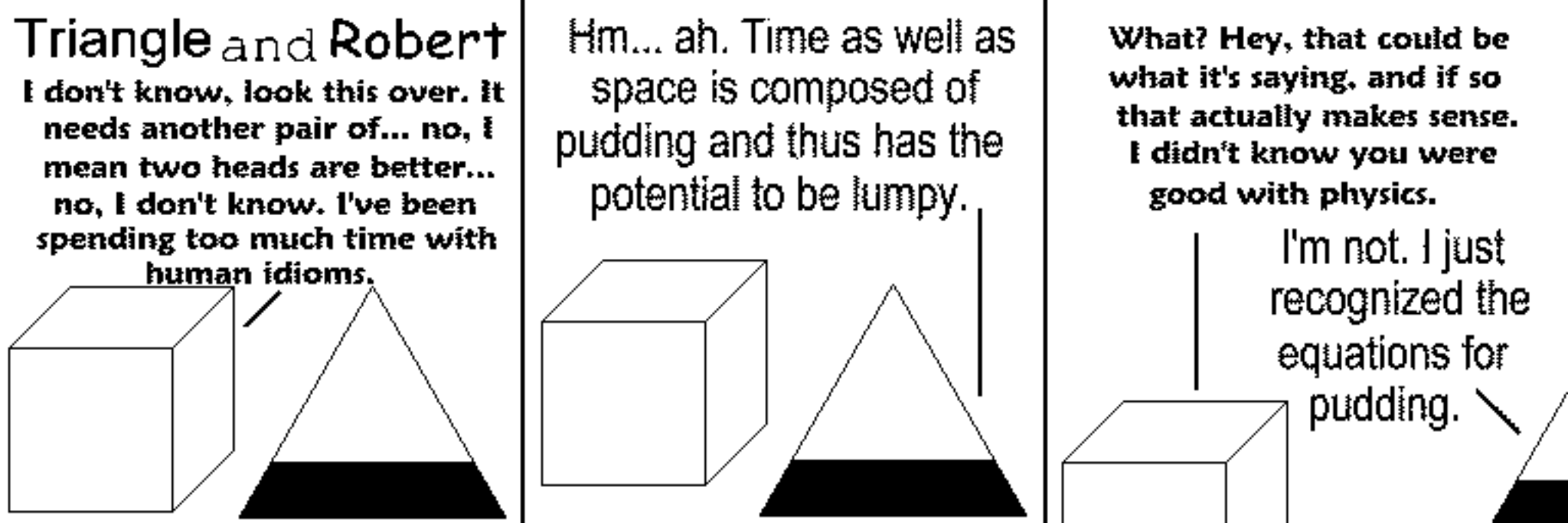
Find anything yet

Tons of confirmation, but nothing new. The Fourth Race had three different systems of physics, only somewhat interchangable.

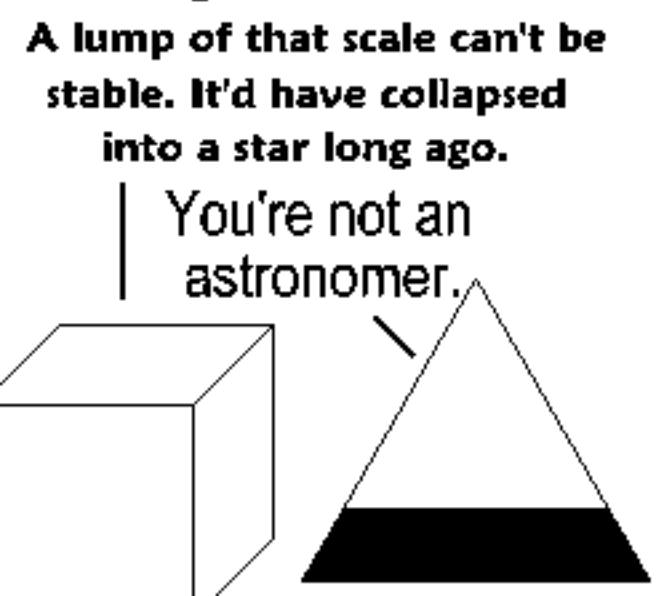


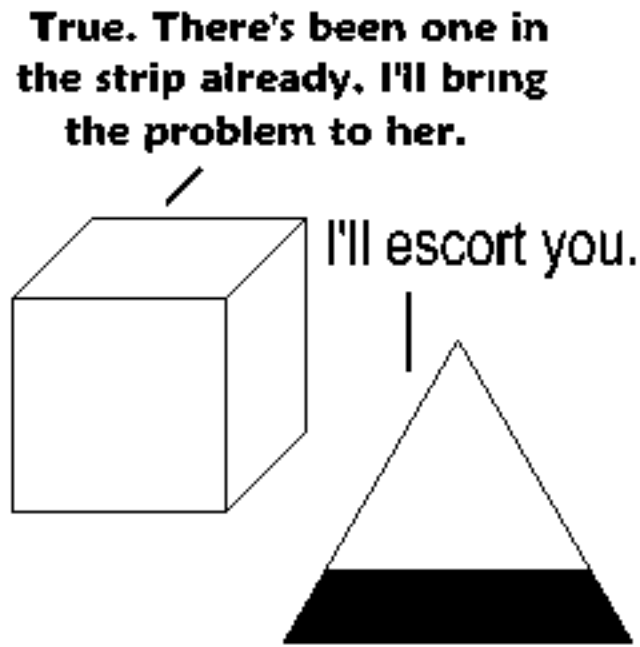
So, like diet plans?

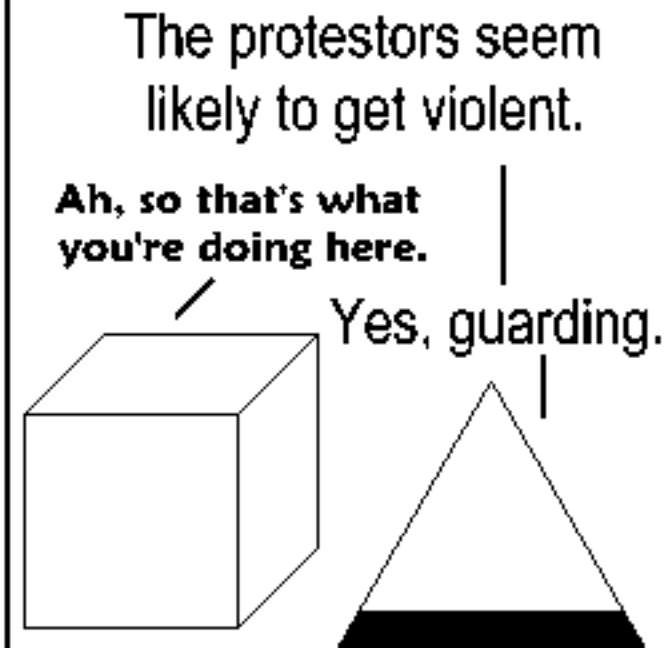
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

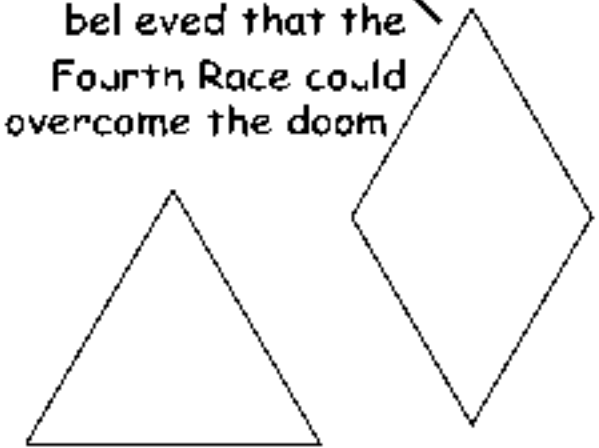




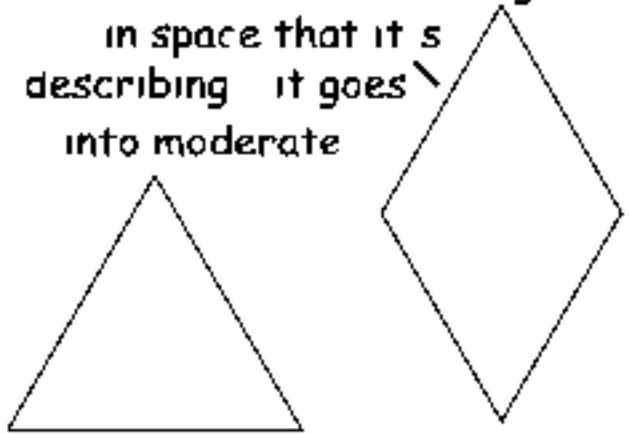


Triangle and Robert

The tone is optimist c The creators of this book either bel eved that the Fourth Race could overcome the doom

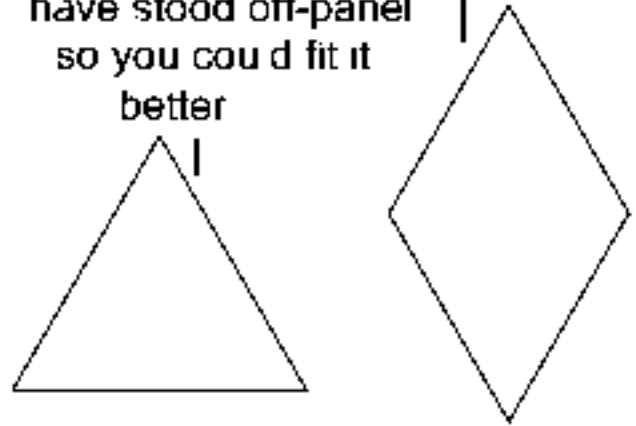


of the previous three or they w shed to forestall panic After a brief descript on of whatever the thing is in space that it s describing it goes into moderate



detail about the Oval mission

If I'd known you had that much to stay I d have stood off-panel so you cou d fit it better



Triangle and Robert

I'm in the strip again! I can tell because I suddenly can't think of what my name is

I'm sorry, I'm terrible with names

The Cartoonist!

Cube's coming with some documents. Eh, I don't need to tell you, you read this thing daily

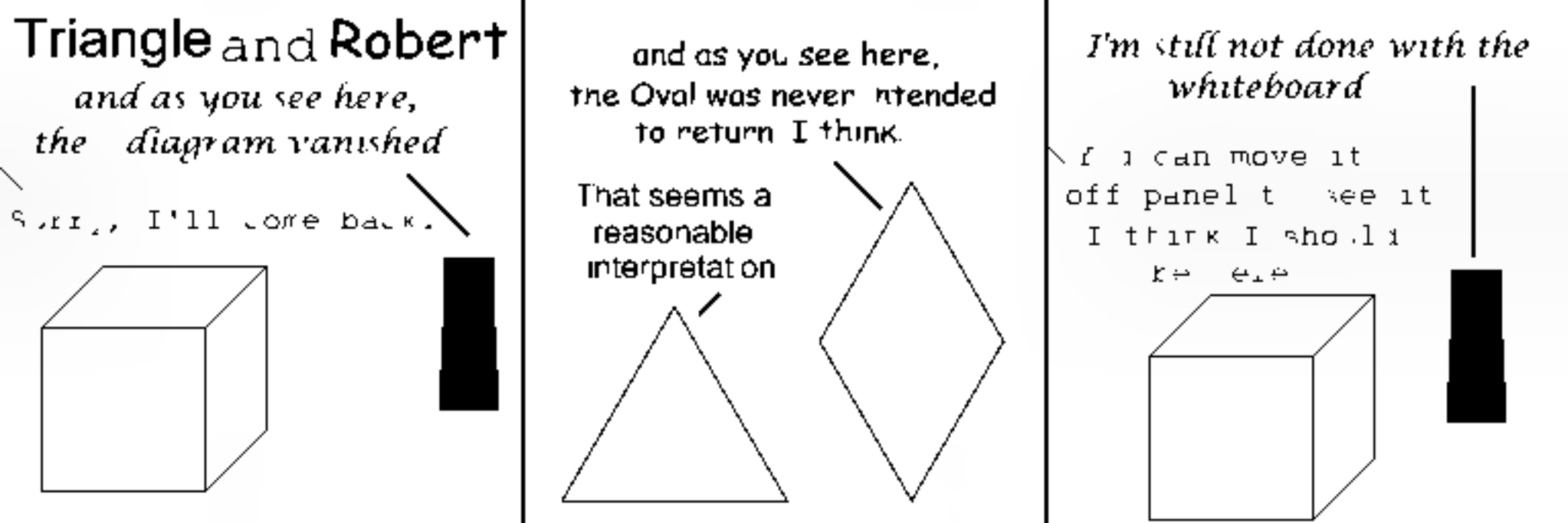
It's an honor, sir.

Don't... don't address me like that unless it's sarcasm

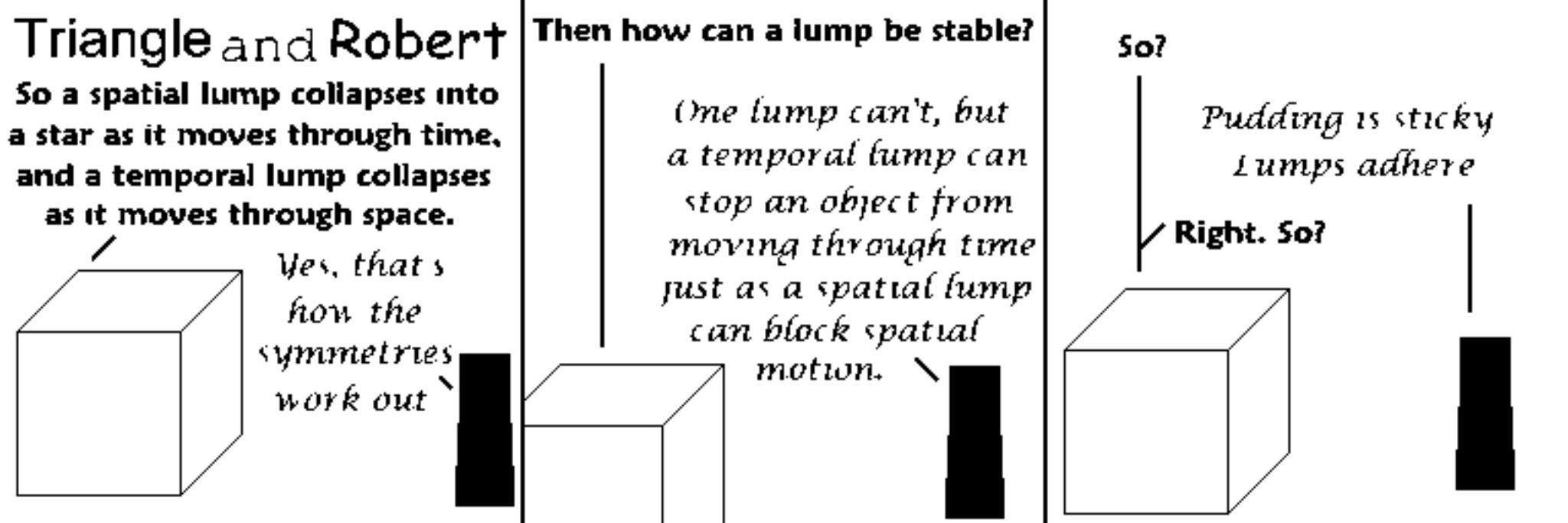
Is your low self esteem that critical to the strip?

No, I just have trouble writing anything good about myself, and when I have trouble writing I end up bringing in Brian the Bear

Triangle and Robert

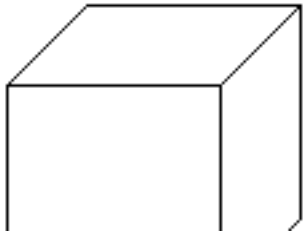


Triangle and Robert



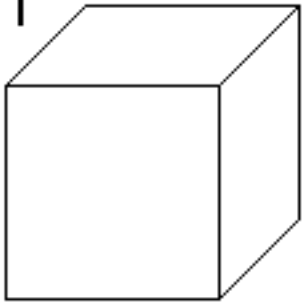
Triangle and Robert

Okay, I admit I'm going out on a limb, but it looks to me like the anomaly the Oval was sent to investigate is a dual space time pudding lump.



And that would mean?

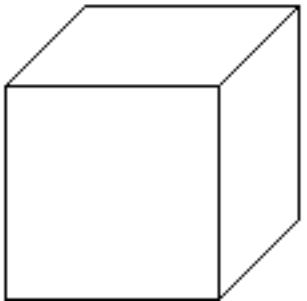
About such a binary lump, time would fail to advance and would instead sort of circle around



So when the Earth nears the lump history starts over?

In a sense, exactly

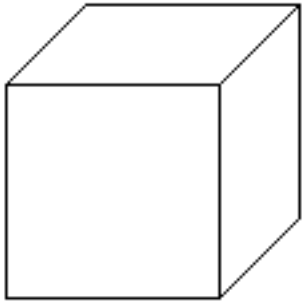
Can you combine "in a sense" with "exactly"? It sounds wrong.



Triangle and Robert

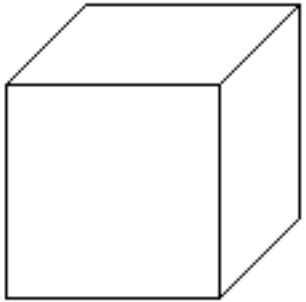
The gaps between the Races are only a handful of millenia long. There's not enough time for evolution to start over from scratch.

I know



Keep on translating. There's bound to be a good explanation eventually

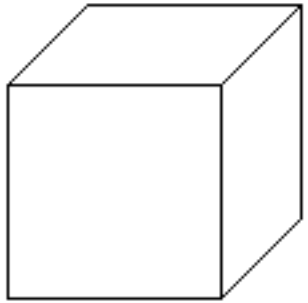
Cartoonist! Hint!



Call Robert. The three of you together can decipher the comic book.

You actually got a hint out of him?

It's always worth a try.



Triangle and Robert

Finally?

Yes. We are ready to attack.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

It's an ambitious plan.

Conquest one nation at a time is too uncertain. I have at my disposal means to ensure that for at least one full day there will be effectively zero resistance. We must take the world then.

I believe I know of what secret weapon you speak. If it slows the polygons for even an hour, my command of the world's sheep will bring victory.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Defense!

What?

病

As Mr. Disease and many others stared in shock, a dull white dome sprang up around the city.

Necessary.

What?

病

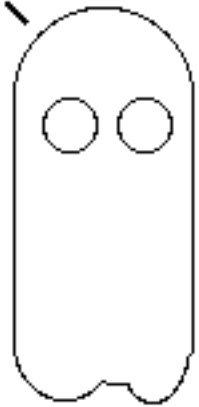
The developing mind of the world's monosodium glutamate has exerted itself to defend the Sentries and the Chosen One from the effects of the Cual's plan.

Must this become so complicated?

病

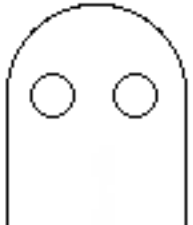
Triangle and Robert

There are no souls to harvest in the aftermath of the ovine conquest. The Oval's assault on the wills of polygonkind has left the minions of the Cornersheep in unquestioned command.



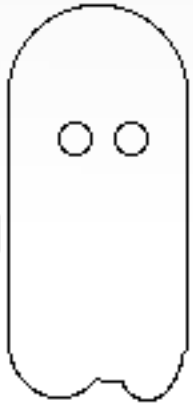
Except the dome.

Yes. Beneath the glutamic dome I can perceive nothing. No telepathy or cuisine can pass into the city. Presumably then, the city is safe for the moment, as is the Chosen One.



When the dome dissolves in the next rain, the protagonists are likely to find the world much changed.

They can do nothing. The time for the Seventh Race on this world has ended.



The Beforings

... beyond space, and
not particularly in the
vicinity of time either...

Phase Three may
be complete.

May?

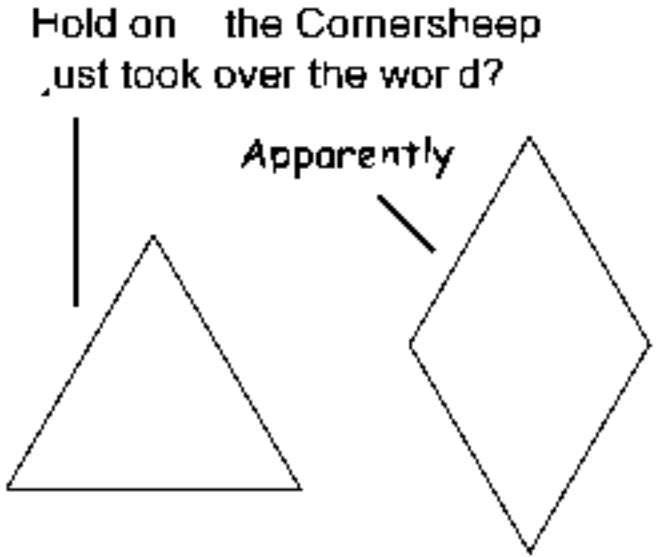
Either it is complete or
it can never occur
The uncertainty is
deafening

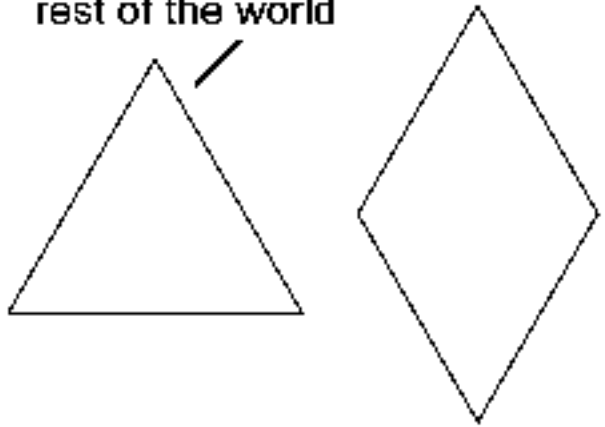
All this was to
be expected.

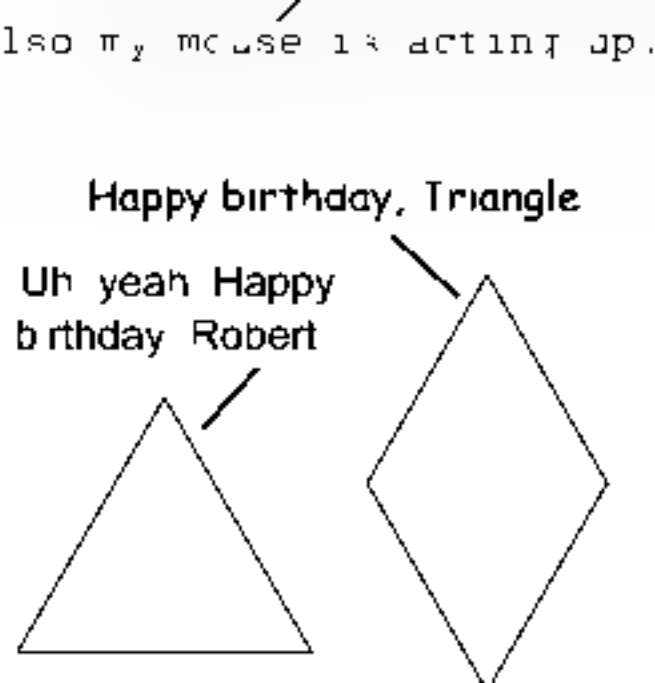
All outcomes are possible.
Everything changes
Everything flows

That's a quality
of pudding

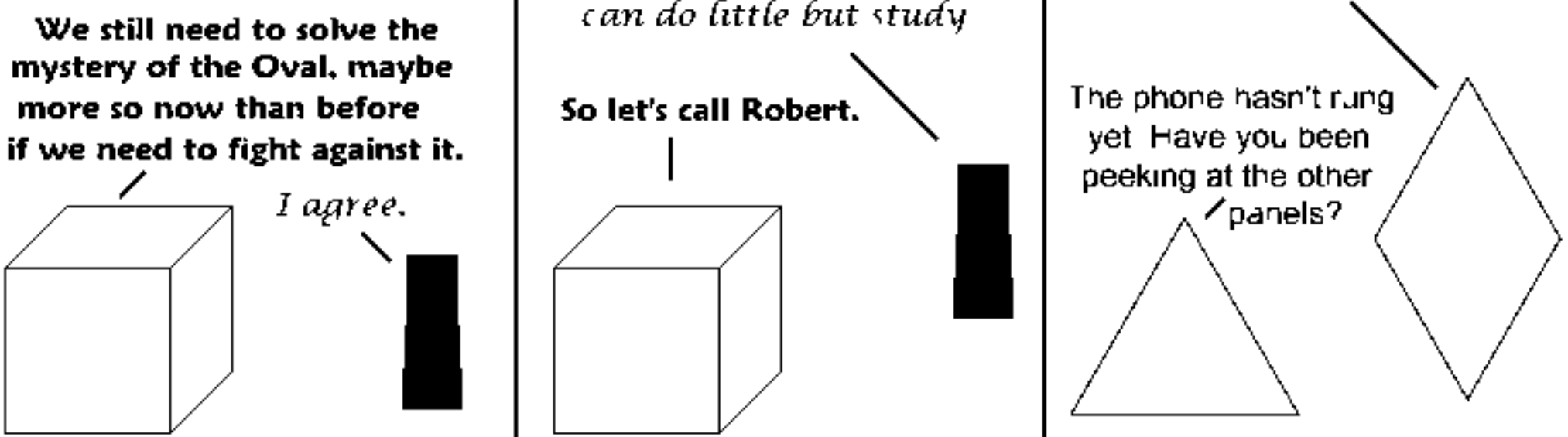
Triangle and Robert





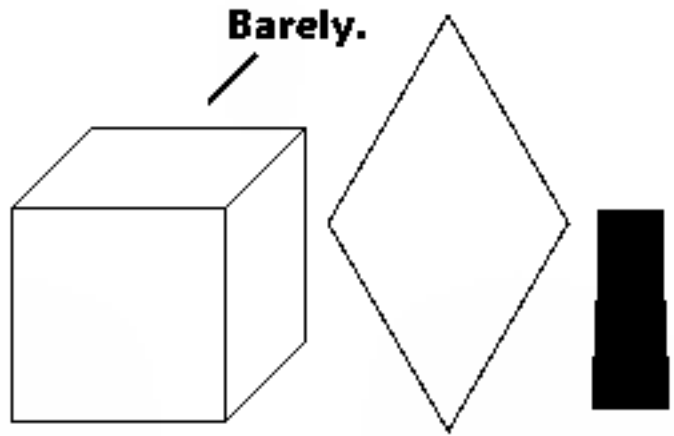


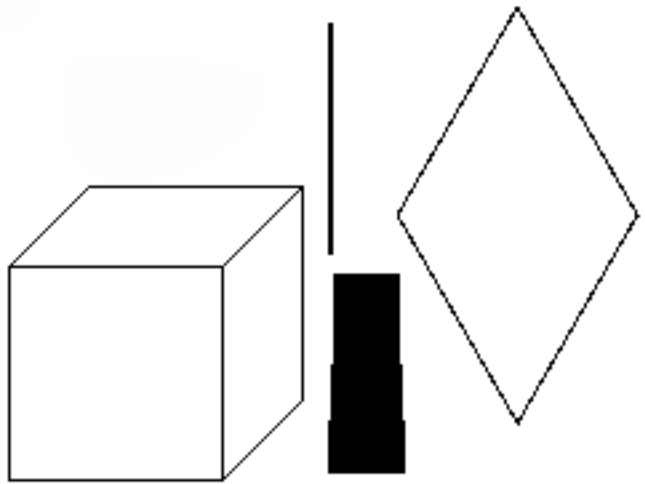
Triangle and Robert

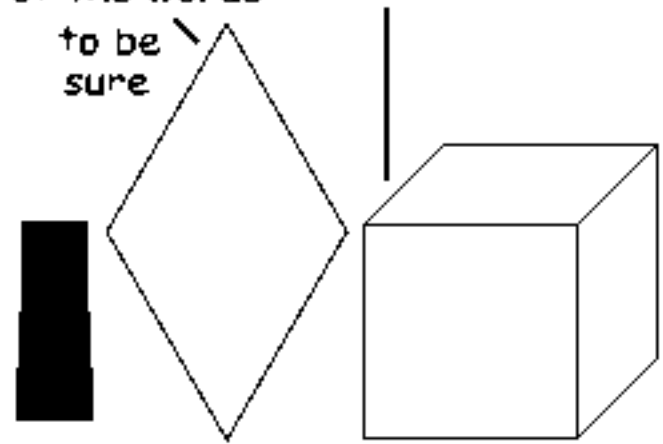


Triangle and Robert

Or, good. All three f[illegible] can fit in one panel.







Triangle and Robert

Is that what changing resolutions feels like?

Could this caption be something like "Don't try this at home!"?

I'll never be cruel to a graphics card again.

So that'd be an H, and that's punctuation... yes! That'd make this panel...

When do I stop feeling misproportioned?

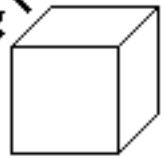
Take deep breaths and look at the horizon.

and then if...

Triangle and Robert

This is even worse! At least antialias me!

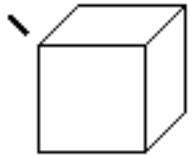
This is a semi-technical explanation of the Oval, this is a description of its course, and this is just a printing error!



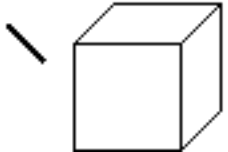
Okay, you're not listening

Is that good?

It's making sense. From here I can come up with a list of the Oval's intended capabilities.



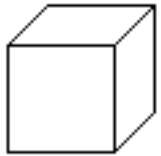
Single pilot. Not intended to return to Earth. Capable of instantaneously transmitting data to Earth, but limited to the speed of sound in pudding for reception. Equipped with automated geometric tools for general-purpose defense and troubleshooting. Stasis armor prevents all damage.



Triangle and Robert

Is the Oval intelligent or just its pilot?

It wasn't intelligent when it was built. Who can say now?

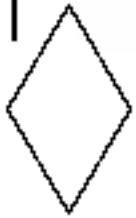


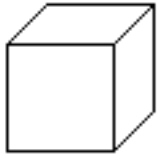
The Cartoonist could

It's not important

You don't know

I haven't decided yet I don't think it'll matter

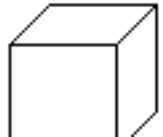




How can we know what we're up against if you haven't even decided?

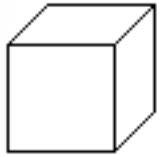
So, I'm fuzzy on a few details. Most of it makes sense anyway

What's the point of archaeology when you're not done writing the past yet?



Triangle and Robert

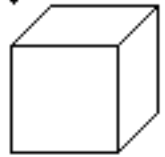
Okay, the val itself is of approximately the same intelligence as a Tetrean philosopher automaton, but without the more critical flaws and entirely subservient to the Covalnant



Okay, in that case who s

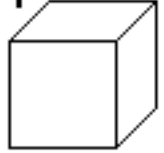
The val has acted as a translator, but everything said was initiated by the pilot

Humans are mortal. How is the pilot still alive?



I already explained the whole time distortion thing! If you don't get it, reread those strips. I'm not going through it with you again.

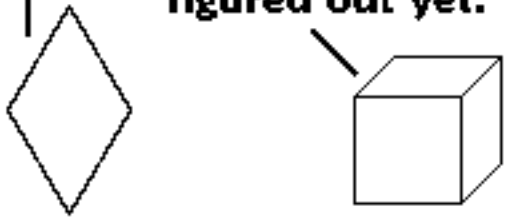
Oh, that stuff.



Triangle and Robert

None of this explains how it could have conquered the Earth. What's the secret weapon?

That, I haven't figured out yet.



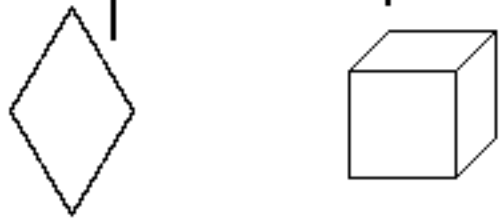
So have we learned anything directly useful?

Well, not for the current situation, no.

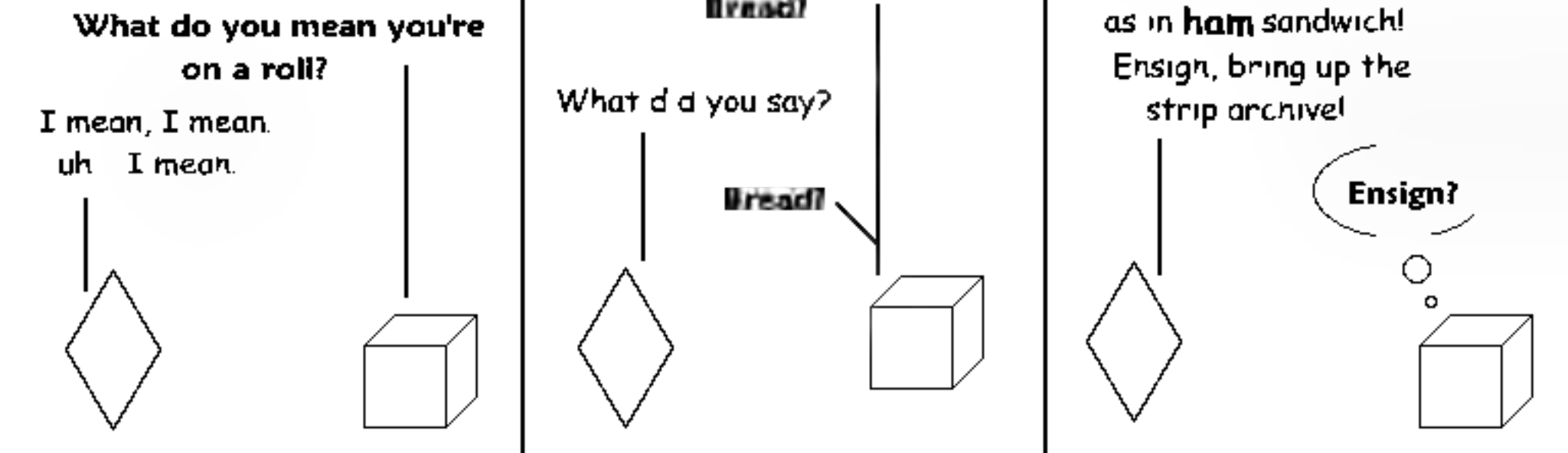
Right. It's all been a complete waste of time.

I wouldn't go that far....

Quiet, I'm on a roll here.



Triangle and Robert

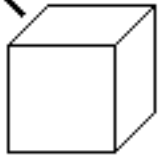


Triangle and Robert

We've seen indications that the Ovalnaut ate the Starham

What powers would th s have granted?

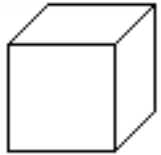
How should I know? I'm not a nutritionist.



The Sentries don't know e ther

Who can we ask?

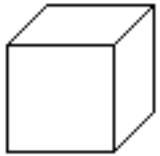
N t me you've used up all your ma ical cheat juice



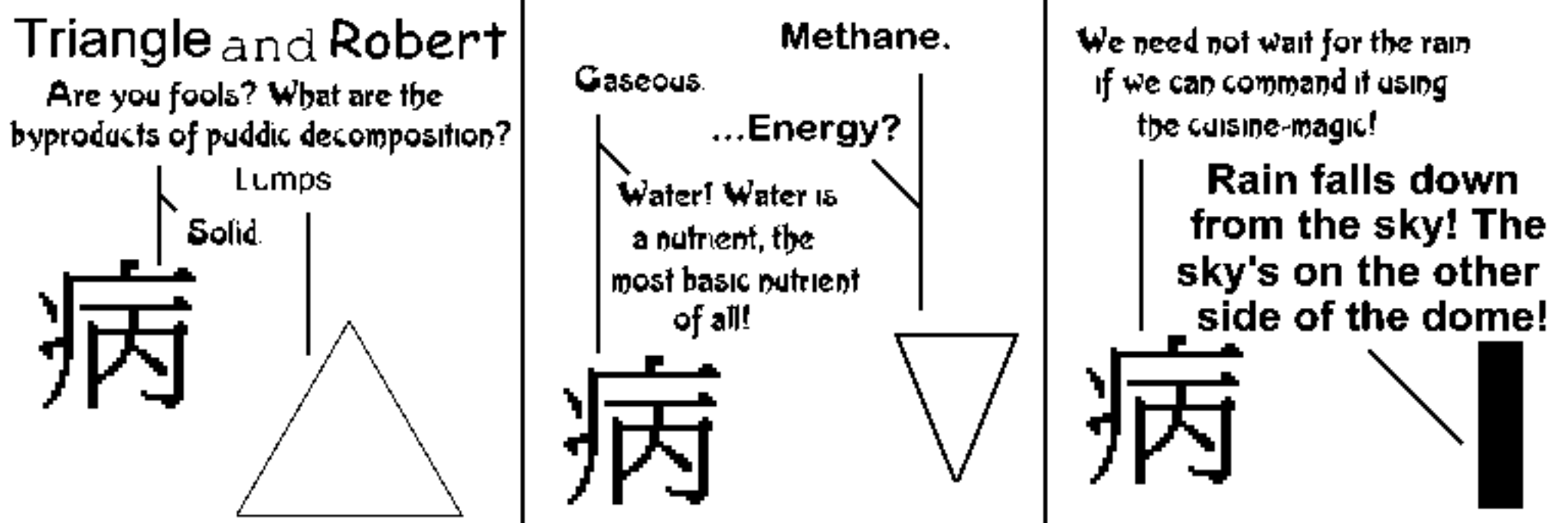
Where can we get more magical cheat ju ce?

I wasn't being literal

There's some way I can use that fact to trap you, right?



Triangle and Robert
Bacopocalypse!
Hibachi!
Juicex!
病
It's not working
Our mag c can't break
through the MSG dome
We can only wait for ra n
病
No.. I have it Think, all of you!
What is the First Nutrient?
Pudding?
Marshmallows?
Pork?
病


Triangle and Robert
Are you fools? What are the byproducts of puddic decomposition?
Lumps
Solid.
病
Gaseous.
Methane.
...Energy?
Water! Water is a nutrient, the most basic nutrient of all!
病
We need not wait for the rain if we can command it using the cuisine-magic!
Rain falls down from the sky! The sky's on the other side of the dome!
病

Triangle and Robert

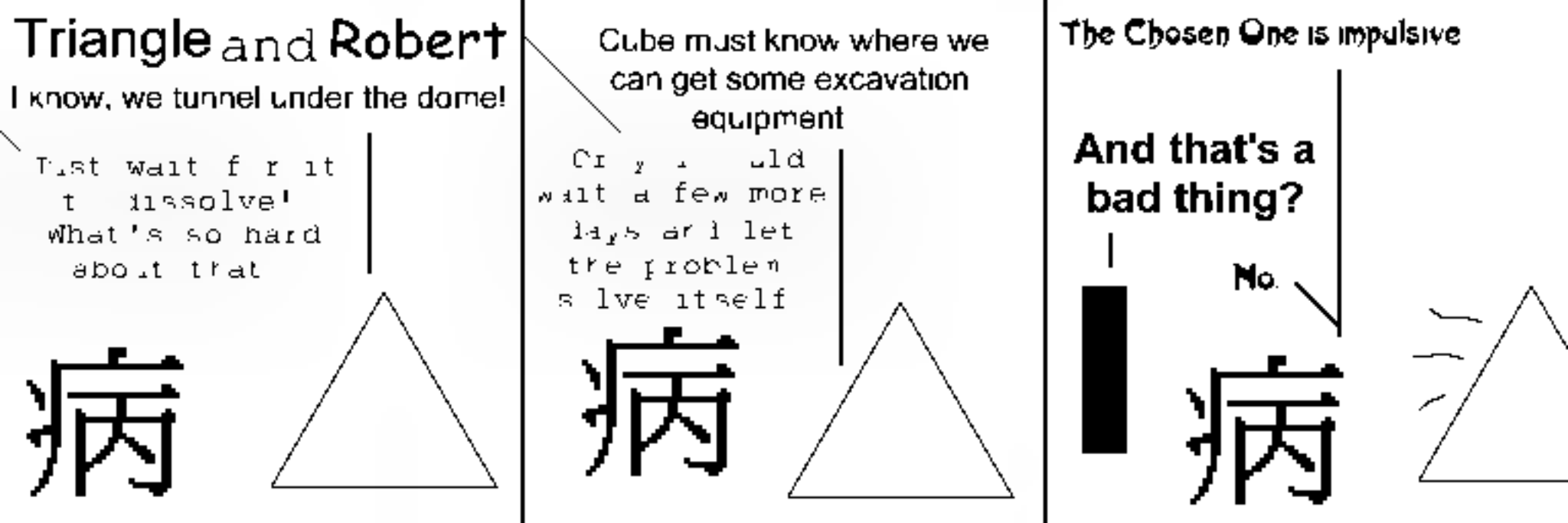
What is there to prevent us from creating a rain on the inside of the dome, directed outwards?

I'll get a firehose

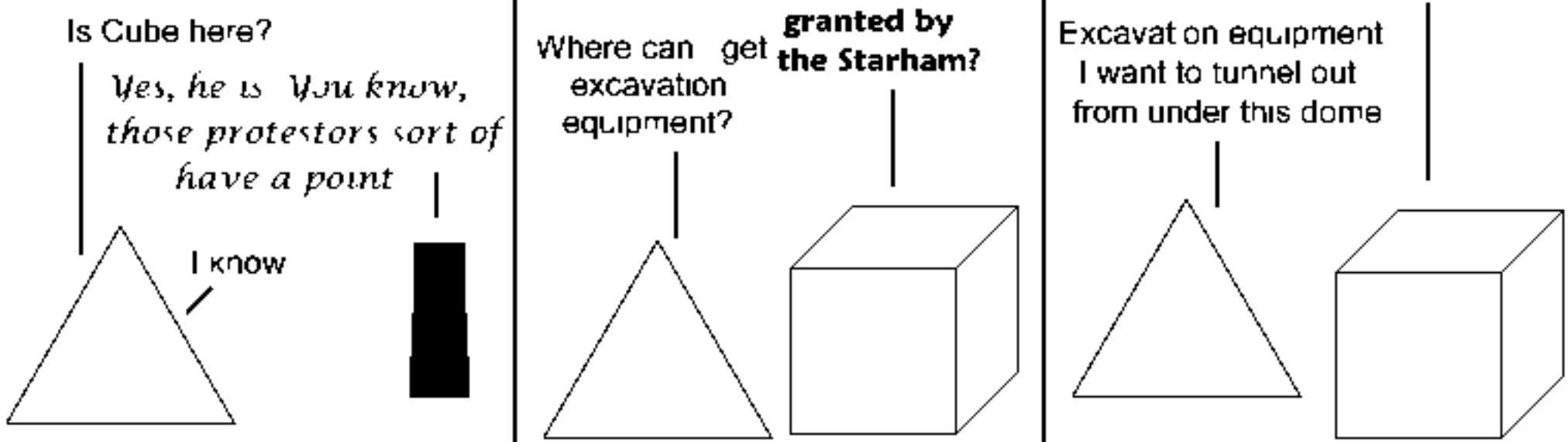
I was thinking we could use cuisine-magic

But I *know* we can use a firehose

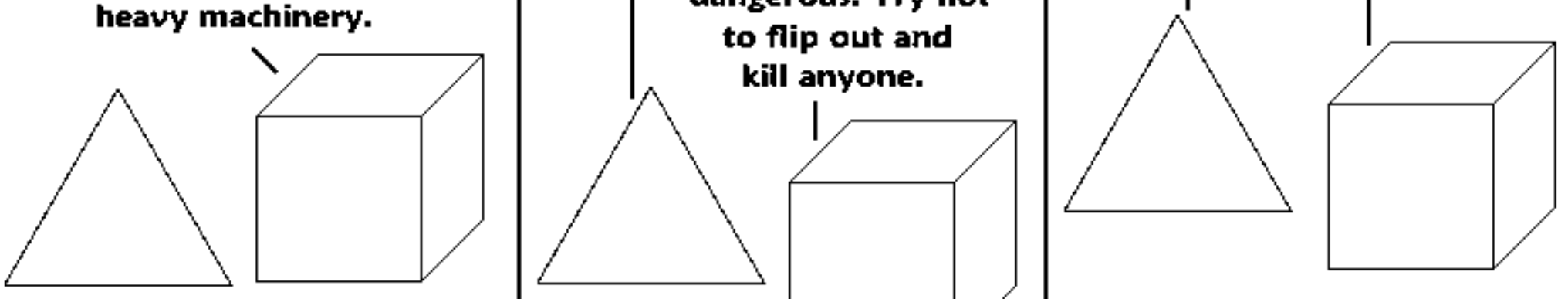
Um, no, that won't work because, it's the dome's too thick! Right! There isn't enough water available! You have to wait until it rains!


Triangle and Robert
I know, we tunnel under the dome!
Just wait for it to dissolve! What's so hard about that
Cube must know where we can get some excavation equipment
Cube should wait a few more days and let the problem solve itself
The Chosen One is impulsive
And that's a bad thing?
No.

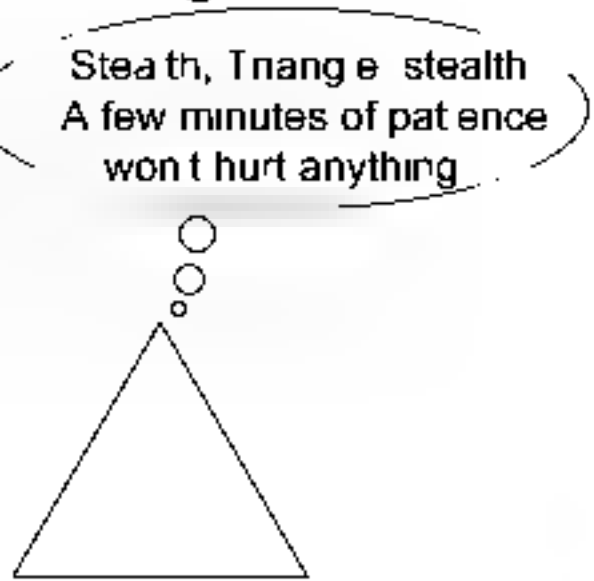
Triangle and Robert

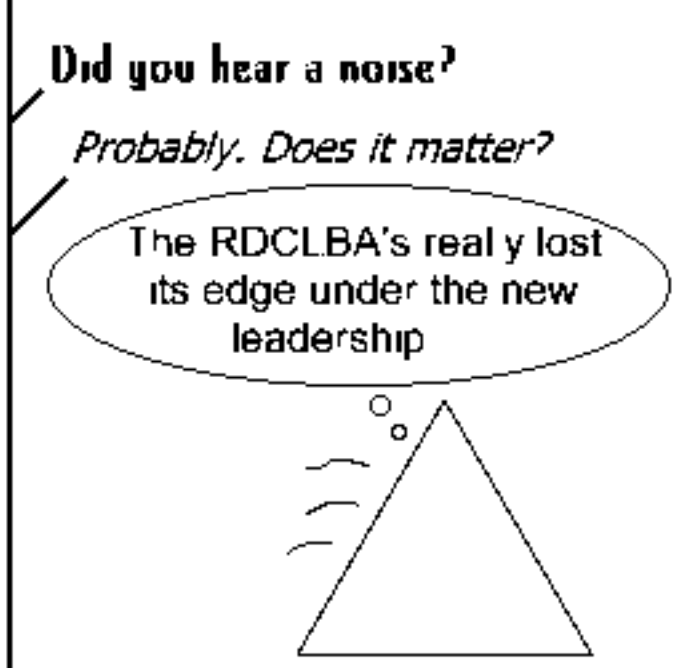


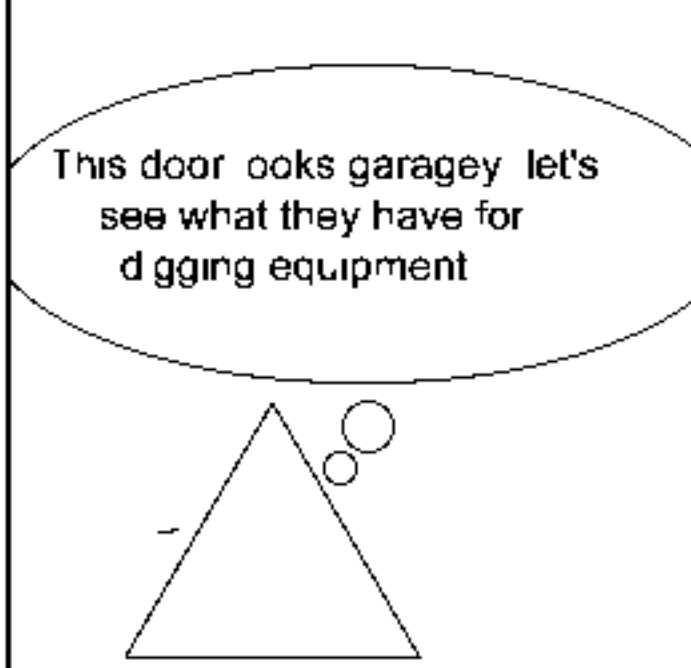
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



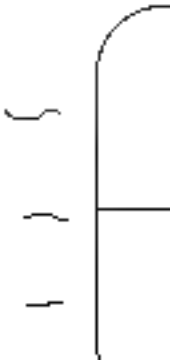




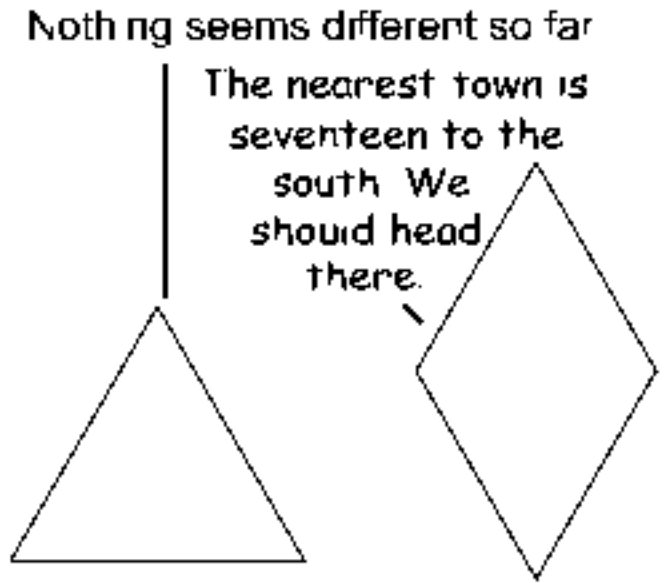
And so, having circumvented the Cartoonist's efforts, Triangle leads Robert, Cube, and the five Food Sentries out from beneath the dome of MSG.

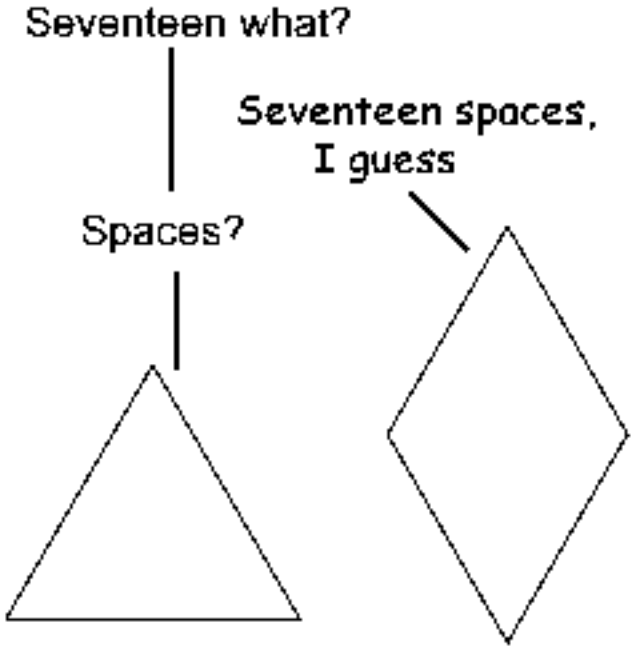
What new adventures await them in the changed world beyond? Good question. For the answer, let's turn to noted adventurologist Prozac the Bear.

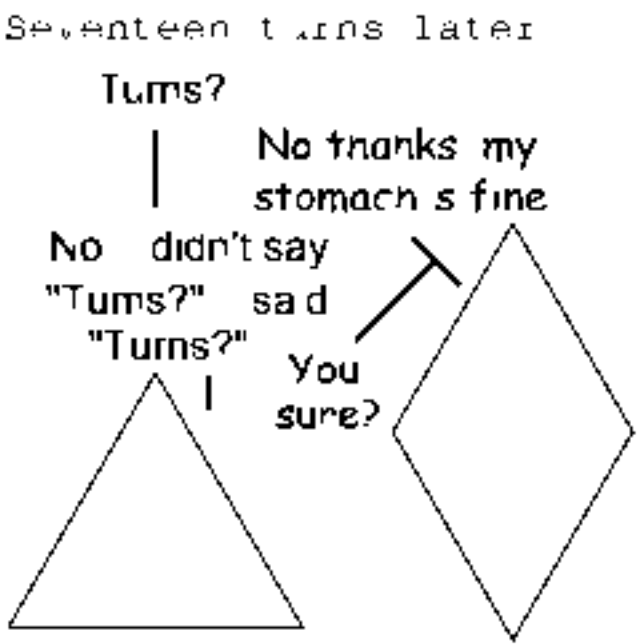
Come to think of it, let's not.



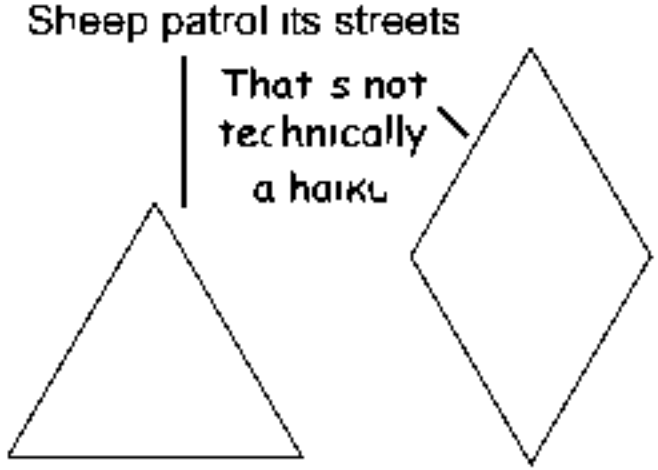
Triangle and Robert

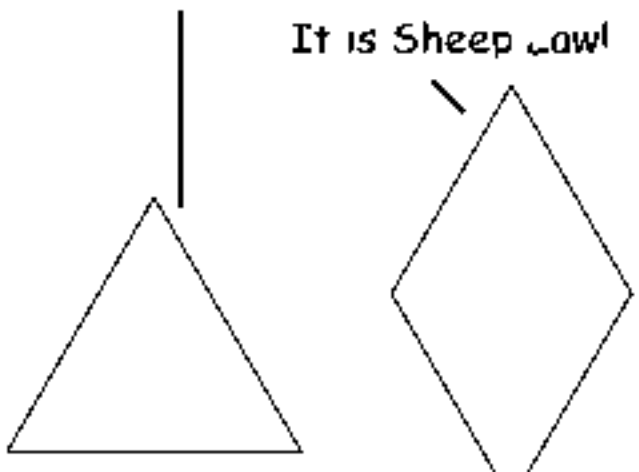


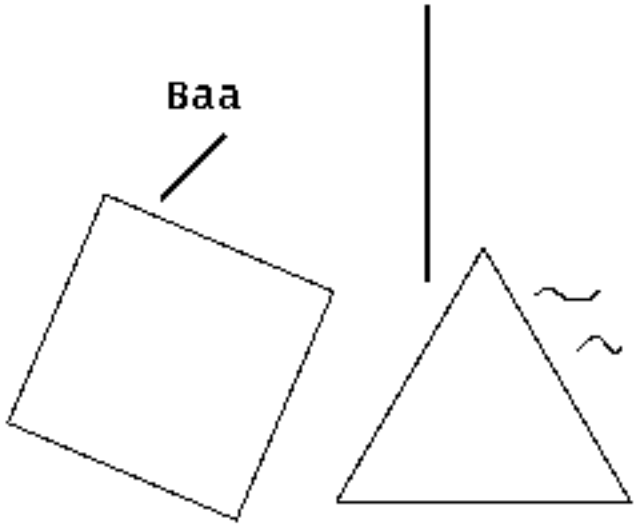




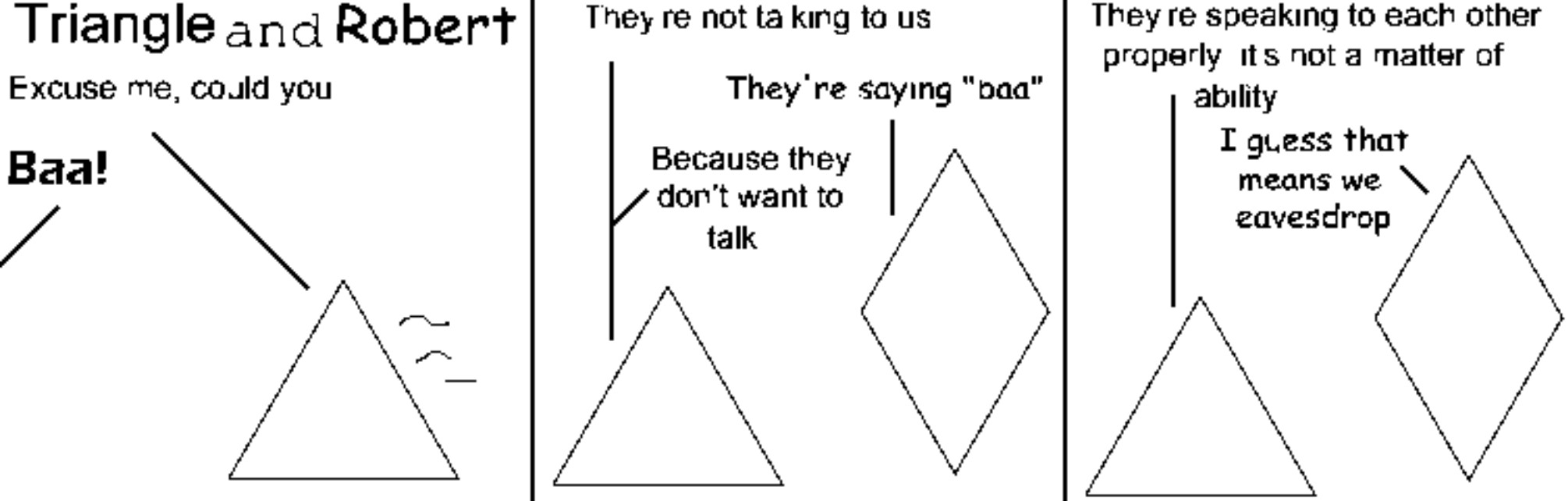
Triangle and Robert





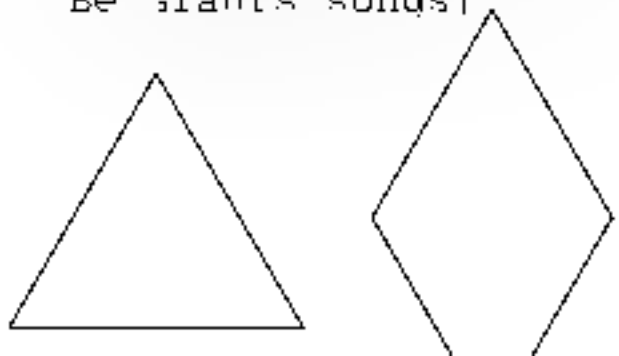


Triangle and Robert



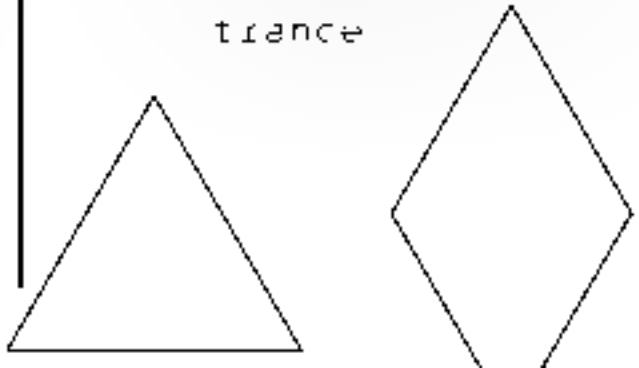
Triangle and Robert

[insert appropriate lyrics from any of several They Might Be Giants songs]



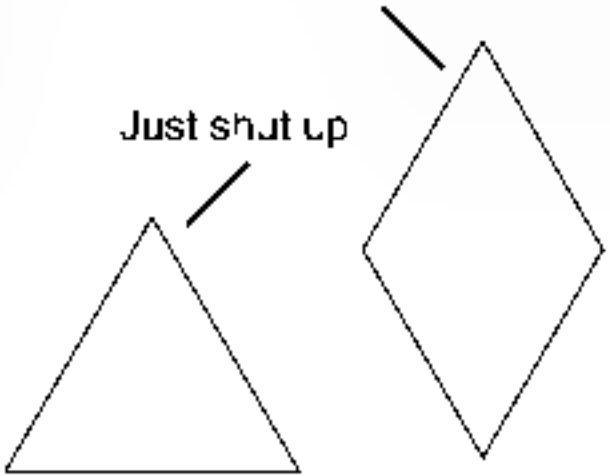
You'll have to be more specific

Well, everyone's going about more or less their normal business, but slowly and quietly, as if they're in a trance

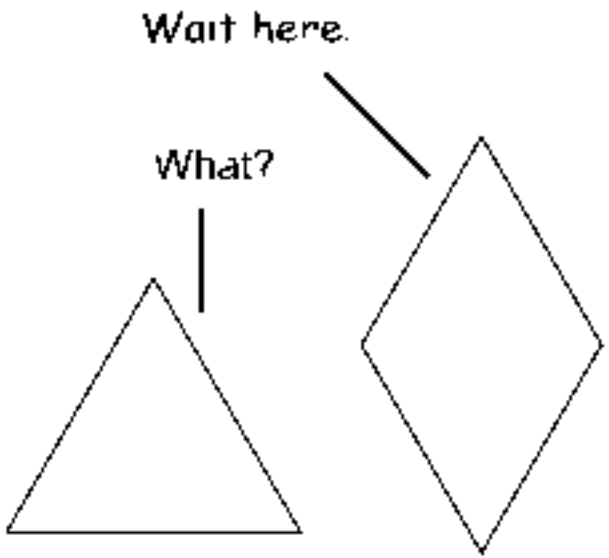


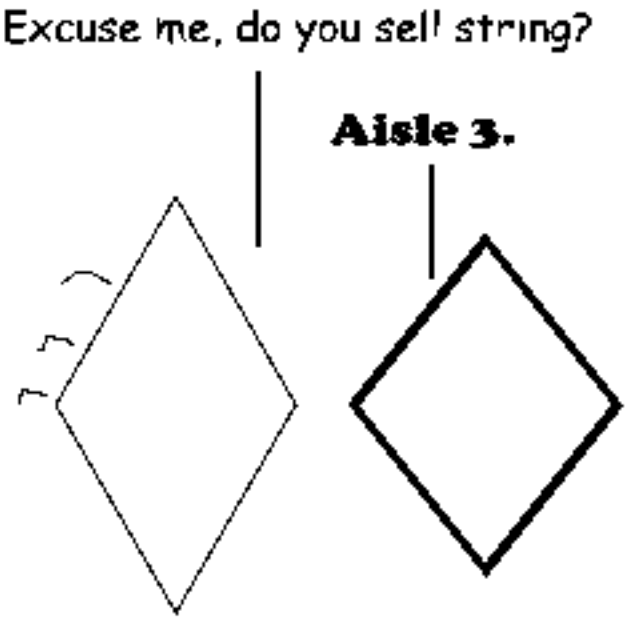
Also I suddenly have a craving for a piece of string and a rock to wind the string around

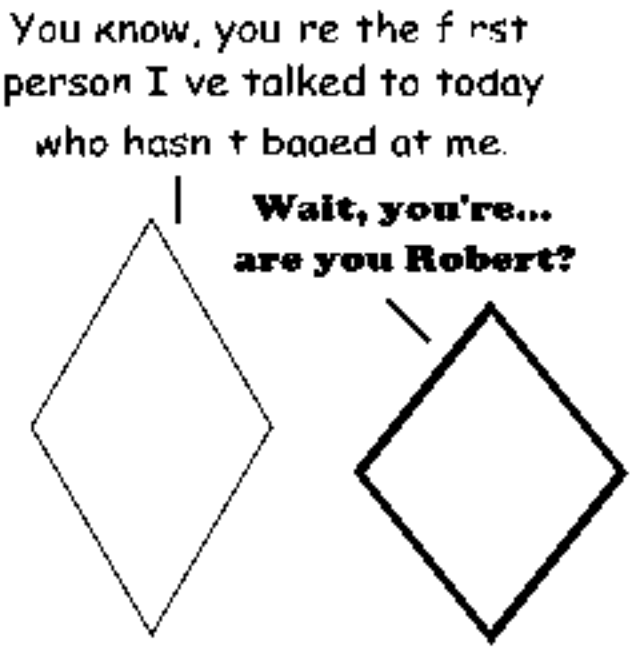
Just shut up



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I read your strip right up to the end, you know.

What end?

This is the strip now

I suppose the sheep must be blocking it then.

What's going on with the sheep? How did they take over?

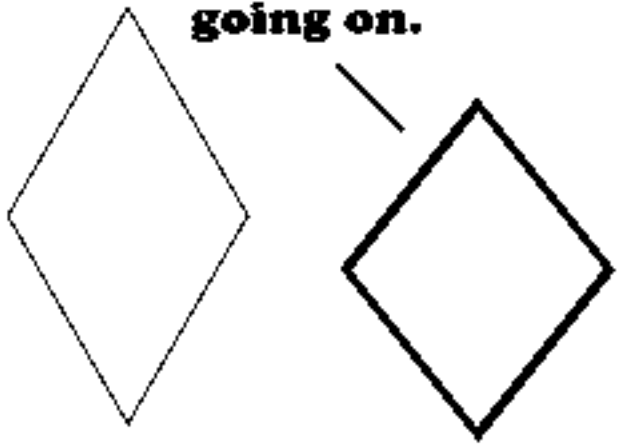
Where have you been?

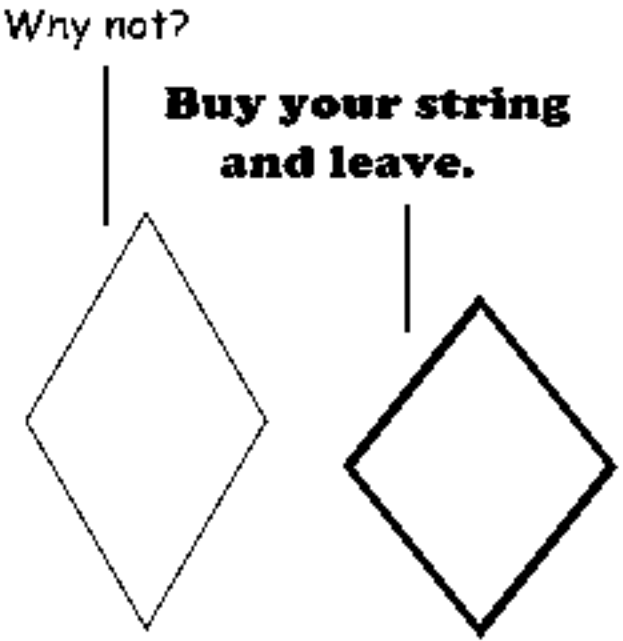
In the MSG dome.

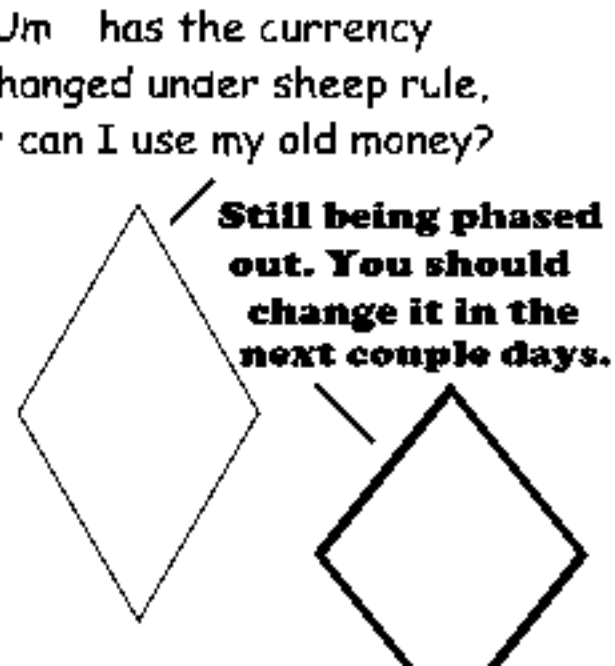
Oh yeah, the strip ended with that dome thing....

It didn't end!

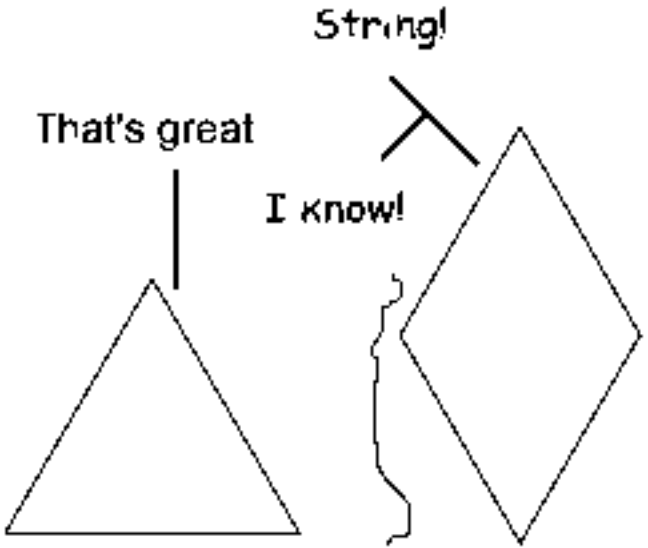
Triangle and Robert

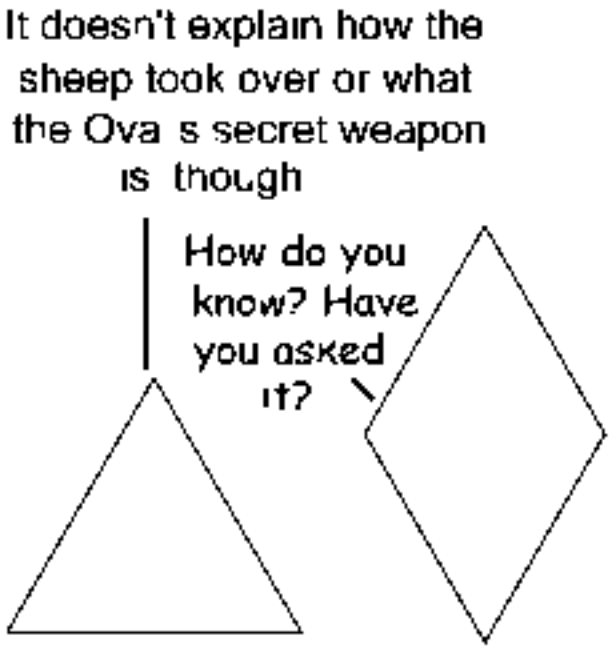


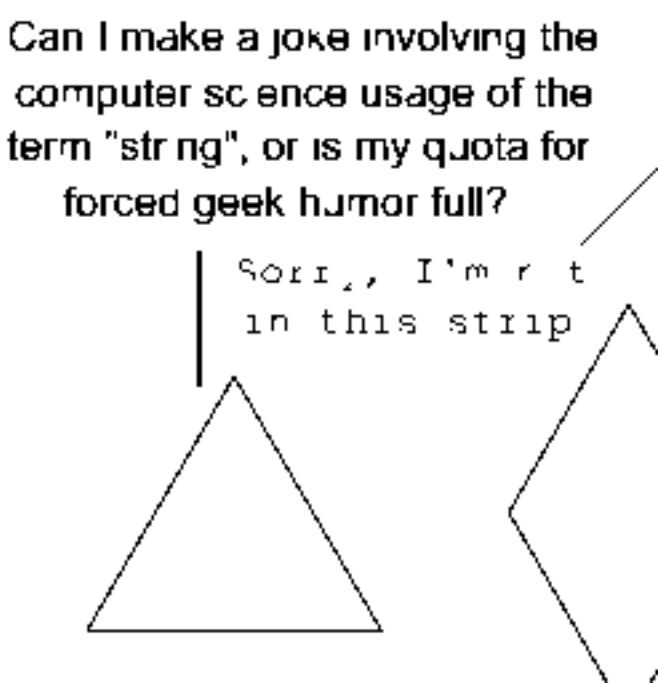




Triangle and Robert

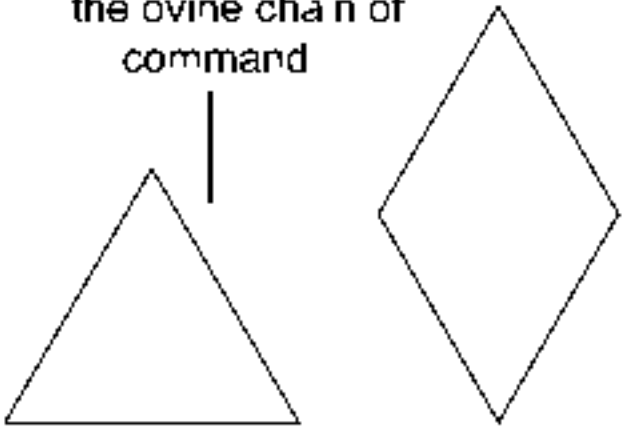






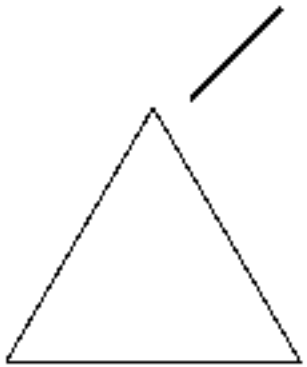
Triangle and Robert

We' l get no answers from the townsfolk We need to find the ovine cha n of command



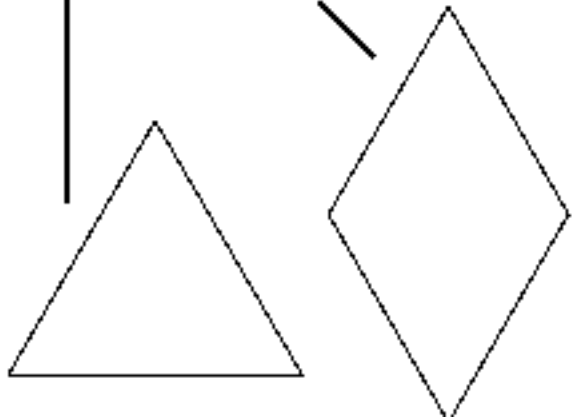
Ducks?

Th n ks



Oh no Why now?

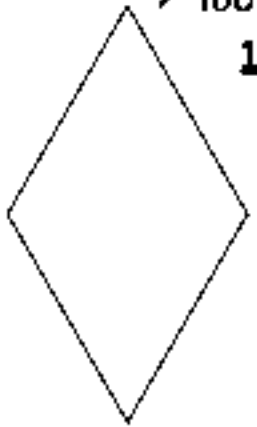
I think the prev ous strip was so self referentially bad as to warp time itself



Triangle and Robert

Mr Disease! Triangle's caught in another space time ducks thanks loop!

Linda! Commandeer a kitchen!



So you two are on a first name basis now?

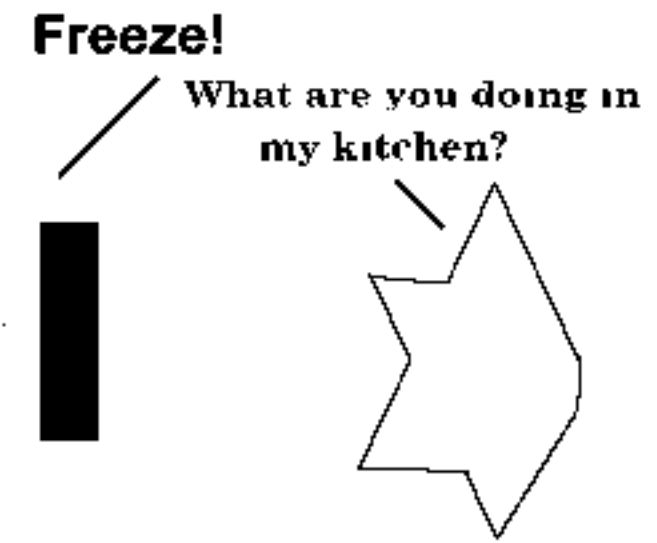
No, we are not on a first name basis!

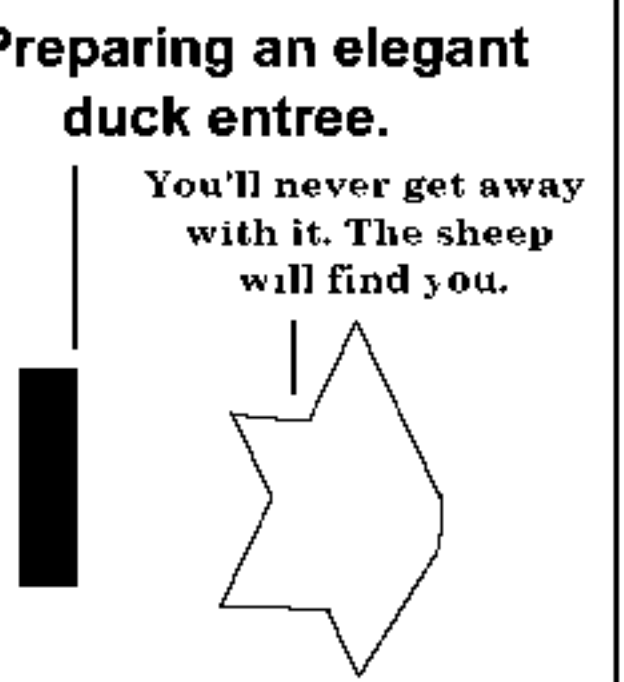
I apologize for the familiarity

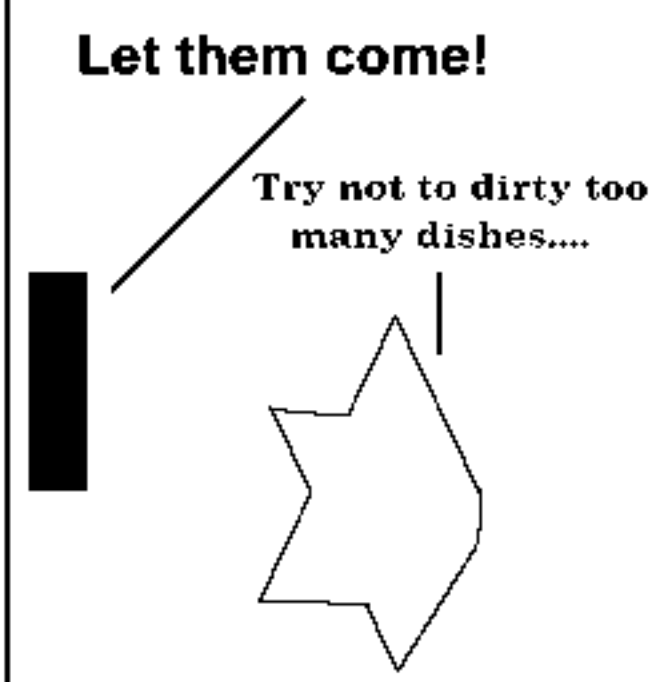
Prepare Persistence of Canard Rotis!

That gets sort of messy!

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Tell me! Where do you keep the ginger? Now!

I.. I don't use ginger....

Stop lying to me, scum!

Triangle and Robert

– I'm telling you, I don't have any ginger!

Baa?

Baa!

Insert Lawsheep

INSERT DEPUTY SHEEP

The sheep are com ng!

Linda! The man has no ginger! Stop beating him!

病

Baa

病

Insert Lawsheep

Strip Which Is Still Titled "Triangle and Robert" Despite Having Increasingly Little Focus on Those Two Characters

Linda! Pull back!

What?

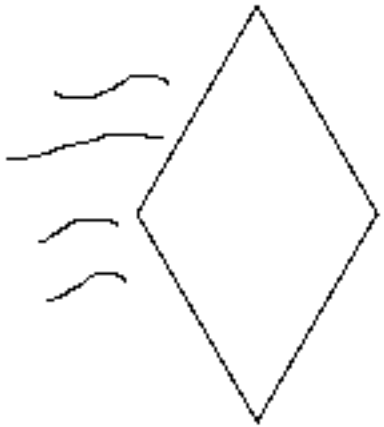
Baa!

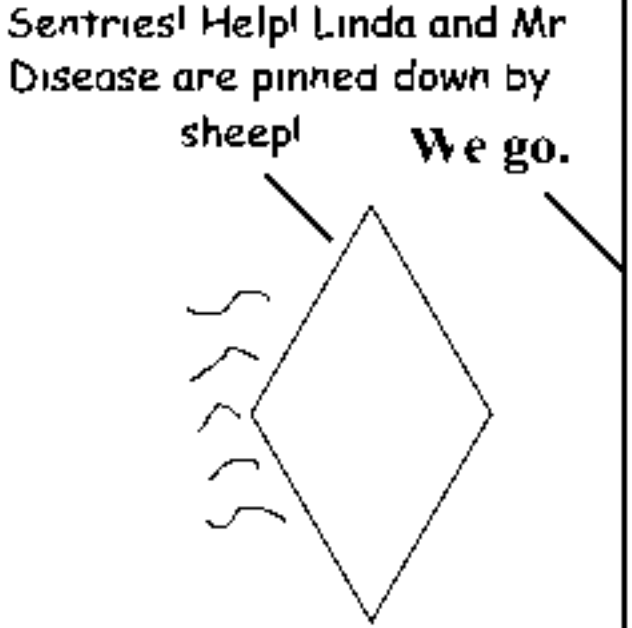
Oh! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I was so immersed in beating that guy I didn't realize....

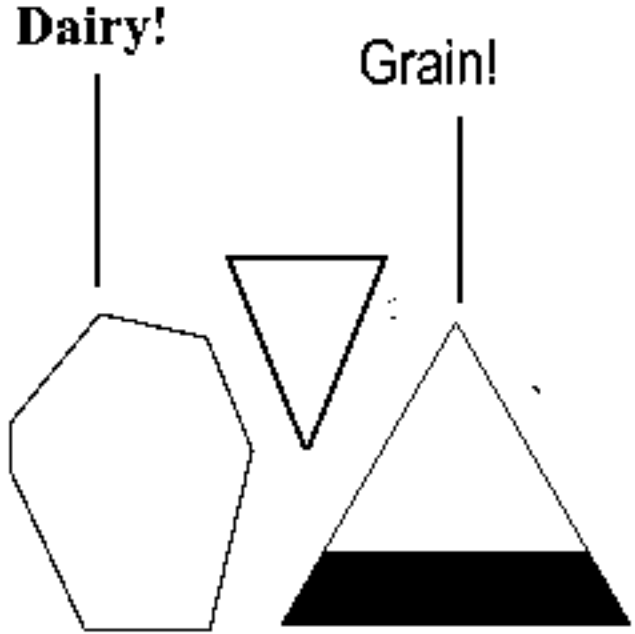
Which end's the loin?

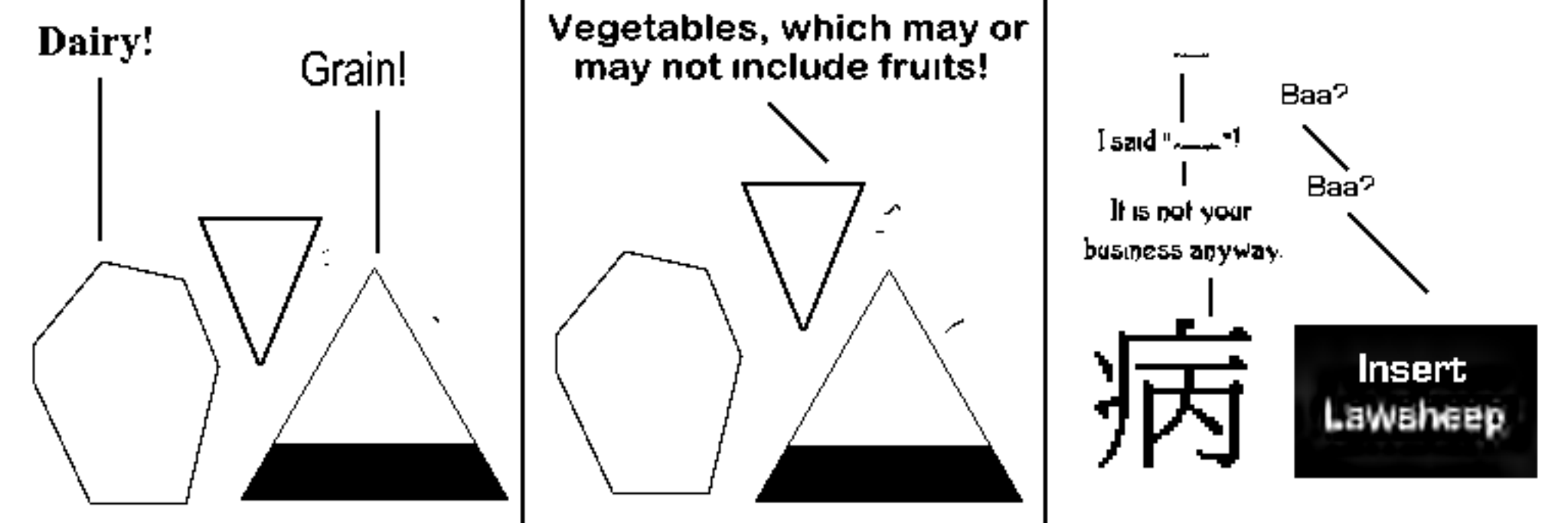
Triangle and Robert
Watch out! There are more com ng!
...baa...
Baa!
Baa.
Rhombus! Quickly fetch the other three Sentries! We are outnumbered!
病
Insert Lawsheep
Speak for yourself! I'm holding out fine!
haggis
INSERT
SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

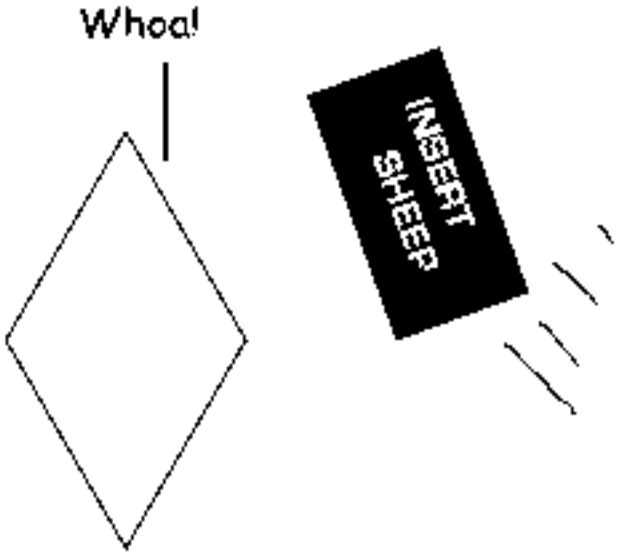


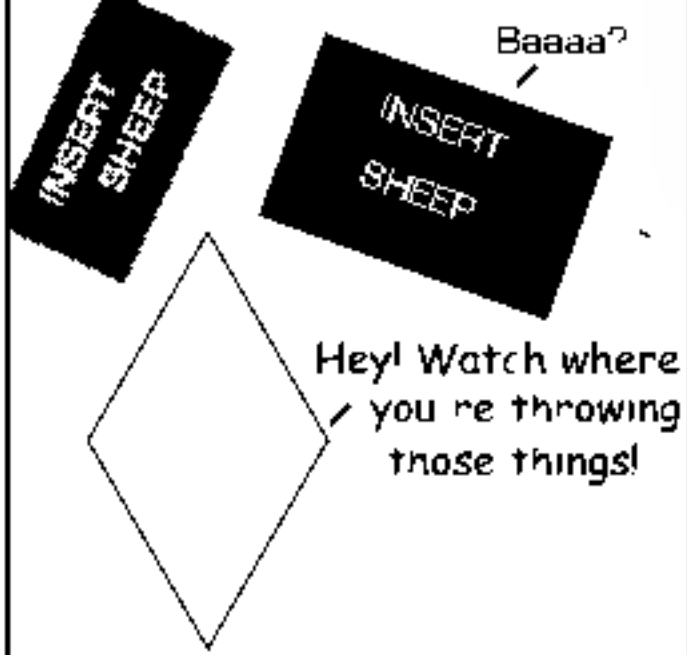


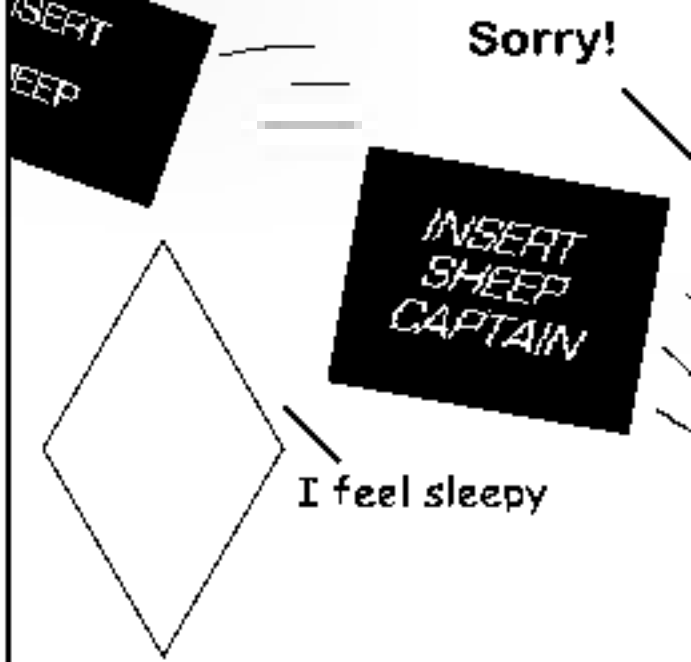



Dairy!
Grain!
Vegetables, which may or may not include fruits!
Baa?
I said "____"!
Baa?
It is not your business anyway.
病
Insert LaWsheep

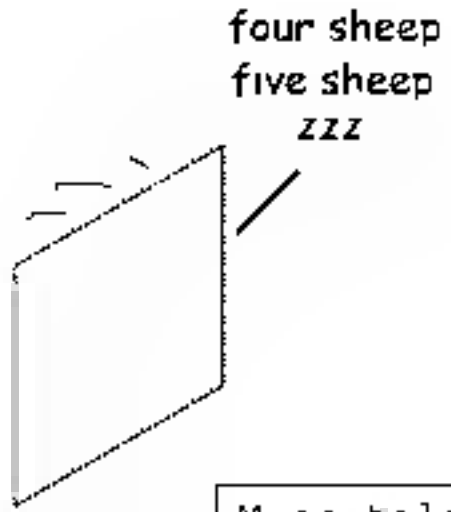
Triangle and Robert

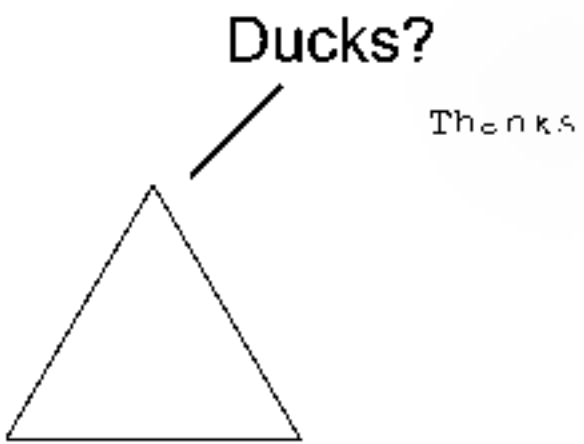


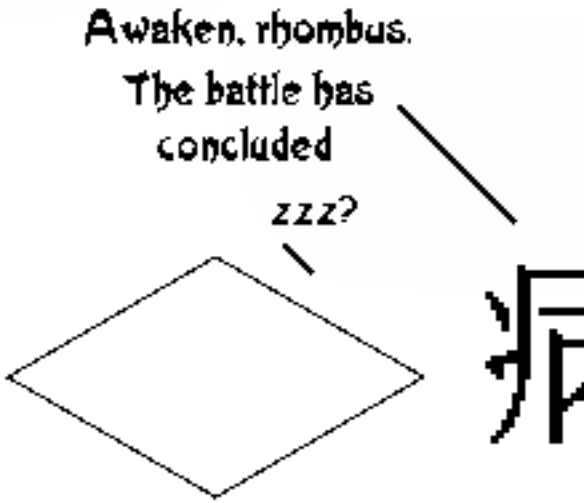


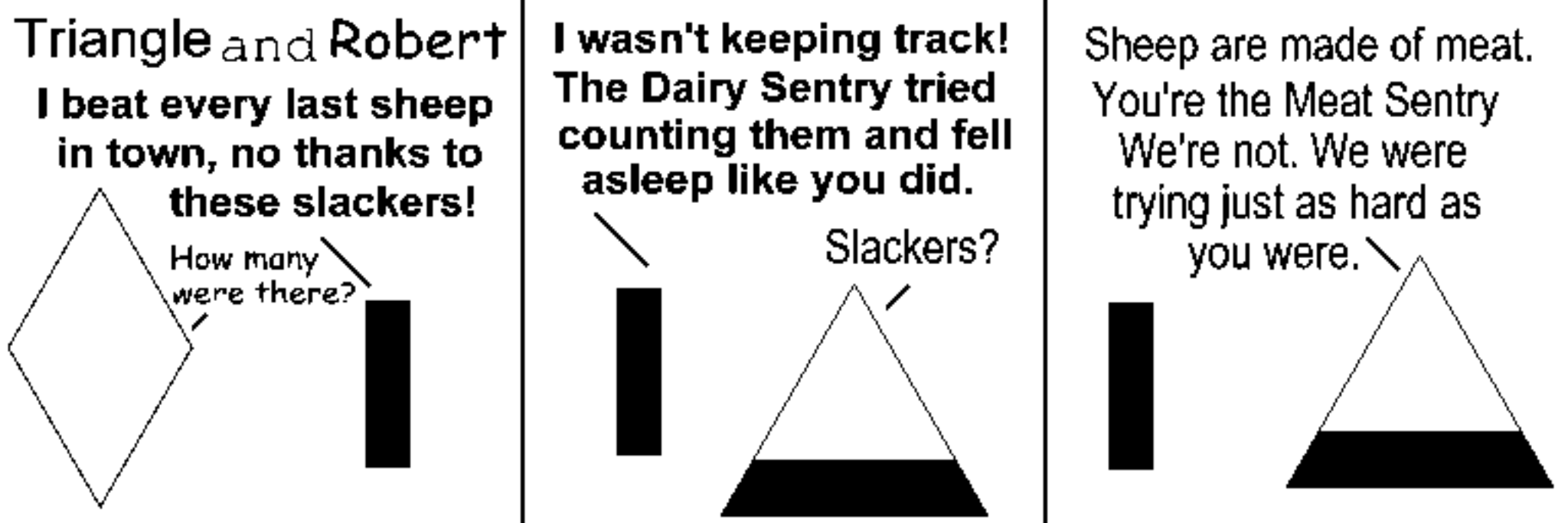


Triangle and Robert



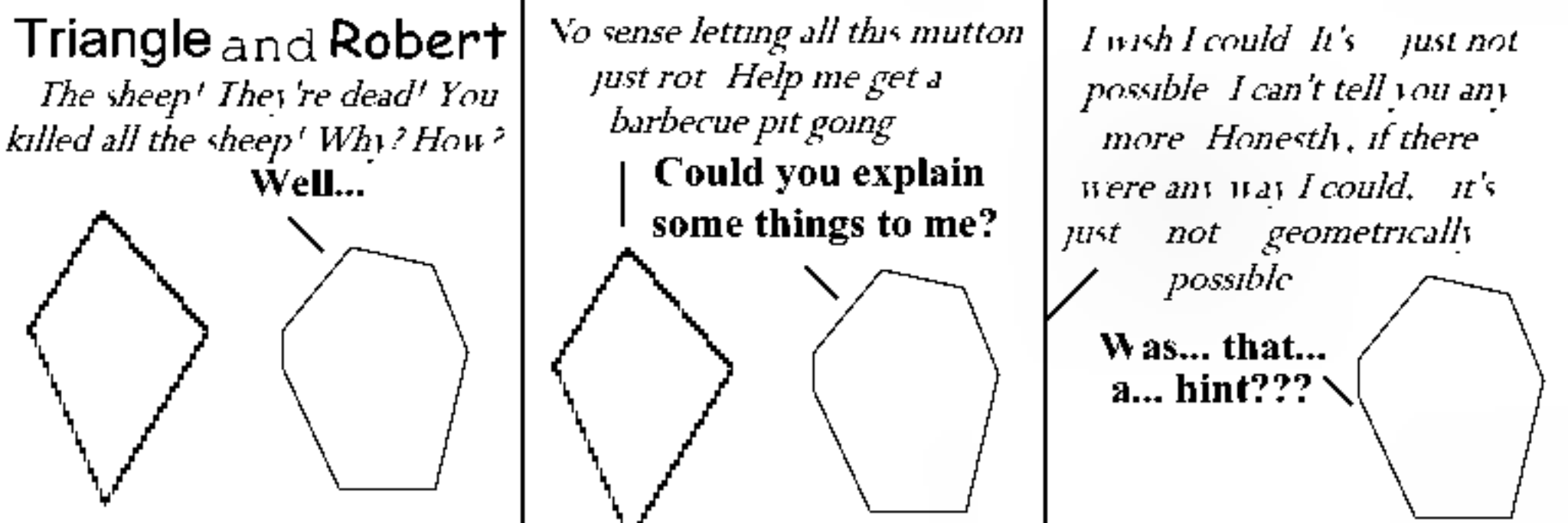




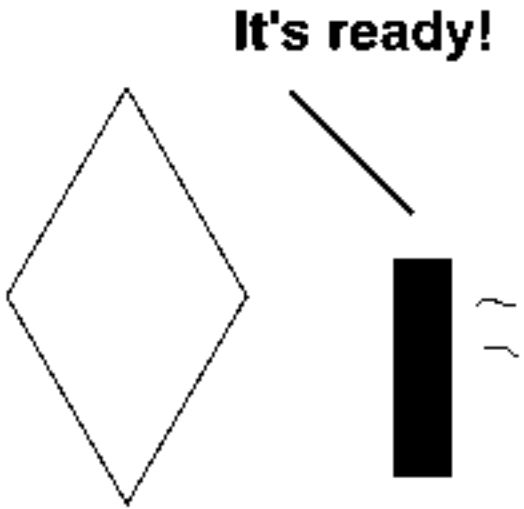

Triangle and Robert
I beat every last sheep in town, no thanks to these slackers!
How many were there?
I wasn't keeping track! The Dairy Sentry tried counting them and fell asleep like you did.
Slackers?
Sheep are made of meat.
You're the Meat Sentry
We're not. We were trying just as hard as you were.

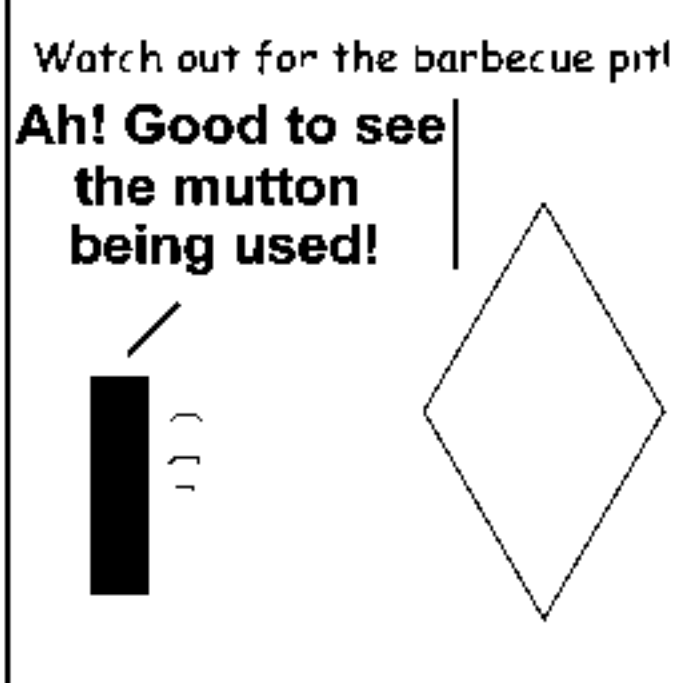
Triangle and Robert
We'll have to settle this, but this isn't the time. We're a team and we have a common goal. Let's work towards it.
I'll agree with you for the moment. Now someone get me some ginger!
I've found some.
This recipe the Meat Sentry's working on... are you sure it'll bring Triangle back into normal time?
Probably. If not, at least we'll have something for dinner.
病

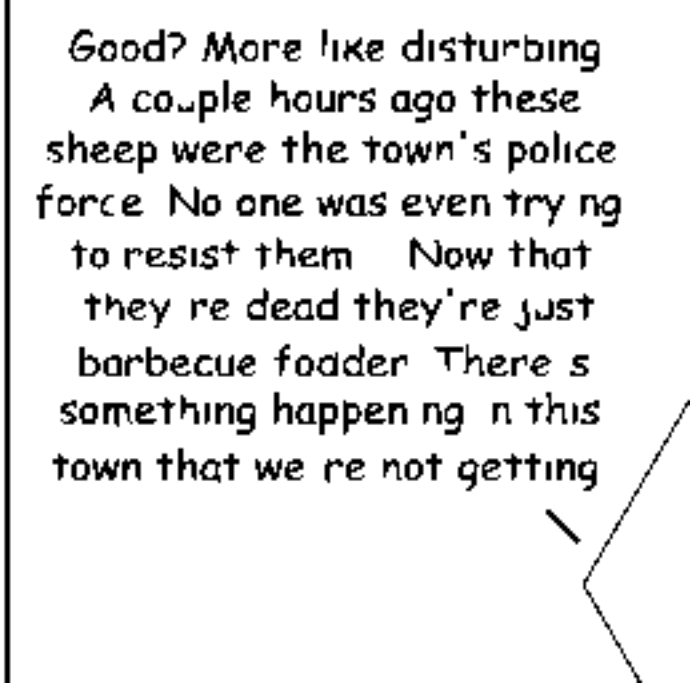
Triangle and Robert

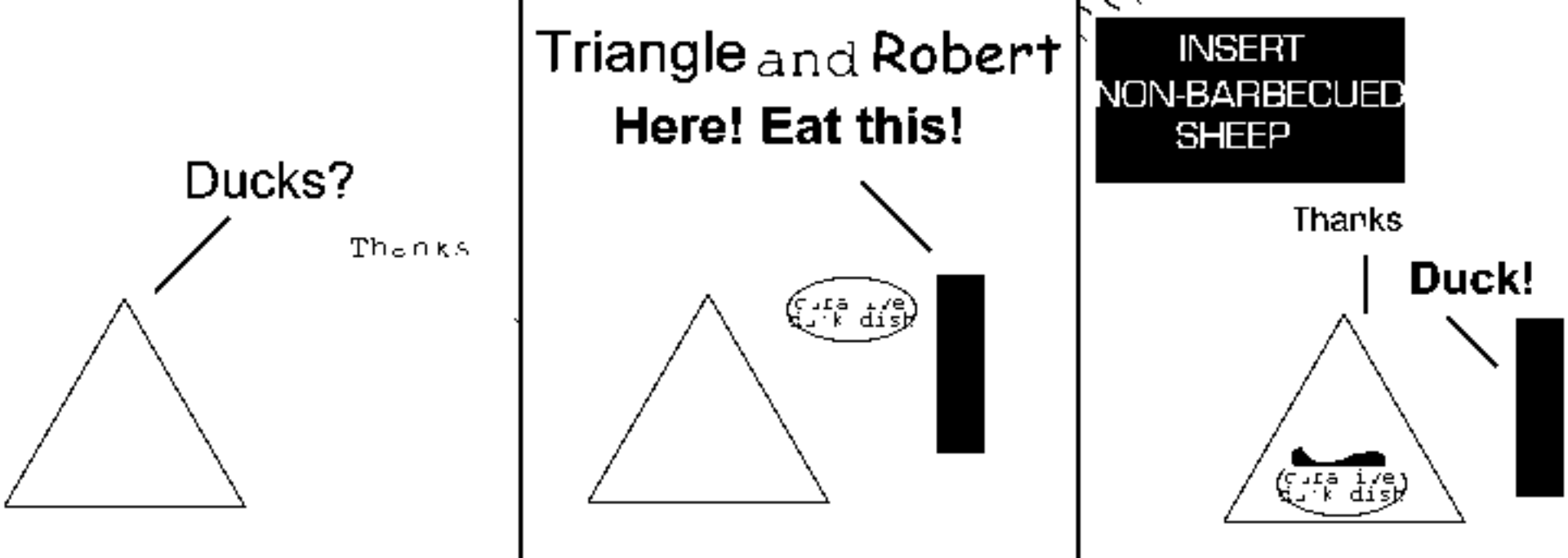


Triangle and Robert

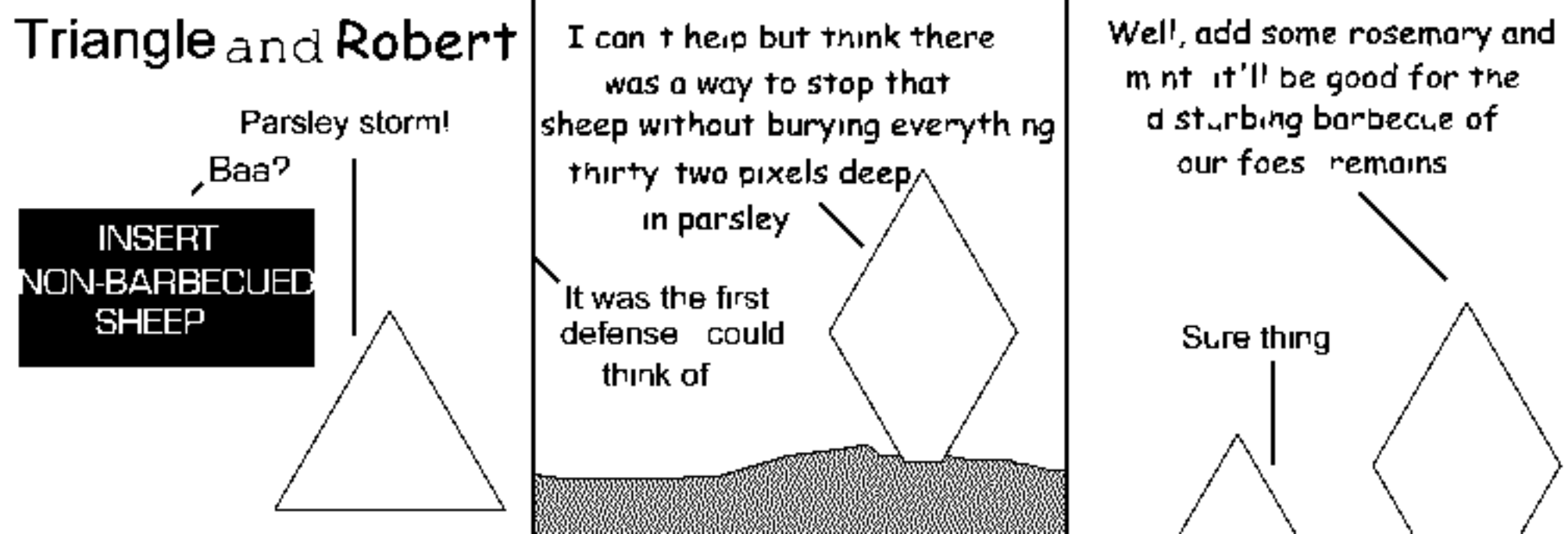


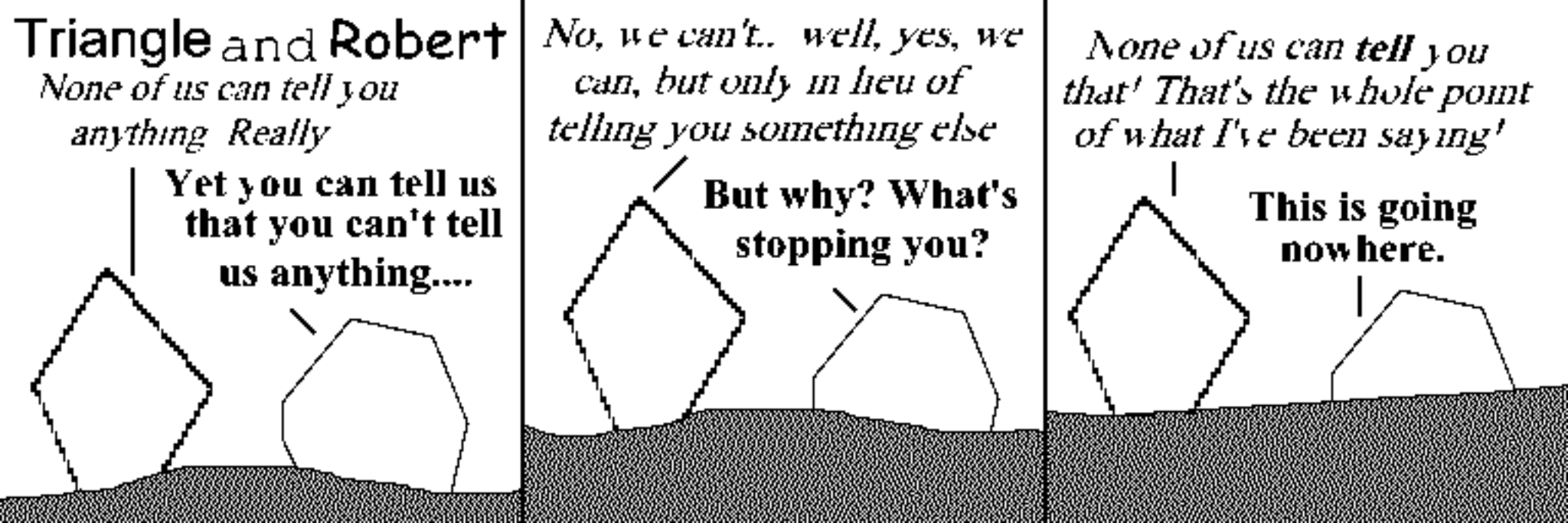





Ducks?
Thanks
Triangle and Robert
Here! Eat this!
INSERT NON-BARBECUED SHEEP
Thanks
Duck!

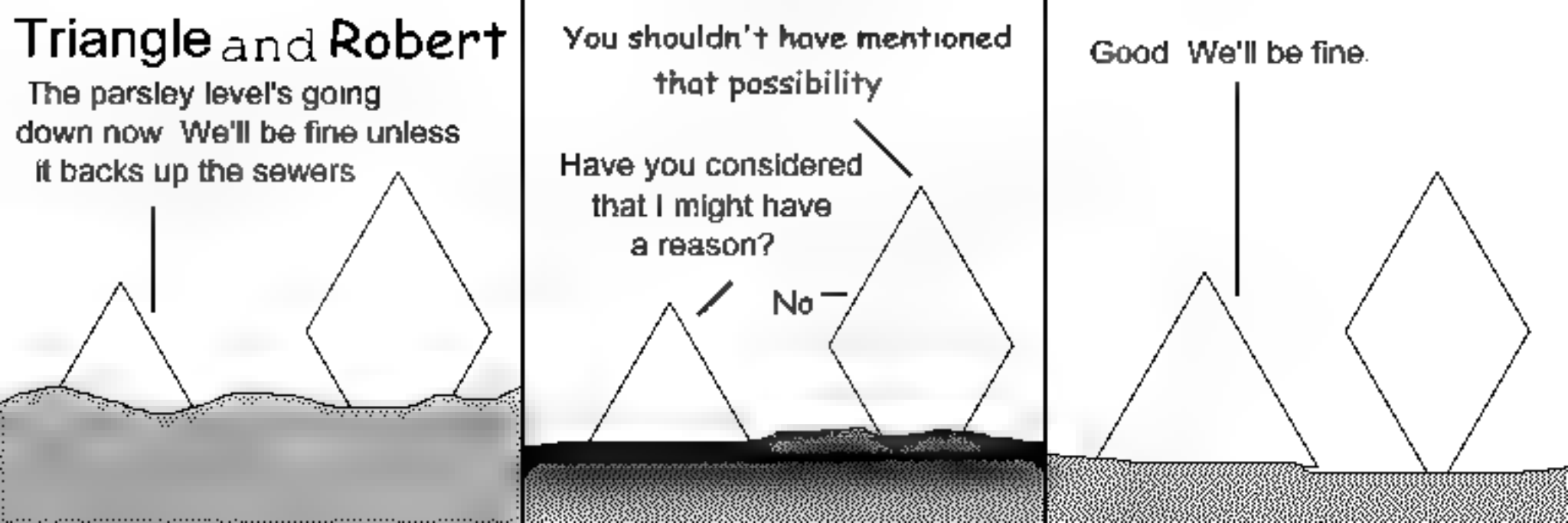
Triangle and Robert



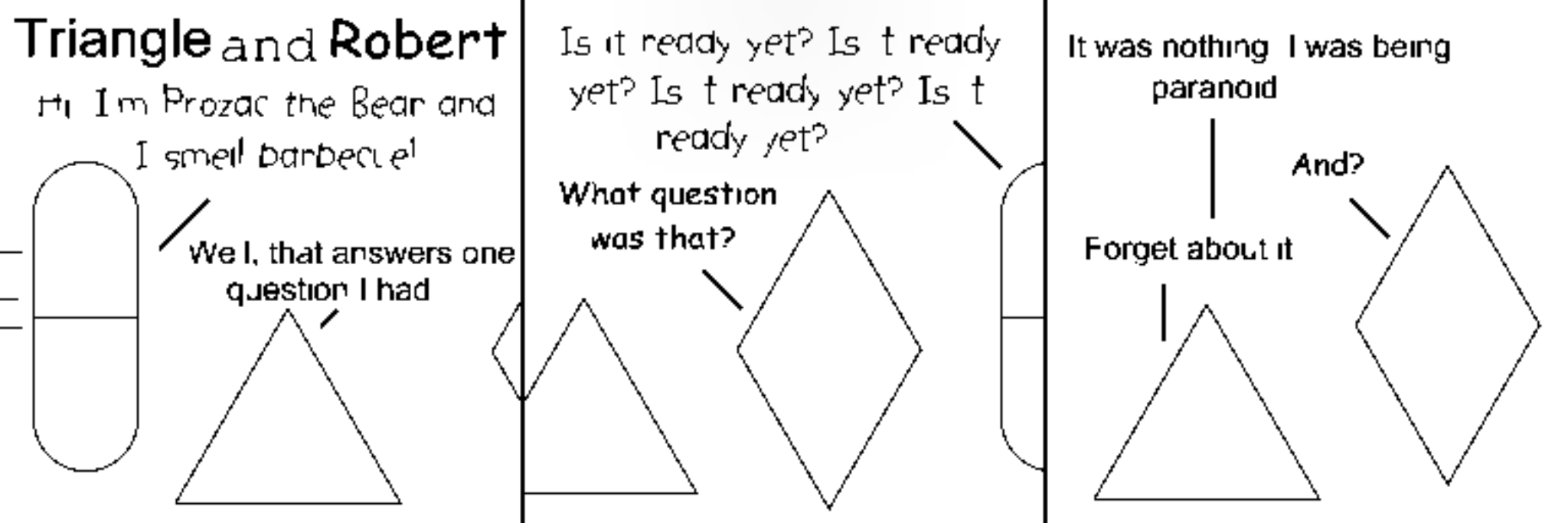

Triangle and Robert
None of us can tell you anything Really
Yet you can tell us that you can't tell us anything....
No, we can't.. well, yes, we can, but only in lieu of telling you something else
But why? What's stopping you?
None of us can tell you that! That's the whole point of what I've been saying!
This is going nowhere.

Triangle and Robert
I know
to use all this

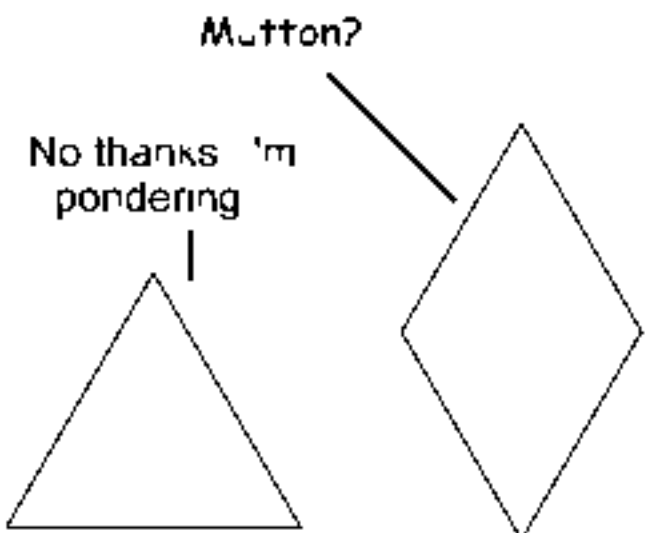
Triangle and Robert

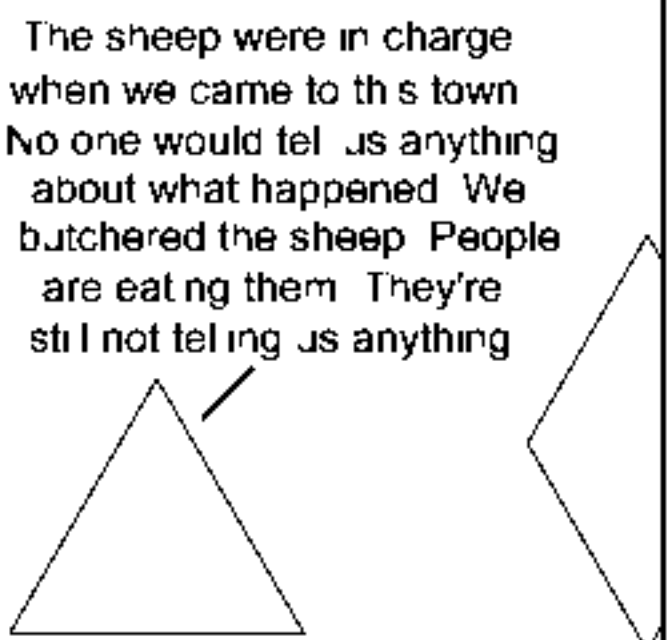


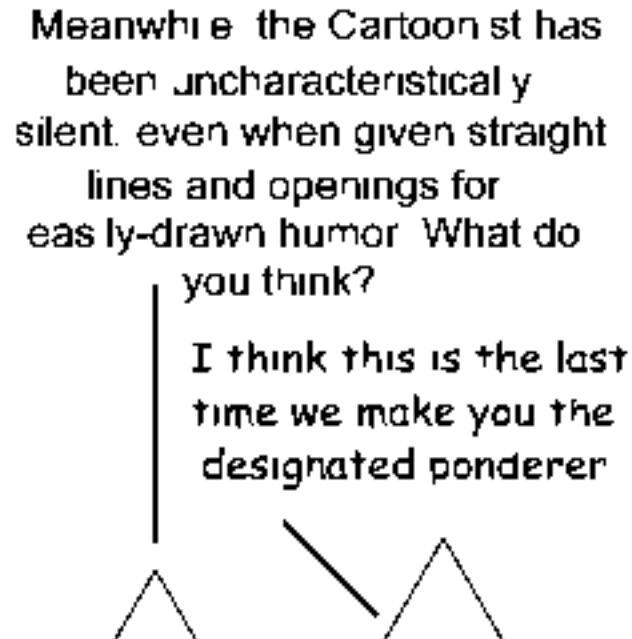
Triangle and Robert

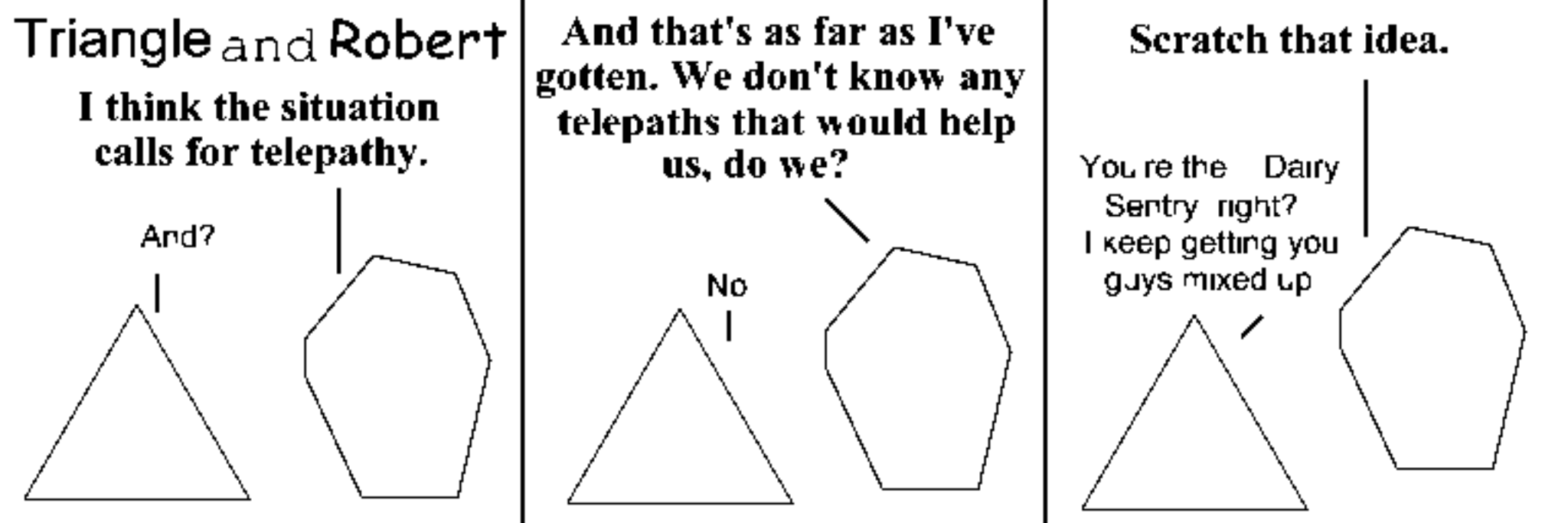


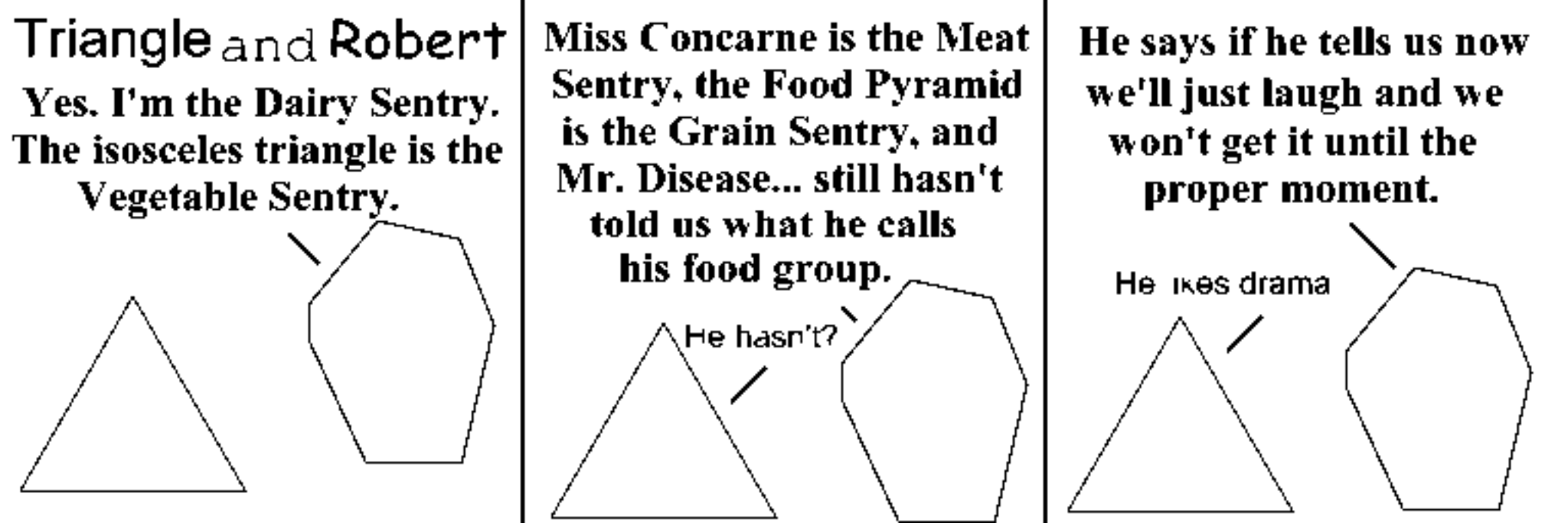
Triangle and Robert



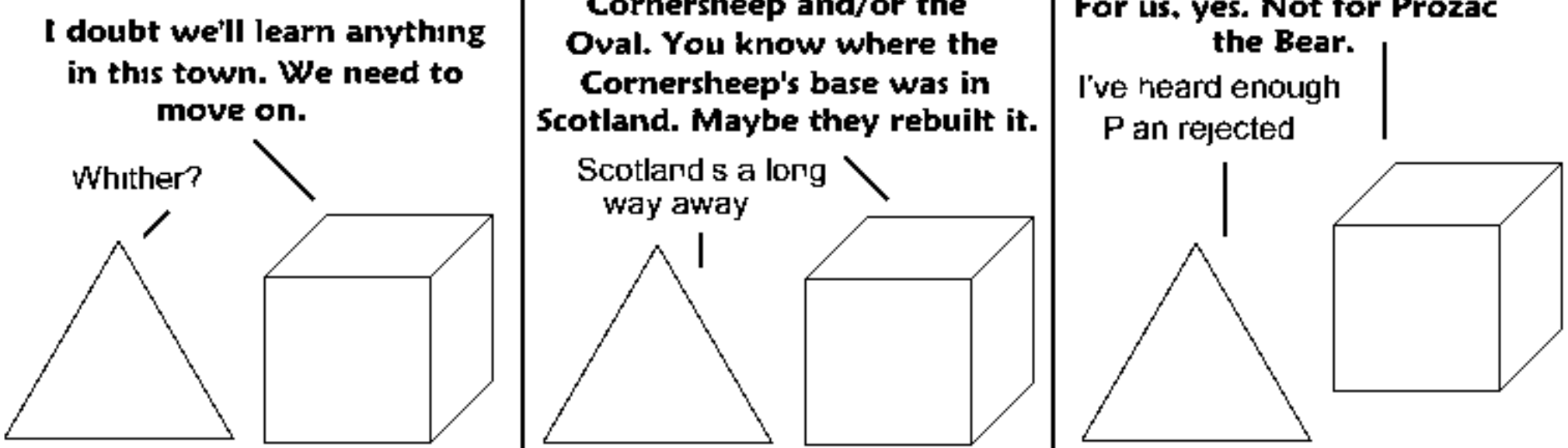




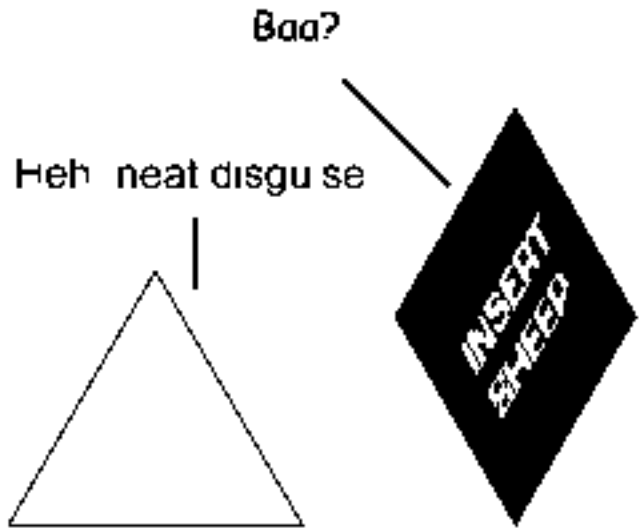

Triangle and Robert
I think the situation calls for telepathy.
And?
And that's as far as I've gotten. We don't know any telepaths that would help us, do we?
No
Scratch that idea.
You're the Dairy Sentry right? I keep getting you guys mixed up

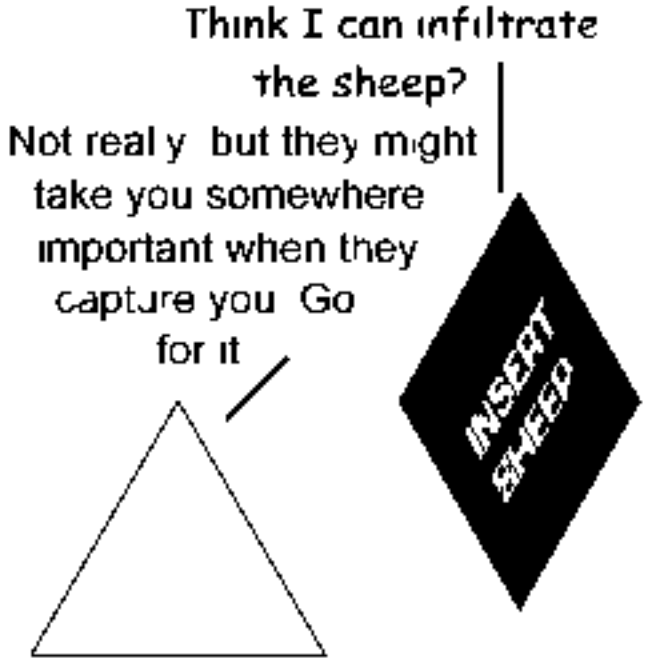

Triangle and Robert
Yes. I'm the Dairy Sentry. The isosceles triangle is the Vegetable Sentry.
Miss Concarne is the Meat Sentry, the Food Pyramid is the Grain Sentry, and Mr. Disease... still hasn't told us what he calls his food group.
He hasn't?
He says if he tells us now we'll just laugh and we won't get it until the proper moment.
He likes drama

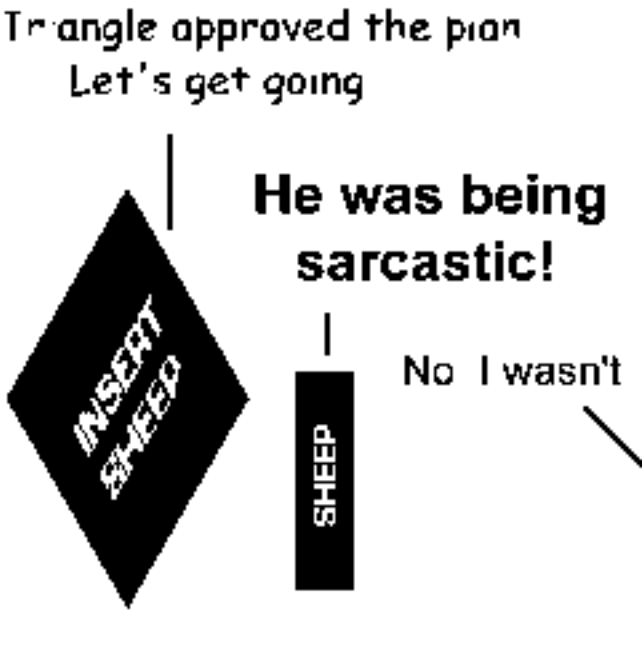
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

The Cornersheep must know that this town's sheep are dead He'll have sent reinforcements

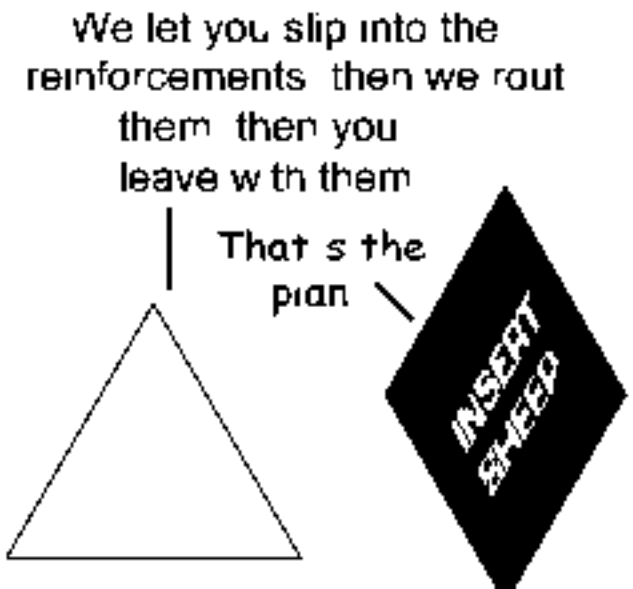
From where?

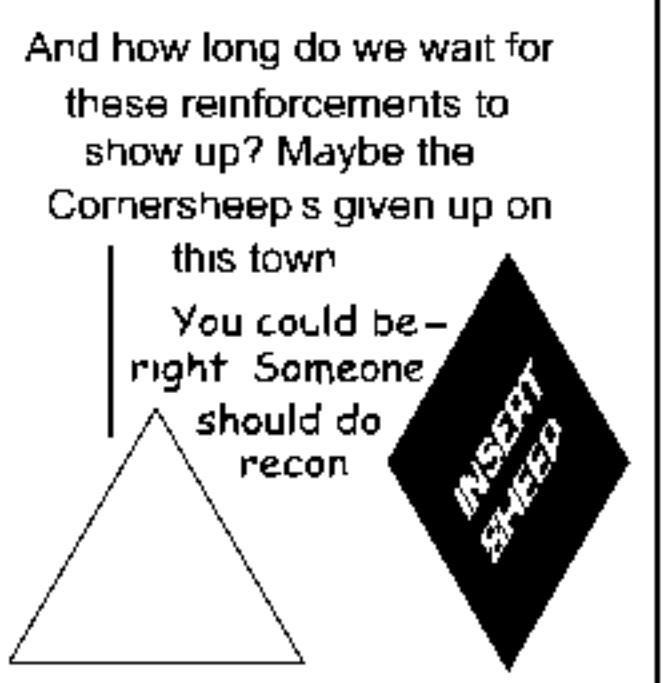
I don't know Our best chance at infiltrating their ranks will be after they've entered the town and before they encounter Triangle and company.

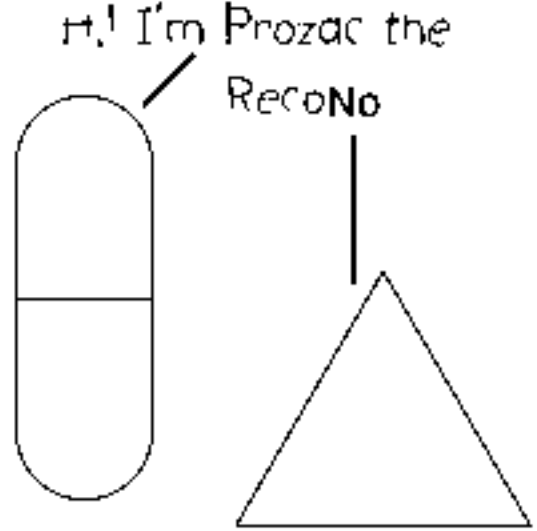
We might, pass as sheep visually, but what about the Cornersheep's telepathy?

— I wish you hadn't pointed that out.

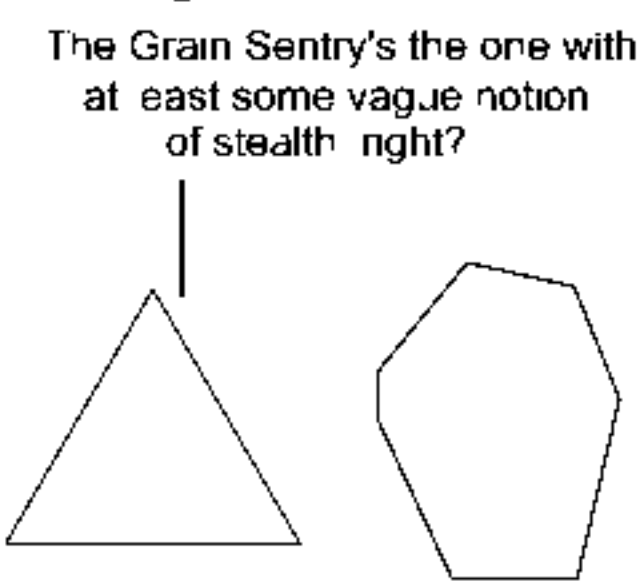
Triangle and Robert

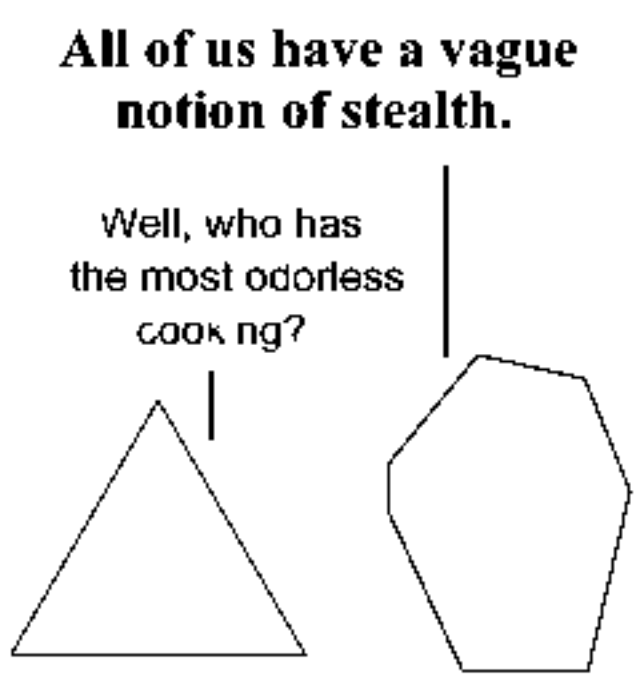


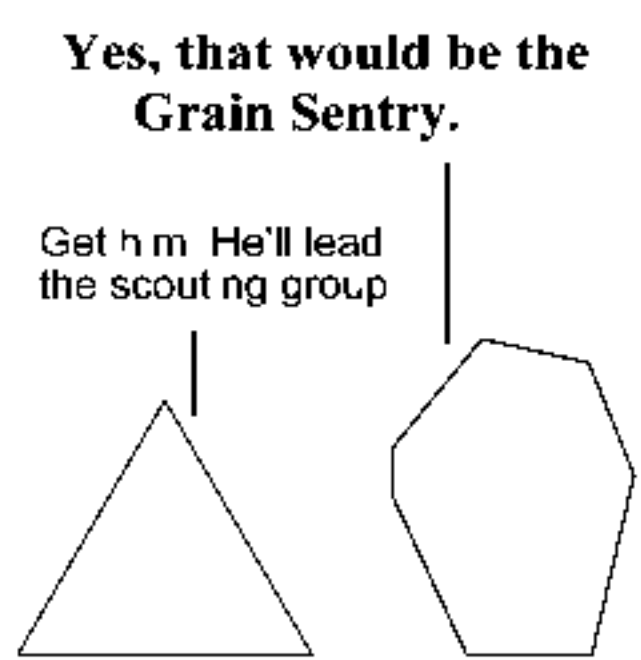


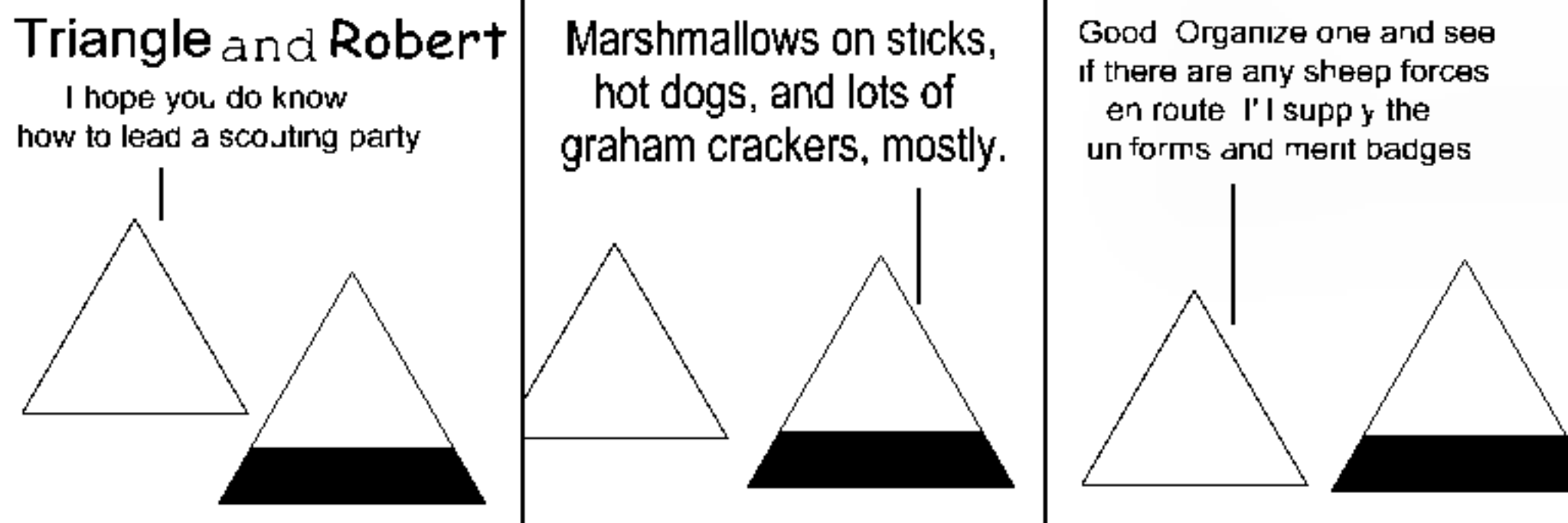


Triangle and Robert





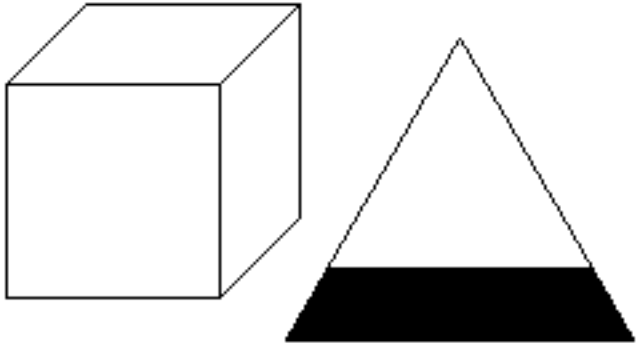



Triangle and Robert
I hope you do know how to lead a scouting party
Marshmallows on sticks, hot dogs, and lots of graham crackers, mostly.
Good Organize one and see if there are any sheep forces en route I' I supp y the un forms and merit badges

Triangle and Robert

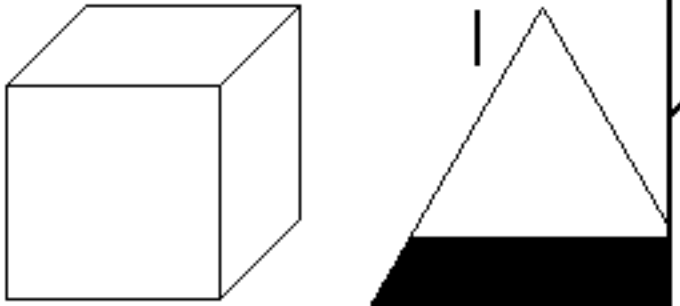
Just the two of us?

I was considering Mr. Disease, but well...



But well what?

We'd probably start arguing about something and lose track of the mission.



I thought you two got along.

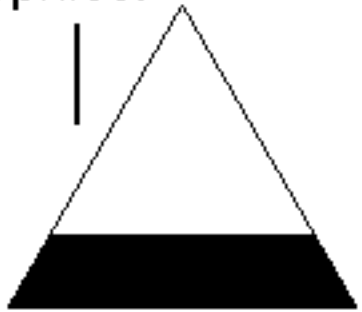
We do, as long as we both have the Meat Sentry to argue with

...so any actual teamwork on the part of the Sentries is purely coincidental?

It's seemed that way since the Starham....

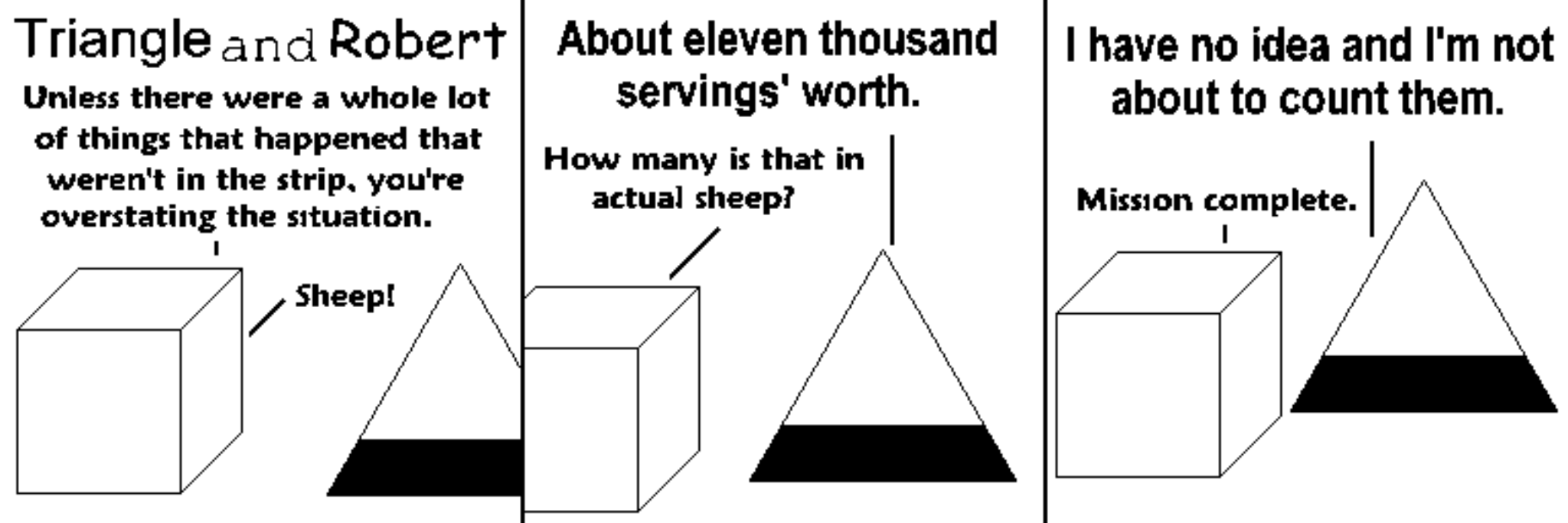
Triangle and Robert

None of us can trust the other four. Our food groups embody different philosophies.



When we first fought together against Orpuddex, the Vegetable Sentry didn't show up for the battle. When our memories were eaten, the Meat Sentry let herself become a tool of evil. I threatened to destroy the very foundations of our

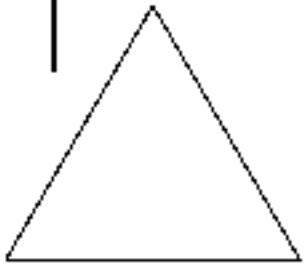
power as the Food Pyramid. We still can't be sure Mr. Disease is even really a Sentry The Dairy Sentry . there's just something weird going on with him. I think his time as Robert's housepet did something to his mind, I don't know what.

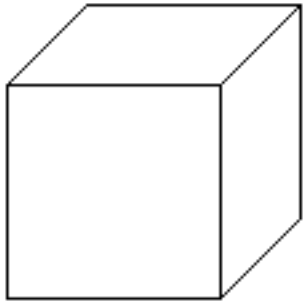

Triangle and Robert
Unless there were a whole lot of things that happened that weren't in the strip, you're overstating the situation.
Sheep!
About eleven thousand servings' worth.
How many is that in actual sheep?
I have no idea and I'm not about to count them.
Mission complete.

Triangle and Robert

You've finished scouting?

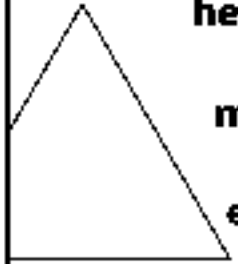
Yes. The sheep are en route.



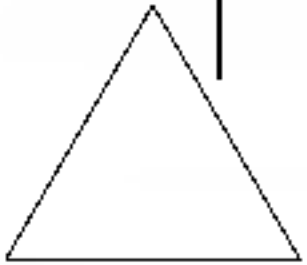


Why am I leader?

Well, the Sentries are following you because you're supposed to be the Chosen One of the Beforings. Robert is following you because he's the wacky sidekick, and I just figure it makes sense to follow the same polygon as everyone else as long as we're working towards the same goal.

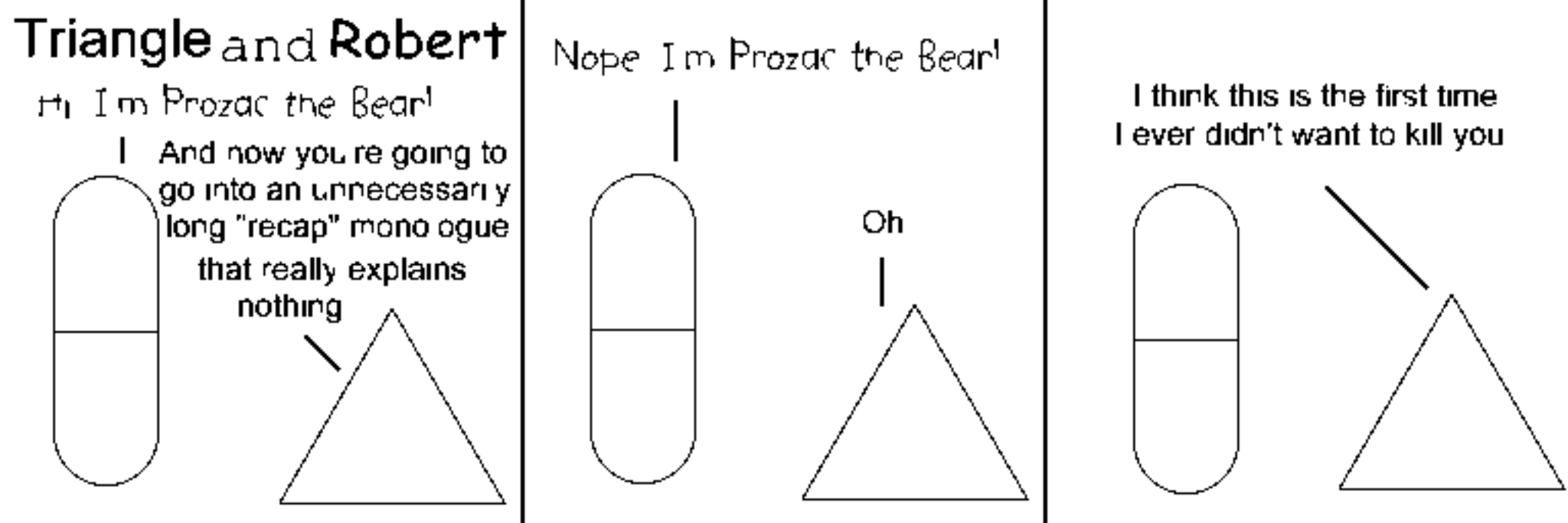


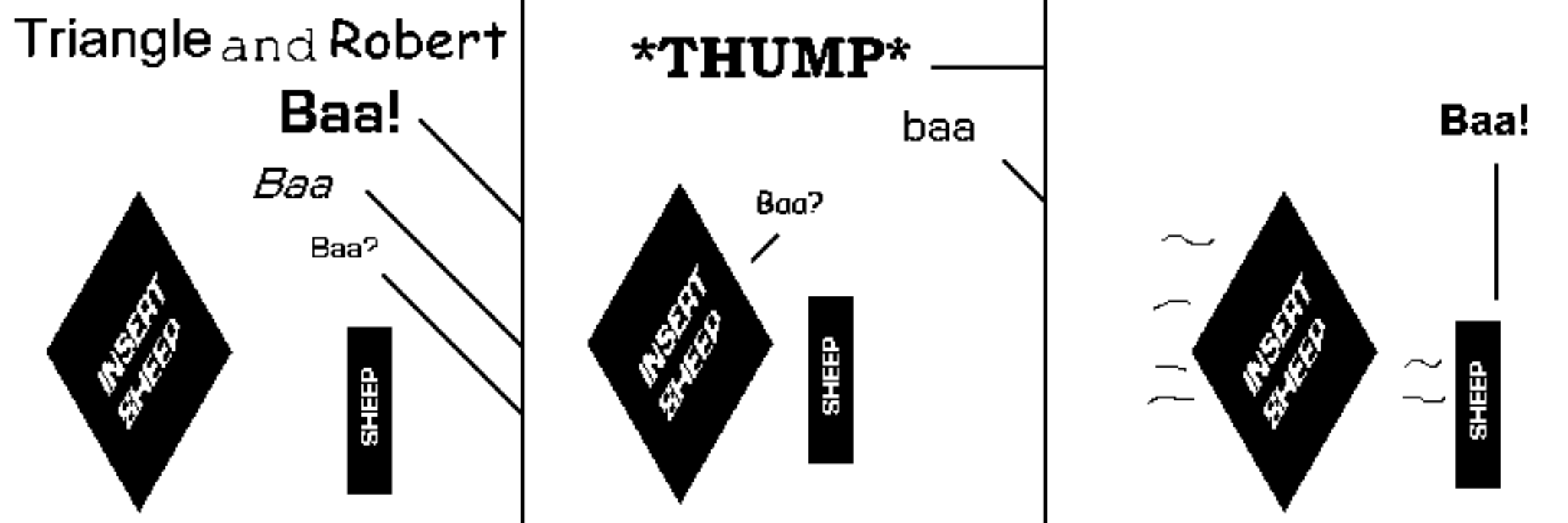
And of course Prozac the Bear's just following me to be annoying



Help me up, I collapsed under the weight of my last sentence.

Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
Baa!
Baa
Baa?
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP
THUMP
baa
Baa?
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP
Baa!
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

That mostly went well

Mostly.

We attacked a little early but the confusion only helped Robert and Linda sneak into the ranks

Now it's up to them.

They were the only two who could pass as sheep. They'll have to succeed

Triangle and Robert

Baaaa!

Neither one of us s
cut out for esp onage
Sooner or ater I il do
someth ng wacky or you h
do something v olent

INSERT SHEEP

Baa!

Y[redacted]
a point.

SHEEP

Baa?

Uh, baa.

Baa.

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

Baaaa.

What did you just volunteer for?

Baa I think
And keep your
font s ze
down

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

History books would later call the conflict between the forces of sheep and polygon the Zero Days War. (By which species the histories would come to be written, whether ovine, geometric, or something still stranger, I do not yet intend to reveal.)

During this time, however, there is another conflict which will have an effect on the fate of the Universe of Pudding. This conflict takes place within my mind, the mind of the Cartoonist, and it is a conflict of ideas.

Hello My name is Drug Coated Stent, but you can call me Arthur

It is, in fact, a conflict of very stupid and bad ideas.

Triangle and Robert

Hi! I'm Prozac the Bear!

You are a redundant fool and I shall destroy you

Please. Stop it. Stop it! I have... thingies... to thing! Make with the nice!

Stay out of it. This is my fight!

Who are you?

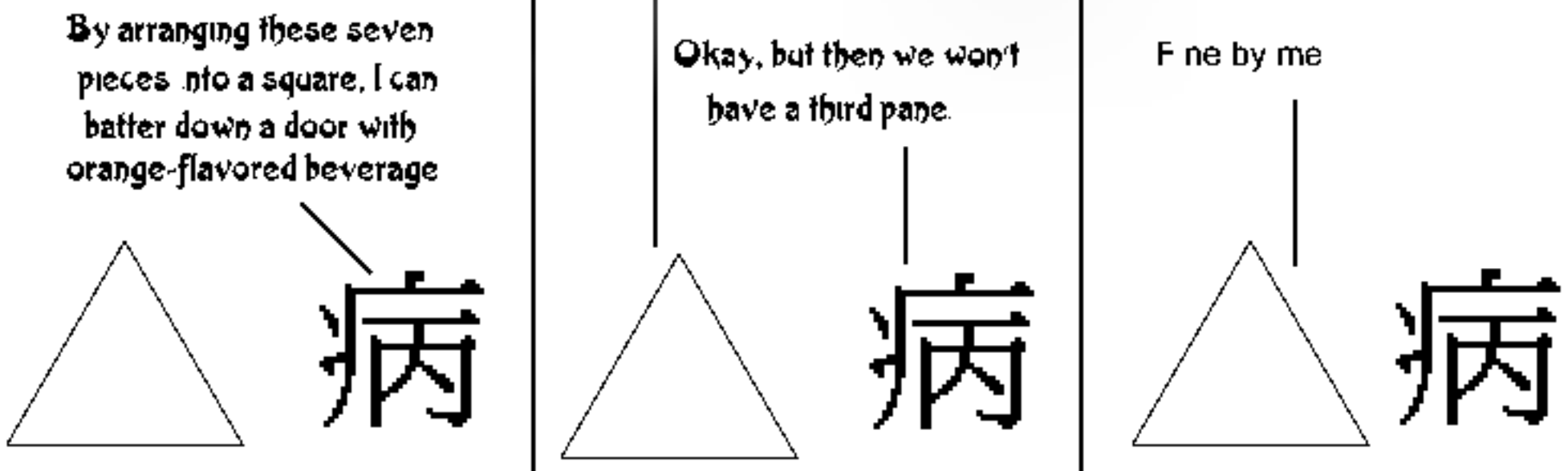
That's... exactly... what I've been trying to figure out! Who I am!

Well, how did you get in here?

Do you two know each other?

I .. I need to make a bunch of Firesign Theatre references!

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Frozac the mighty Bear,
teach me your ways so
that I might be happy,
or at least unhappy in a
less boring way

You would ask a boon of
me, but first I must ask a
quest of you

Speak it, and if it is
within my power it will
be done

You must gather for me
a hundred fifty
Rashomon

Right, I'm just going to
look at you very
very triangel, now.

Gotta catch em a
viewpoints are equally
valid

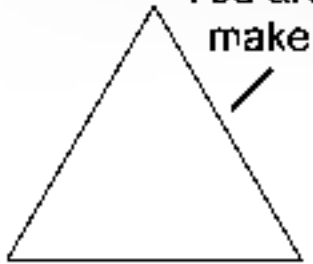
Triangle and Robert

Triangle hug me

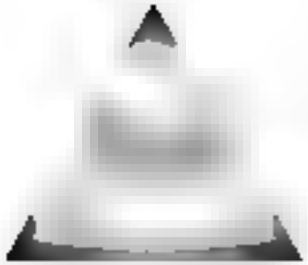
I'm pointy and you're relatively noncorporeal Where have you been?

I wanted a sustaining plot that wouldn't need my direct intervention, so I was staying out of it but I LIKE meddling! Not being in strip makes Jack something something!

You are so failing to make sense right now



I know. Isn't it great Here, have a meaningless gradient



Triangle and Robert
I'm back from.
I'm back
Sh undercover
Baa.
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP
Oh right
Baa.
Baa.
I think we're going to board that ship
Baa!
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP
Baaaa baa!
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Aboard the ship.

Is it safe to narrate now

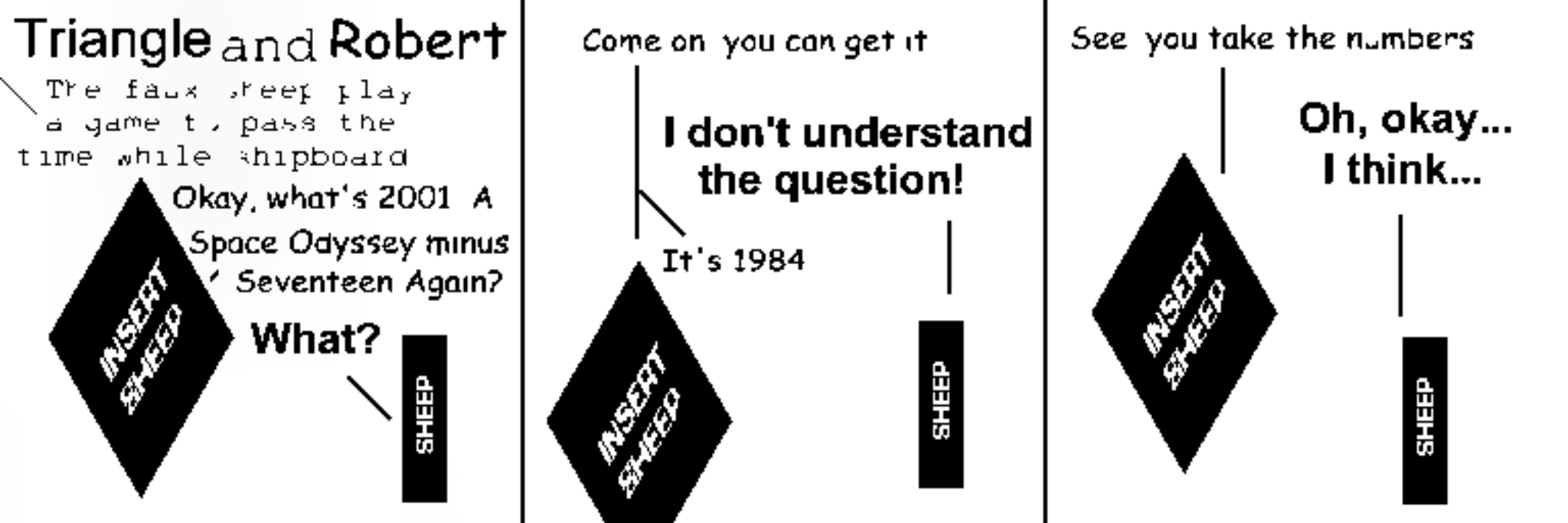
I think so

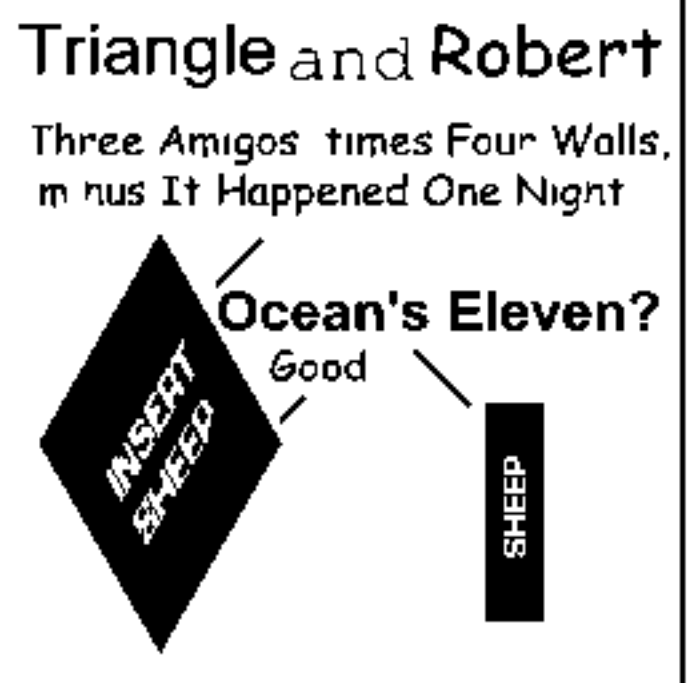
Aboard the ship, Linda and Robert have no difficulty blending in with the crew and the many sheep being transported, but are unable to gather any useful information

I know you haven't narrated in a while, but try to control yourself!

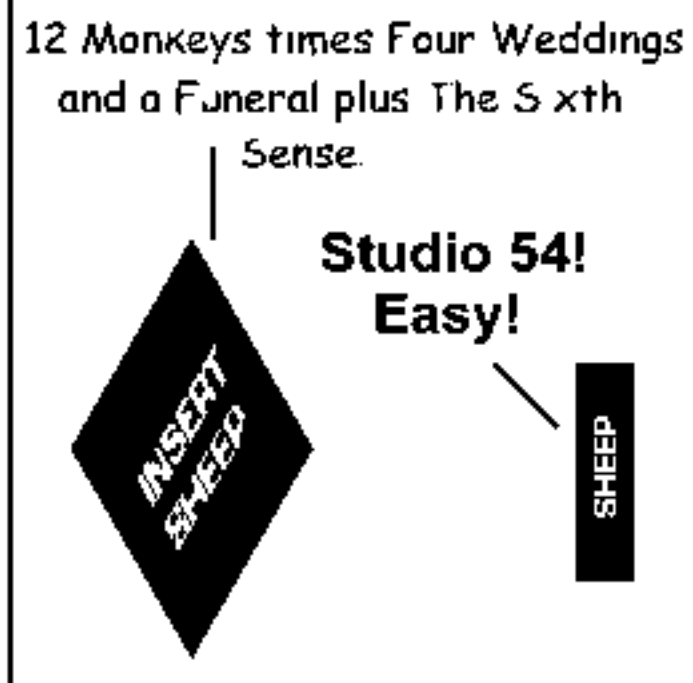
Font size

Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
Three Amigos times Four Walls, minus It Happened One Night
Ocean's Eleven?
Good
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP

The Thirteenth Floor minus Naked Gun 2½.
9½ Weeks
Fractiony
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP


12 Monkeys times Four Weddings and a Funeral plus The Sixth Sense.
Studio 54! Easy!
INSERT SHEEP
SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Wait! Something's wrong. What's 13 minus 2.5?

INSERT SHEEP

9 5

SHEEP

Yes. Now, what's 9.5 plus 2.5?

Hey, that s only 12!

Yes.

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

Then e ther the Cartoonist hasn't been bothering to check his arithmetic or someone, or something s tampering with the very laws of mathematics

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

Can't it
k th

Triangle and Robert

Think grassy thoughts!

What?

Baa! Baa!

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

The Cornerstone's sheep's boarded the ship. Don't think about it. Just stay sheepish. He won't use his telepathy at full strength if he doesn't suspect anything.

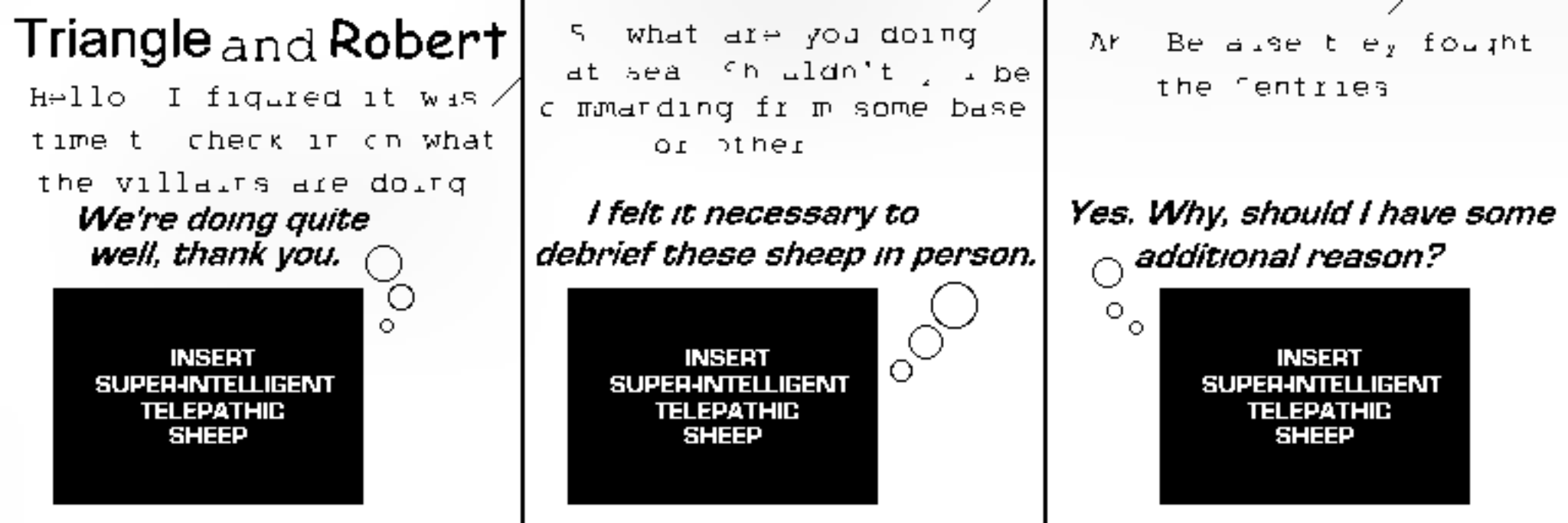
Baa.

INSERT SHEEP

SHEEP

I hear narrating. The cartoonist's attention must be nearby.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP


Triangle and Robert
Hello I figured it was time to check in on what the villains are doing
We're doing quite well, thank you.
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
What are you doing at sea? You shouldn't be commanding from some base or other
I felt it necessary to debrief these sheep in person.
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Because they fought the Centries
Yes. Why, should I have some additional reason?
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

What of the Sentries did you observe?

Baa.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

INSEF SHEE

Four, but not she of Meat? Describe to me this fifth.

Baa.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

INSE SHE

Him. So he has accepted his talents. But... then where is the Meat Sentry?

Baaaa!

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

IN S

Triangle and Robert

You. Stand to attention!

B... baa?

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

SHEEP

Just "SHEEP"? No "INSERT"?

Baa! Baa! Baaa?

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

SHEEP

Oh. That's... quite a wound. Don't let me keep you from recuperating.

... baa...

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

SHEEP

Triangle and Robert
You look familiar. What company are you in?
Baa!
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
INSERT SHEEP
Oh. I must be thinking of someone else.
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
INSERT SHEEP
By the way, you should really get that posture problem looked at.
Baa, baa!
INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

The Meat Sentry and the wacky rhombus are on board. Execute them.

Baa!?

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

They're in disguise. Look for a rhomboid sheep and a small sheep with an unusual aspect ratio.

Baa??

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

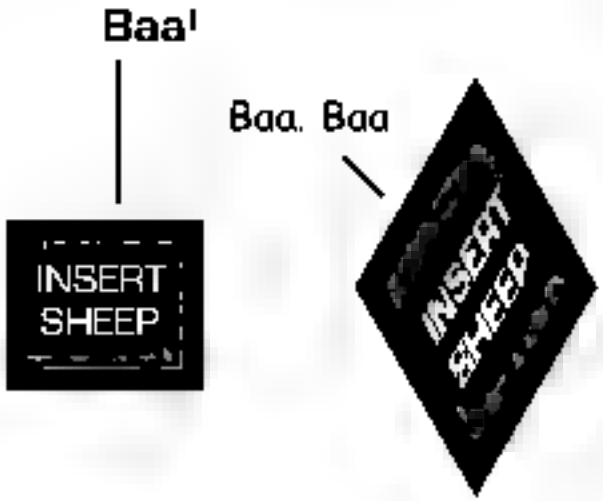
I know what I'm talking about. They are too on board.

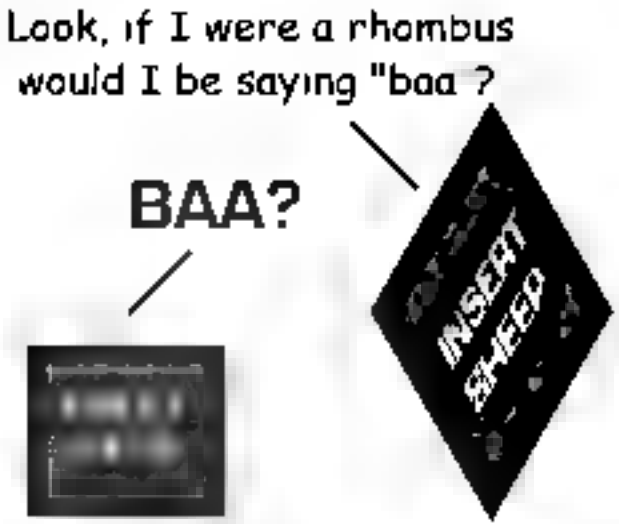
Baa

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

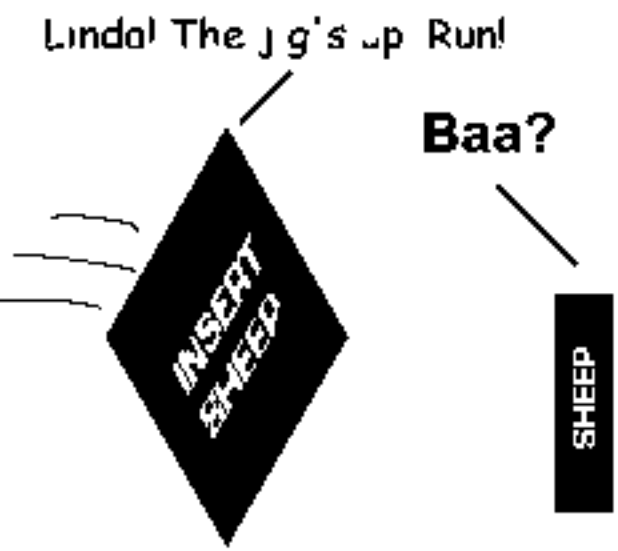
INSERT SHEEP

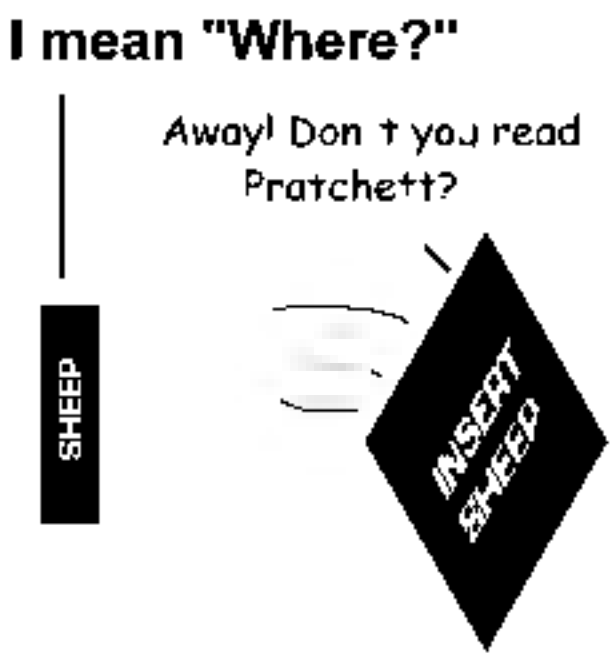
Triangle and Robert



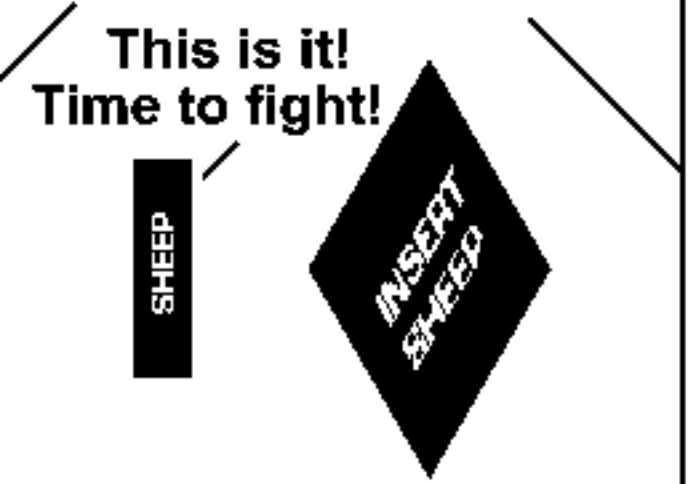


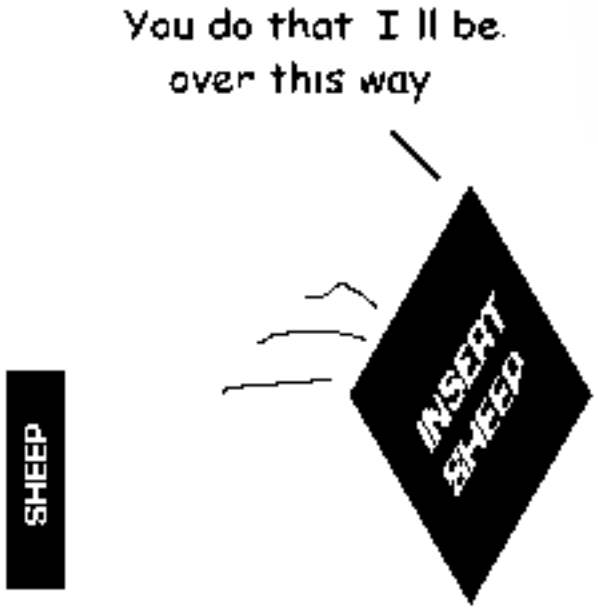
Triangle and Robert



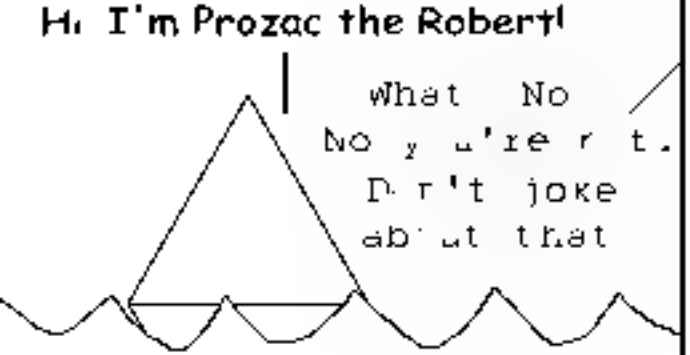


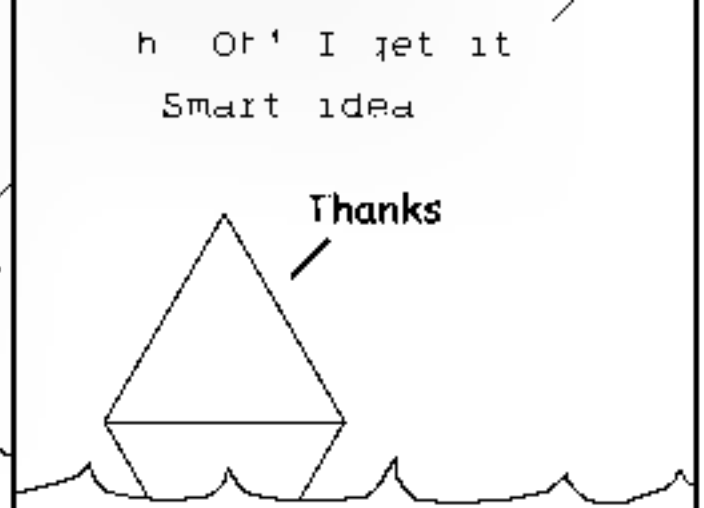
Triangle and Robert

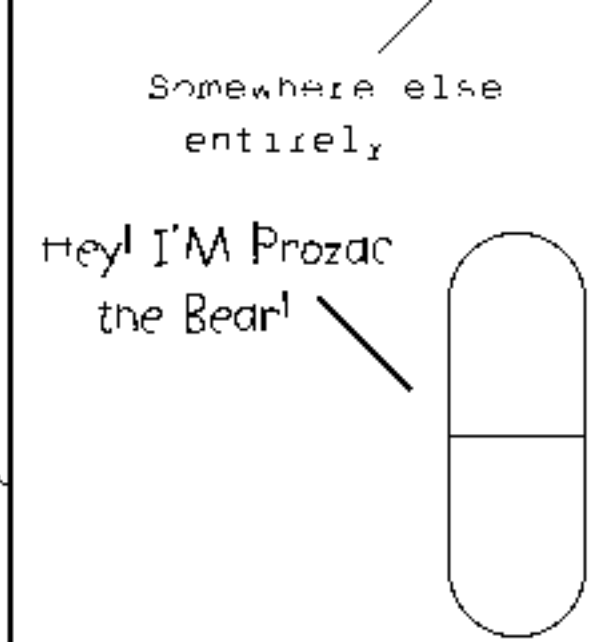




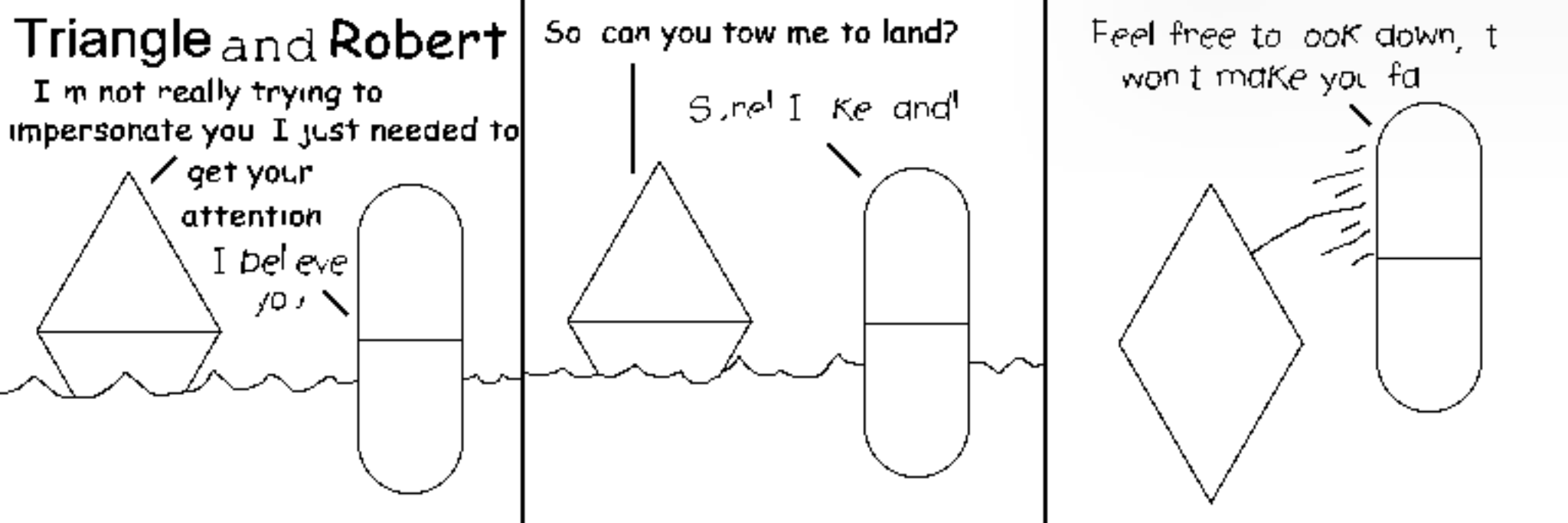
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Baa!

Baa!

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert
So, the Meat Sentry lies defeated at where my feet should be. Your situation is hopeless. Tell me what I...
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
No. I don't need anything from you. Lieutenant! Kill her!
INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Baaa!
Afterlife?
Yup.

Oh, this should be interesting.

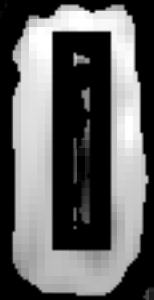
What?

Orpuddex is harvesting.

Harvesting souls for the Factory?

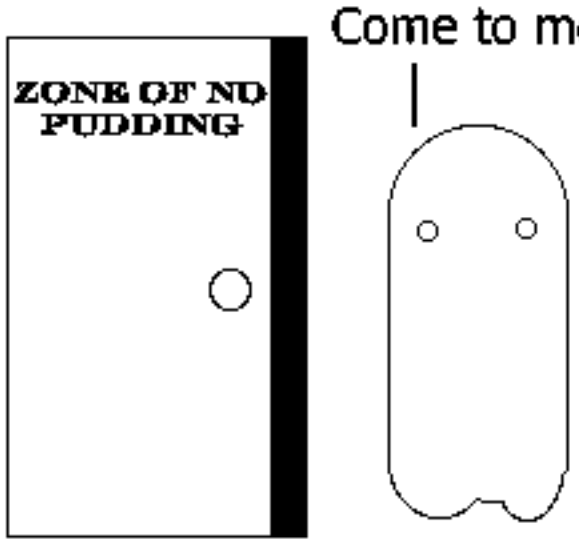
Yeah. I wonder what happens if he tries to harvest a Sentry.

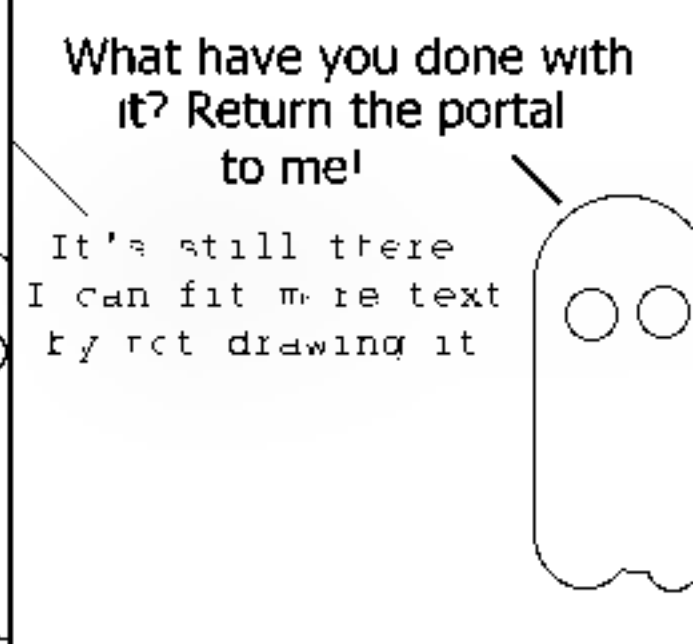
I'm still a Sentry when I'm dead?



Technically, until there's a new Meat Sentry among the living.

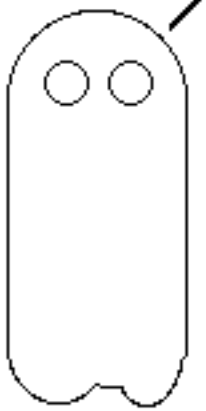
Triangle and Robert





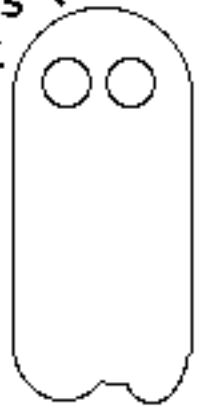
Triangle and Robert

Why have you come to this forsaken place, writer?



[illegible] about to harvest Linda Concarne. I want to watch

It has been long since I last was confronted with the soul of a Sentry. Indeed, if my memory does not fail me, the last was a Grass Sentry of the Fifth Race.

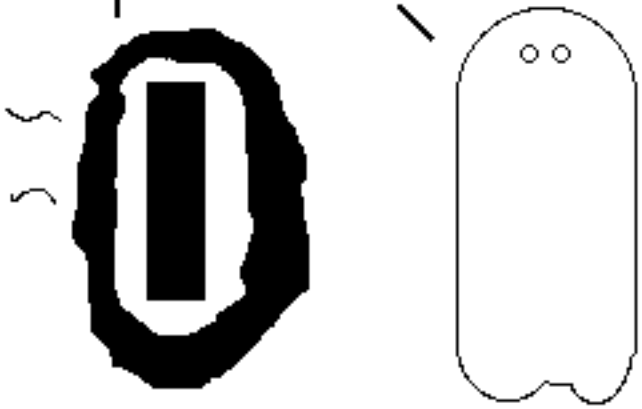


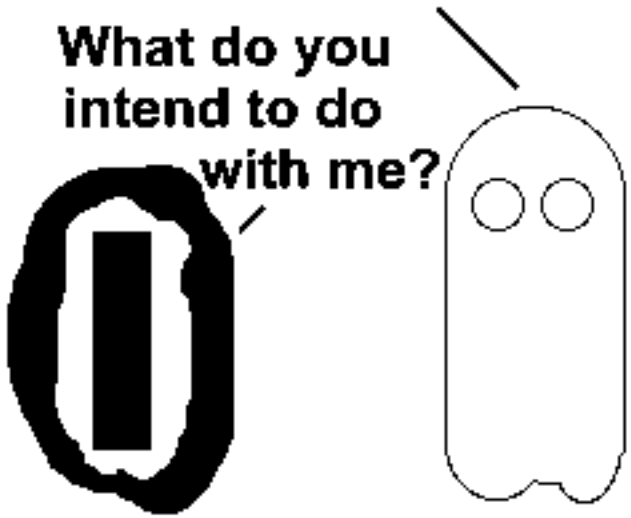
That spirit is still imprisoned within this Factory, though it has never served me.

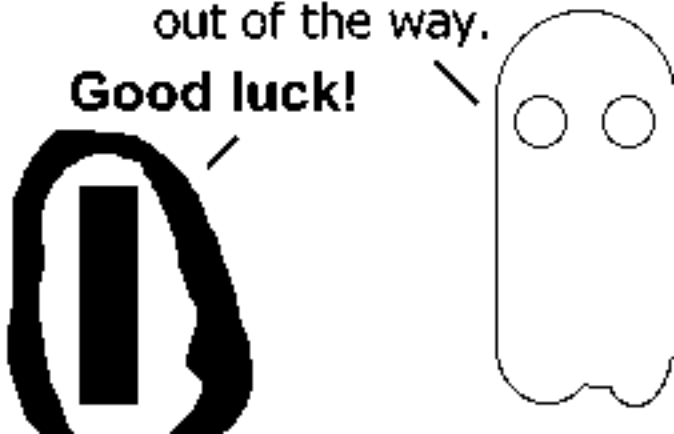
Are there other Sentries within these walls

Ummmmaybe

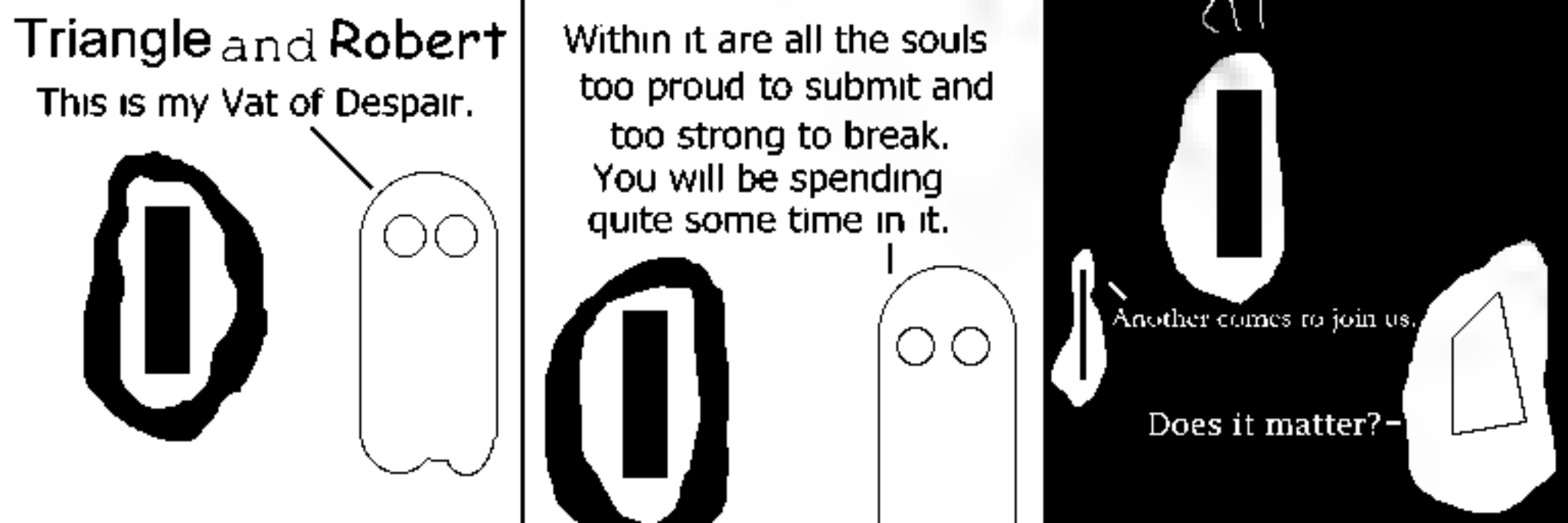
Triangle and Robert

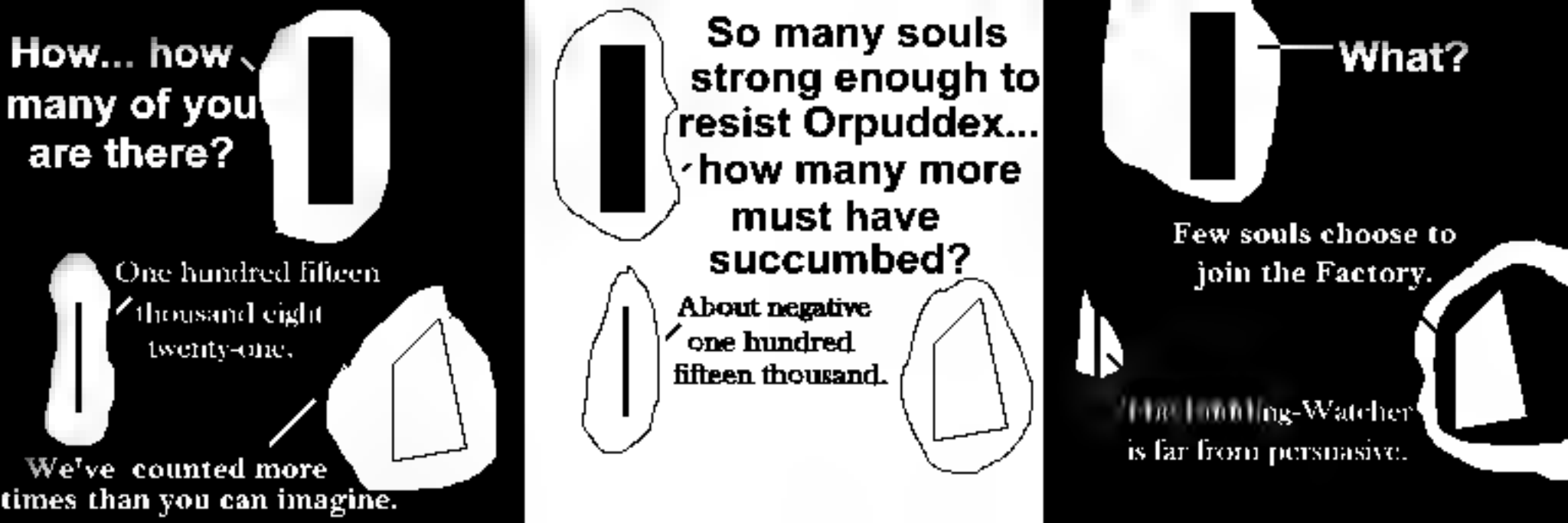






Triangle and Robert




How... how many of you are there?
One hundred fifteen thousand eight twenty-one.
We've counted more times than you can imagine.
So many souls strong enough to resist Orpuddex... how many more must have succumbed?
About negative one hundred fifteen thousand.
What?
Few souls choose to join the Factory.
ing-Watcher is far from persuasive.

Triangle and Robert

You're not all polygons, are you?

Why all the questions?

This is the Vat of Despair. You're supposed to be despairing.

Maybe later! Right now, I'm hoping for some answers!

Why?

None leave the Vat.

I'm going to find someone else to talk to!

Rrrrrrrrrr

You'll never go anywhere.

Triangle and Rob

Cartoonist?

Sorry, you can't hear me from inside the vat

Yes I can!

I mean officially you're your own.

I was just wondering if, since I'm still the Meat Sentry, I can use my cuisine-magic despite being dead!

I'm sorry, the number you have dialed cannot be reached at this time

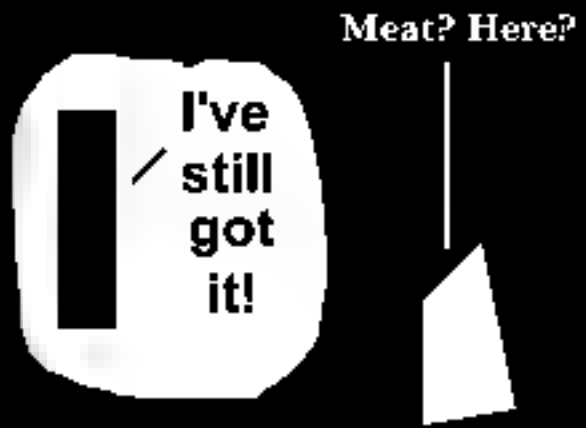
I guess I'll just have to try it for myself and see if it works.

I summon Variety Meat Barrage!

Cartoonist? I can't tell if my cuisine-magic works if you don't draw anything.

.zzz

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Baa!

Baa!

It says "SHEEP" on you, but it's in a different font and you're not a rectangle!

Baa?

INSERT SHEEP

What? I can see your thoughts? Tell me! What are you?

Baaaaa baaaaa baaaaa baaaaa baaaaa.

INSERT SHEEP

Five baaaaas? Should that mean something to me?

Baa!

INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Why is there grass on me? And why is the grass green?

Baa

INSERT SHEEP

You're still not making any sense!

Language focus ng?

INSERT SHEEP

Ah, okay, so you don't know English, and you're telepathic. Okay, I'll wait for you to pick up on the language.

Please hold

INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Sentry Old sentry

Yo, new sentry?

Yes! I'm the current Meat Sentry!

"Meat" flesh?

Anima?

INSERT SHEEP

Well, yes. That's one source of meat.

Sentry power create flesh?

INSERT SHEEP

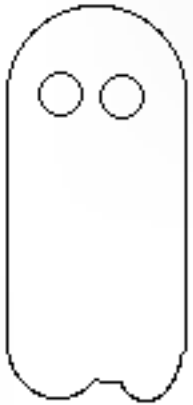
I suppose it's possible. I mostly specialize in destroying things.

Body! Resurrection

Don't jump to conclusions. I wouldn't know where to begin.

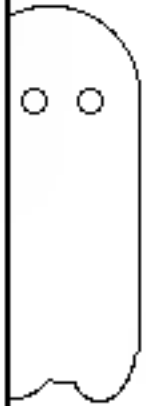
INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert



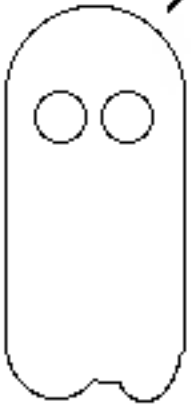
Can a Sertry directly convert pudding into a less fundamental form of food with its daily life energy

What, you don't know?



It's never come up. I figured I'd ask you.

The possibility of a direct conversion would hinge on the flavor of the pudding. What flavor is it?



What about despair flavored

No. It is impossible. However, I thank you for the warning of miss Concarne's plan. She will get nowhere.

Triangle and Robert

So the Fifth Race had Sentries... how many?

Gro ps? As of my death, five groups
Grass, leaves grass other
and grass

INSERT SHEEP

Three grass groups?

Read ng lang age from you
have words missing
Different kinds of grasses

INSERT SHEEP

And everything edible other than grass and leaves was "other"?

No A most everything
Not p dding sa t icks
m nd-energy food

INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Tell me about the days of the Fifth Race. If I ever get out of this vat it might be useful knowledge to have.

INSERT SHEEP

I'm still not here, but isn't that request sort of out of character

If I had thought instead of fighting I wouldn't be a ghost now. Maybe it's time I start learning things.

Baa?

INSERT SHEEP

Oh no . now the grass knows about me and why he or she is suddenly rendered as a hexagon rather than a fluffy ghost with limbs and such. This could be awkward

Don't worry! What are the odds of your artwork turning telepathic sheep to supervillainy twice?

Baa

Triangle and Robert

Baa woo missing yes
Cartoonist strangeness
Cartoonist's mind cloudy
m Prozac the the

Stop! Pull back!

INSERT SHEEP

What happened?

You can't read the Cartoonist's mind. He doesn't inhabit this world.

What is Prozac the Bear?

INSERT SHEEP

I don't know! The Cartoonist made it as a stupid joke, and it's just kept appearing in the strip since then!

Can t be summoned?

INSERT SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

SUMMONED? Don't! Don't even consider it! Prozac the Bear is a force not worth tampering with!

INSERT SHEEP

doop BOOP doop BOOP doop BOOP doop

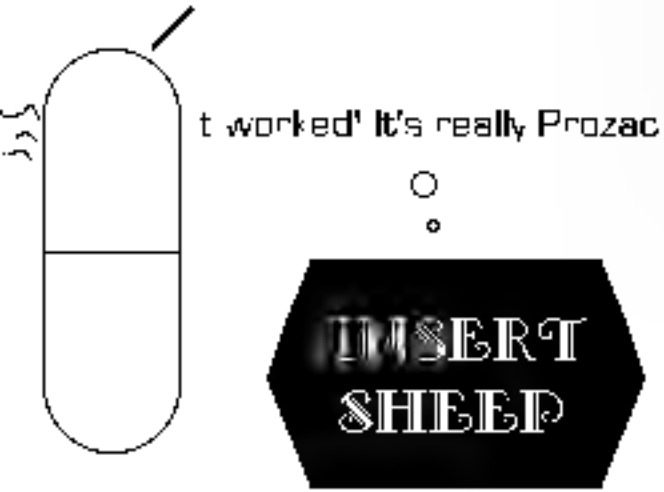
I refuse to be here for this.

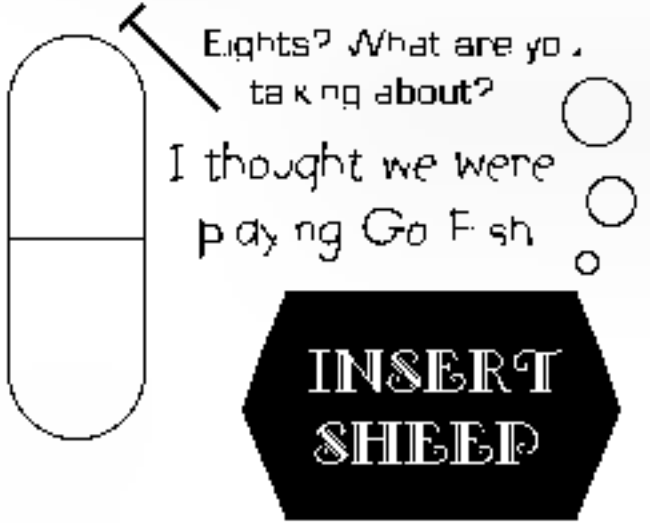
INSERT SHEEP

The Cartoonist's power can restore me to fe even after a these millenia and the key to harnessing that power ies in the one ca ed the Bear

INSERT SHEEP

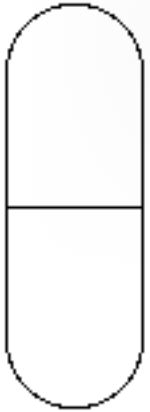
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

So what's up?



wish to be restored to fe You have the power of the Cartoonist It would cost yo , noth ng to help me

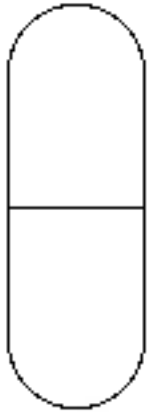
INSERT SHEEP

Okay!

Yo , do t? Thank you

INSERT SHEEP

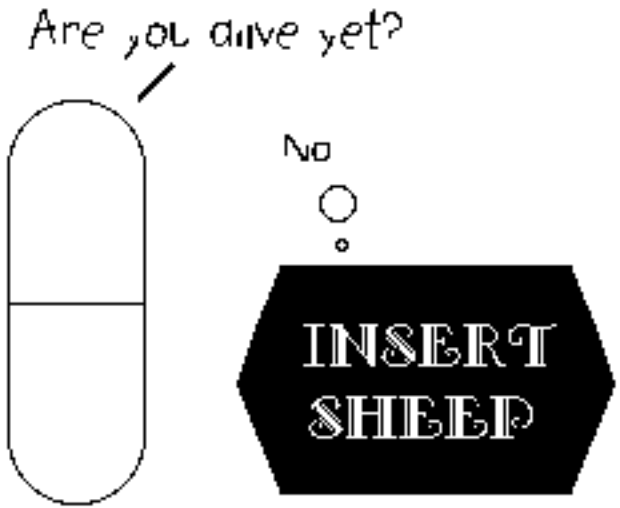
So what do I do?

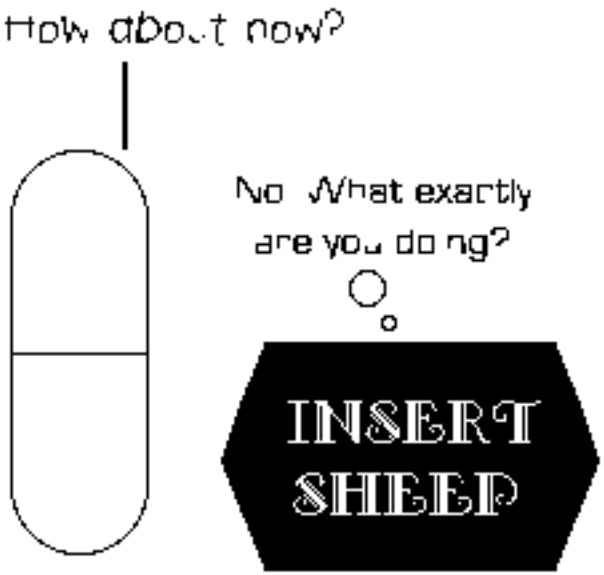


Yo , m. yo , just sort of how should know?

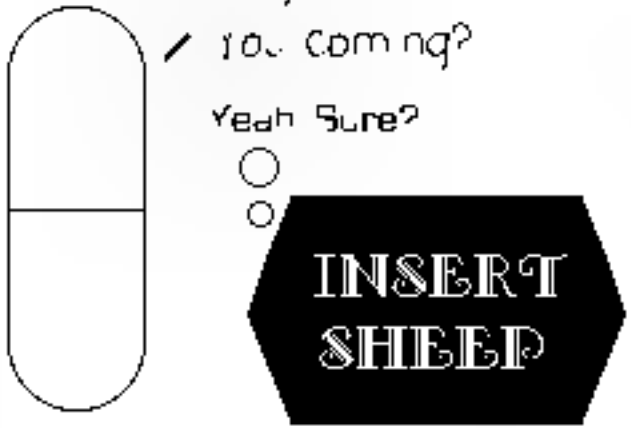
INSERT SHEEP

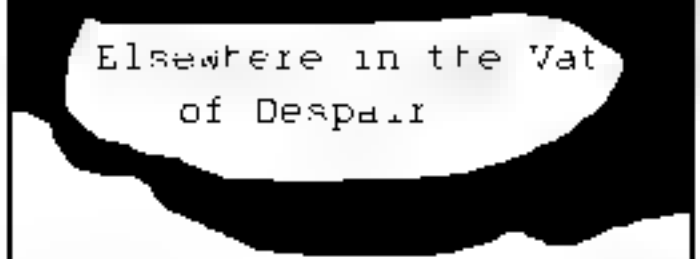
Triangle and Robert



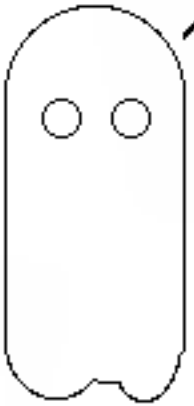


Triangle and Robert





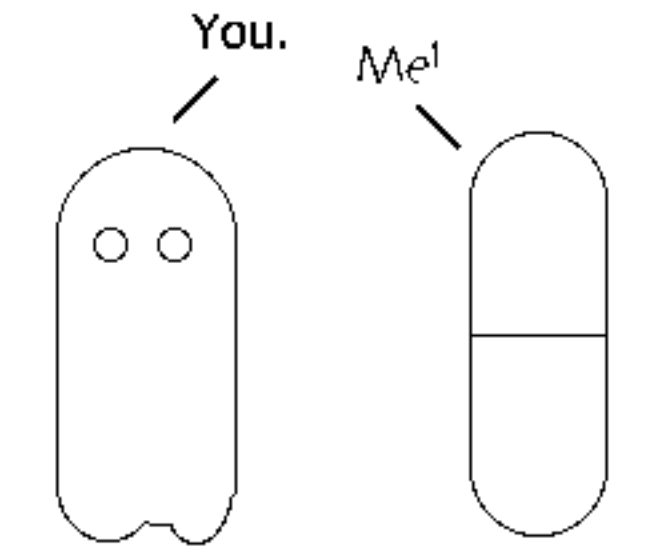
This is actually somewhat hopeless!

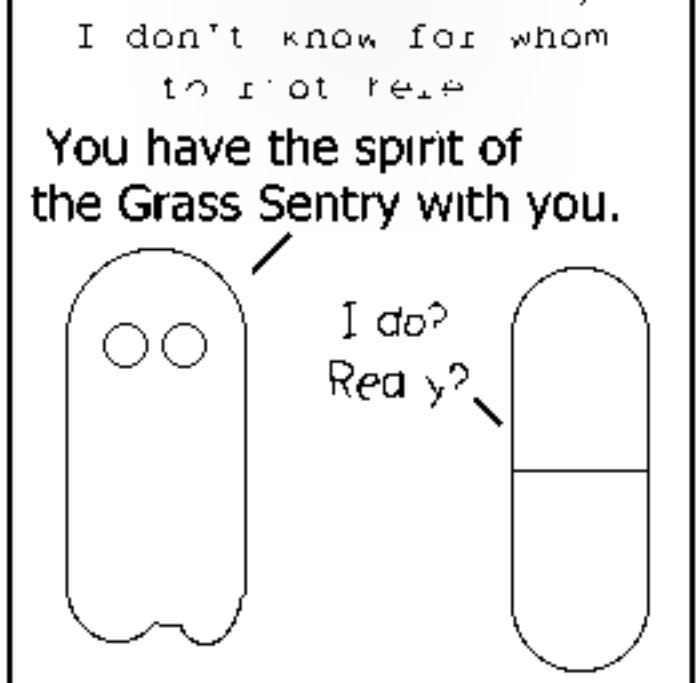


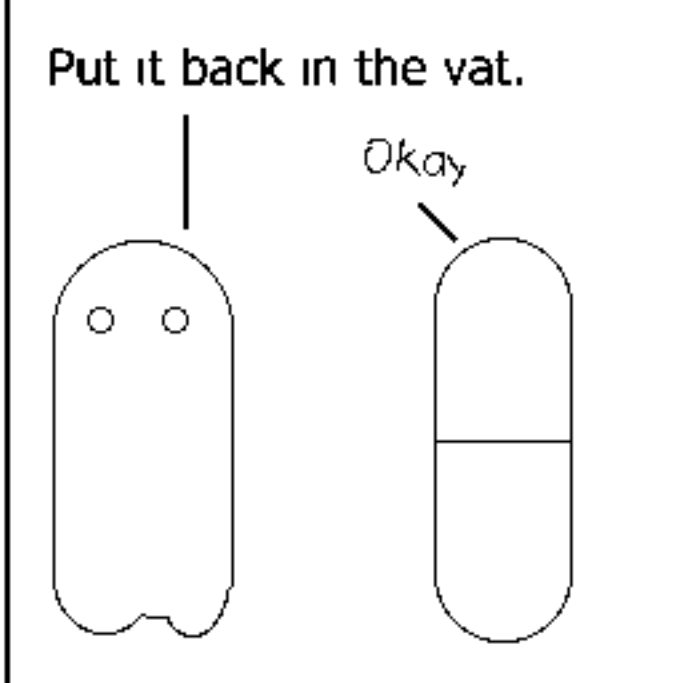
The despair-flavored pudding has already begun to sap the will of the Meat...

What was that? Who disturbs me?

Triangle and Robert







That Prozac that bear whatever t s.

INSERT SHEEP

It threw you back in the vat?

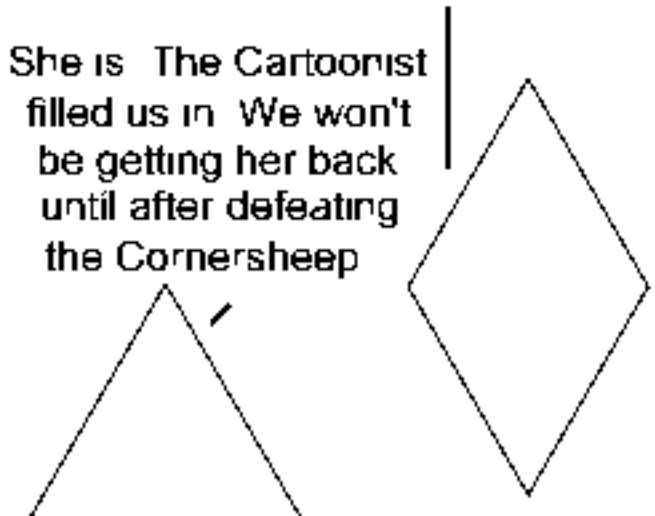
t s a useless abom nation against nature How could this Cartoonist a low s ch a thing to exist?

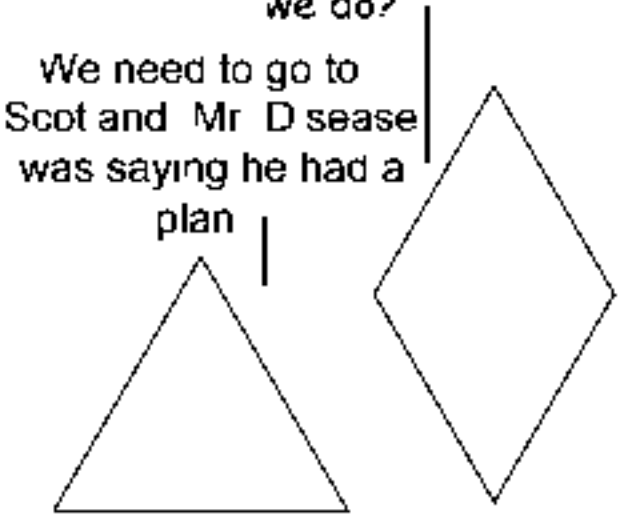
You're talking about the same cartoonist that made you a hexagon despite your predating the rise of polygonal life forms.

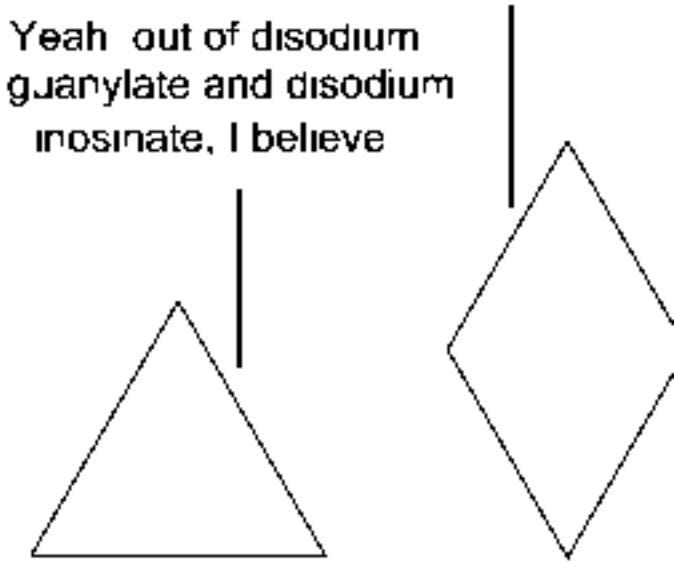
True Has no one opposed the Cartoonist?

Not in any useful way. There are some well-organized protestors, but their actions ca

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

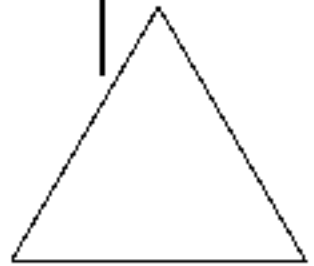
What are disodium thing and the other thing?

From what I understand they enhance MSG n the same way that MSG enhances meat

I believe I have established a s.gnal! Most of the entity's power is dedicated to maintaining the city dome. but it has some remaining consciousness. I will ask it to lower the dome and to use its power to take us to Scotland.

So you should go do that. instead of running around te ling everyone about it

If a seap.ane of additives arrives, board it



Triangle and Robert

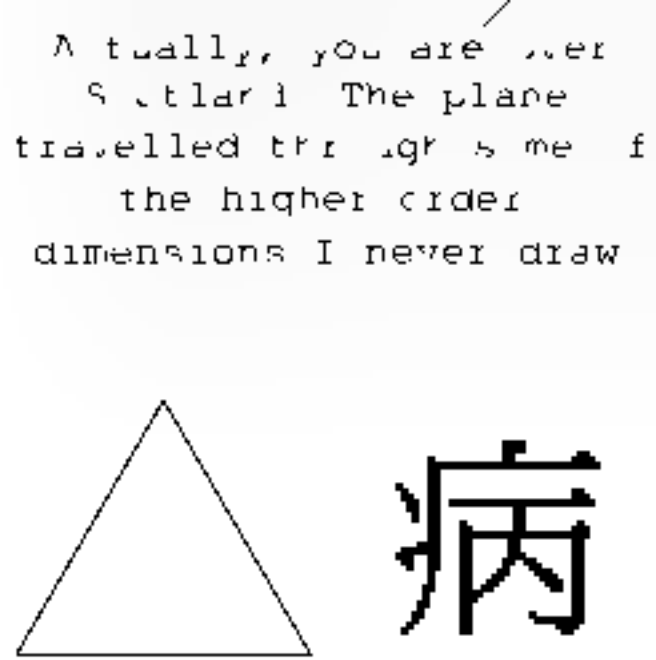
OK

And so, the MSG entity ceased its concentration and the rains came, washing away the dome which had been protecting the last city on Earth not under the control of the Cyberspeep.

I can take three of your group to Scotland and the lair of your foe.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



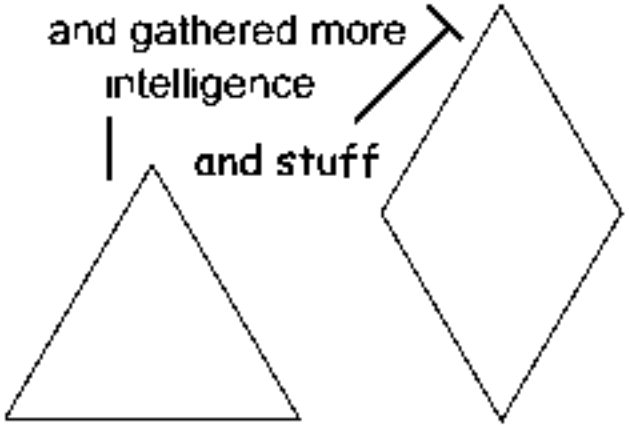
Triangle and Robert

We should have formed a plan

and taken equipment

and gathered more intelligence

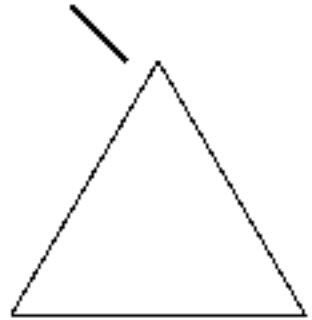
and stuff



The plan is thus to gather intelligence and equipment

Or we could turn around

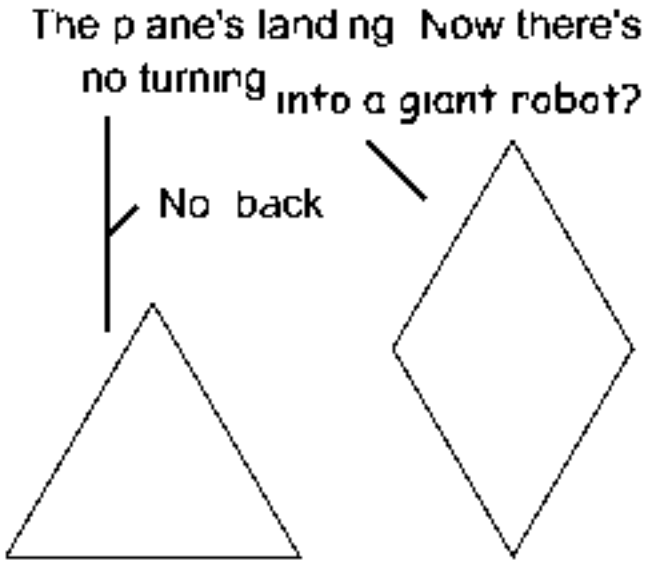
病

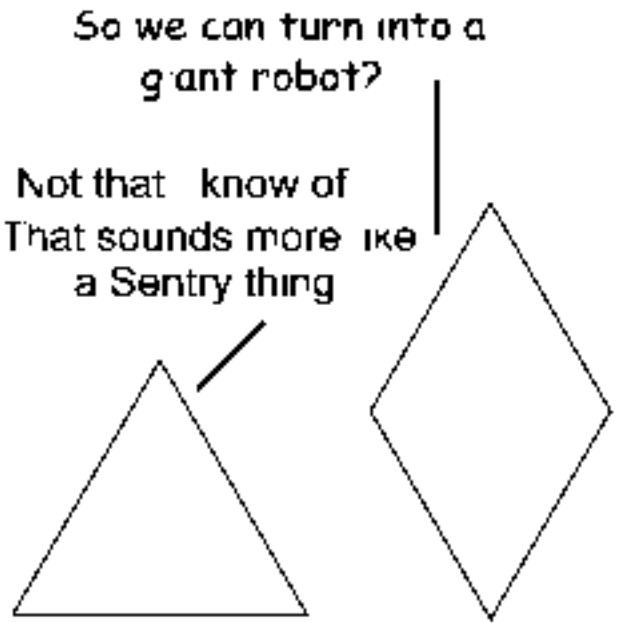


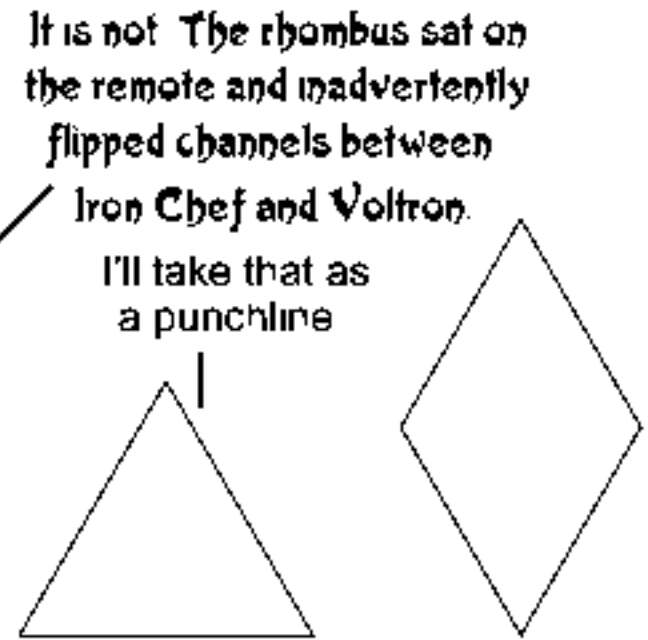
No. Fight now!

病

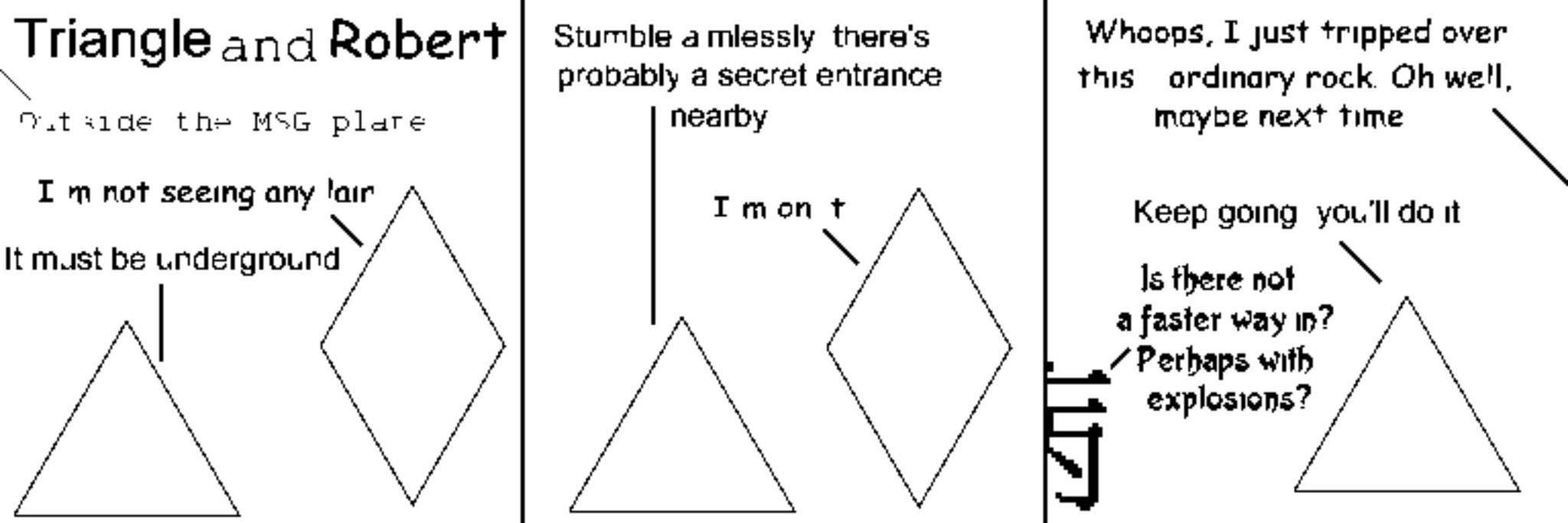
Triangle and Robert



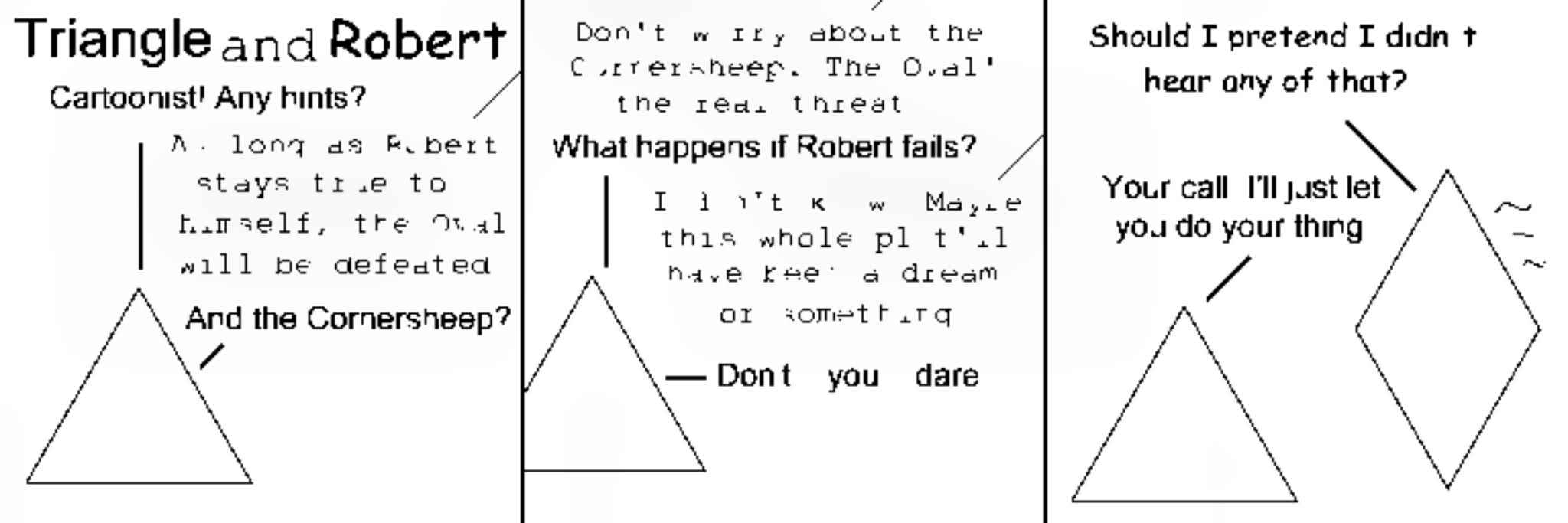




Triangle and Robert

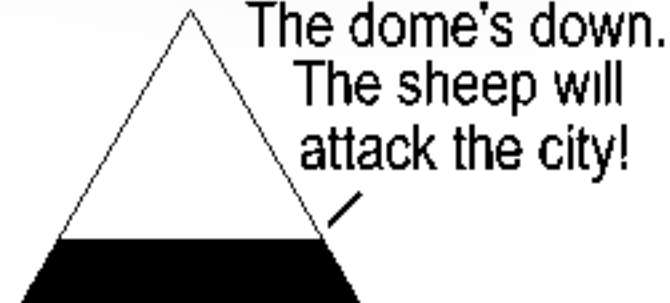


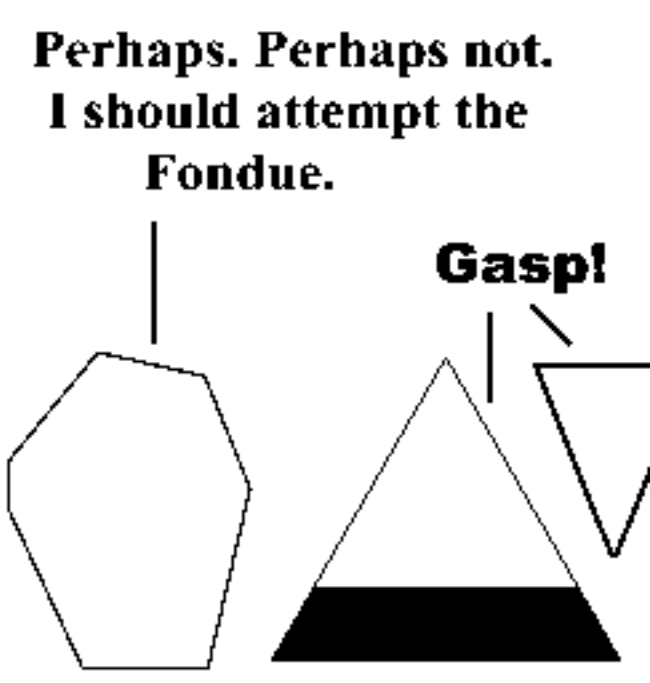
Triangle and Robert

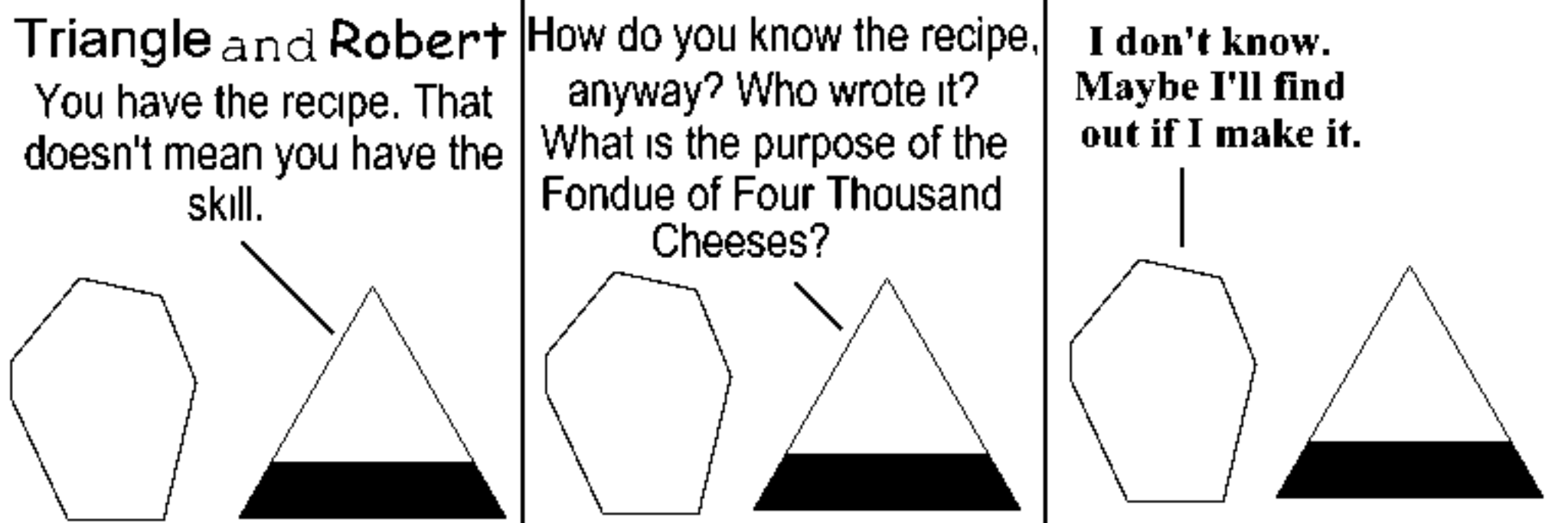


Triangle and Robert

While Robert attempts to penetrate the mysterious defenses of the Oval's hiding place, a situation arises back home

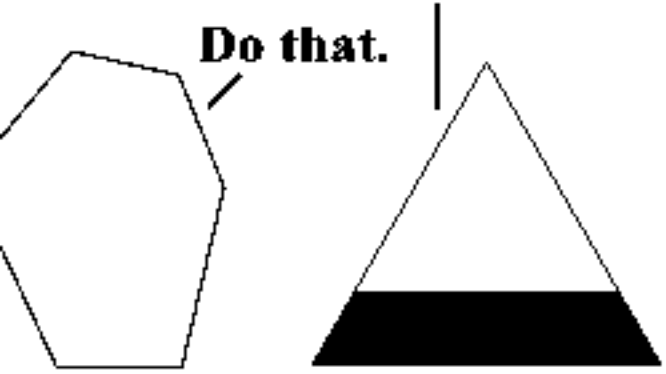


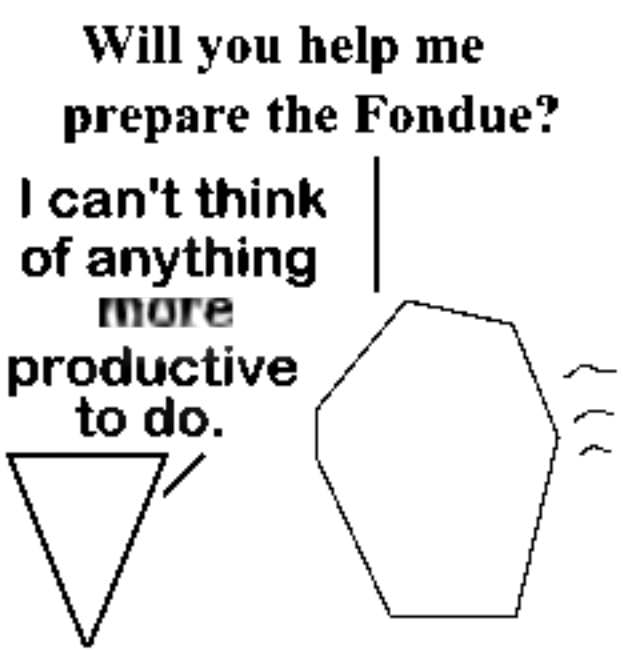


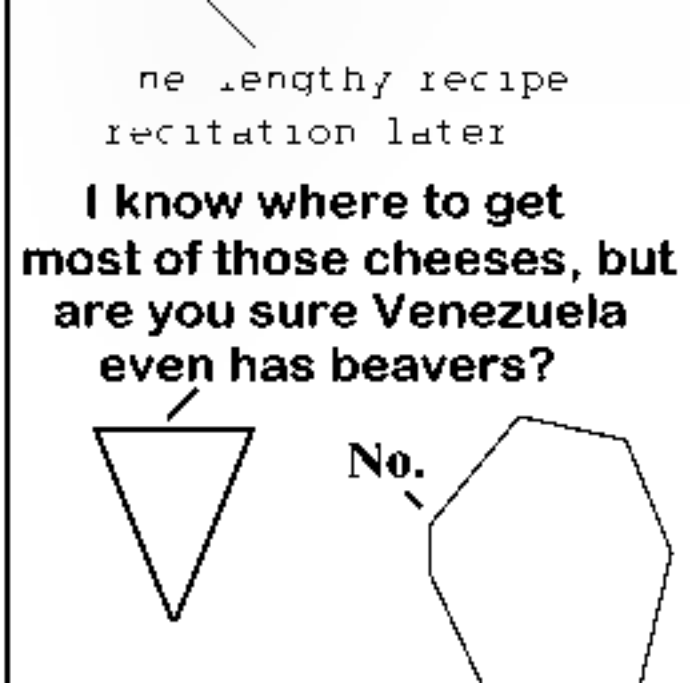

Triangle and Robert
You have the recipe. That doesn't mean you have the skill.
How do you know the recipe, anyway? Who wrote it? What is the purpose of the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses?
I don't know. Maybe I'll find out if I make it.

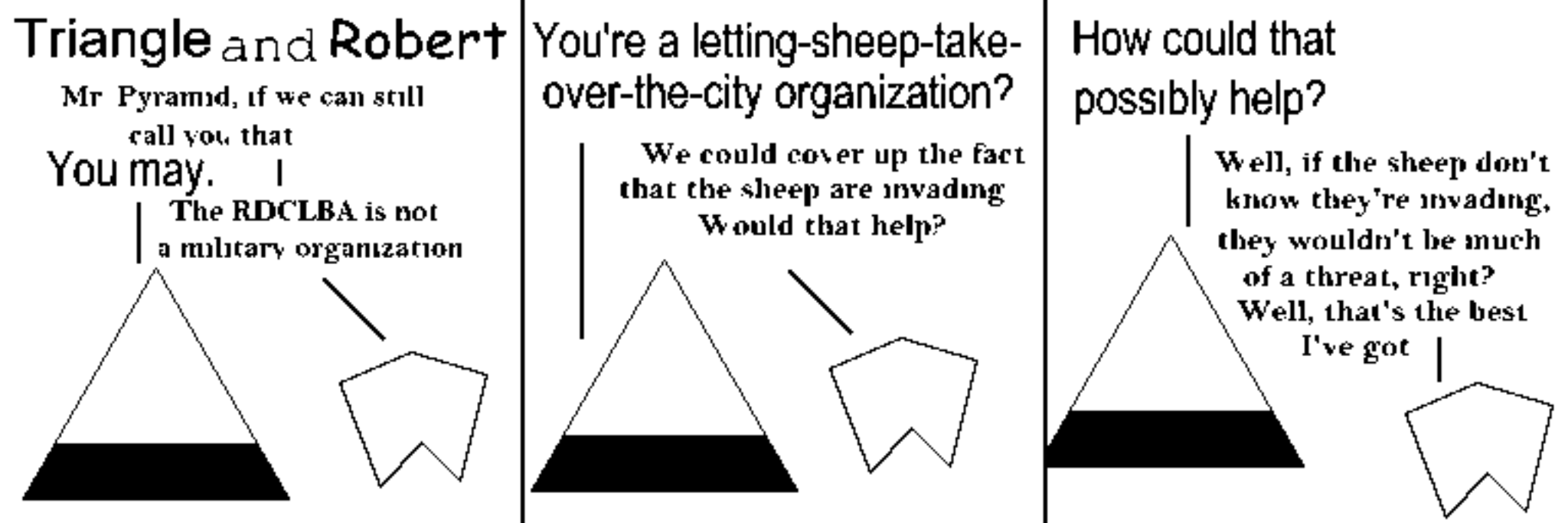
Triangle and Robert

I think I can convince the RDCLBA to organize a defense against the sheep



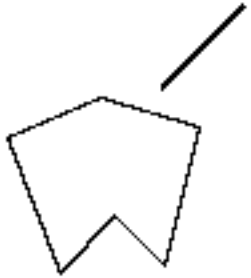




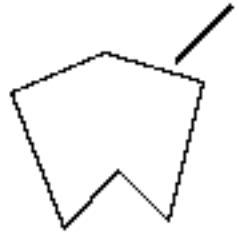

Triangle and Robert
Mr Pyramid, if we can still call you that
You may.
The RDCLBA is not a military organization
You're a letting-sheep-take-over-the-city organization?
We could cover up the fact that the sheep are invading Would that help?
How could that possibly help?
Well, if the sheep don't know they're invading, they wouldn't be much of a threat, right?
Well, that's the best I've got

Triangle and Robert

Listen up! The RDCLBA has a job to do! Just because the government has been disbanded by sheep doesn't mean we can't do something!

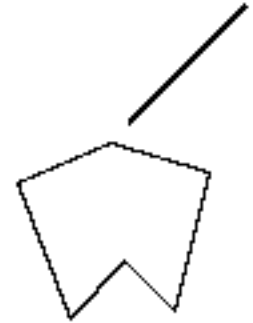


We lost a lot of polygons in the Cube disaster, and I know the agency hasn't really recovered That doesn't change the task at hand This city will soon be attacked by ovine forces We won't stand a chance in direct combat We need to divert them

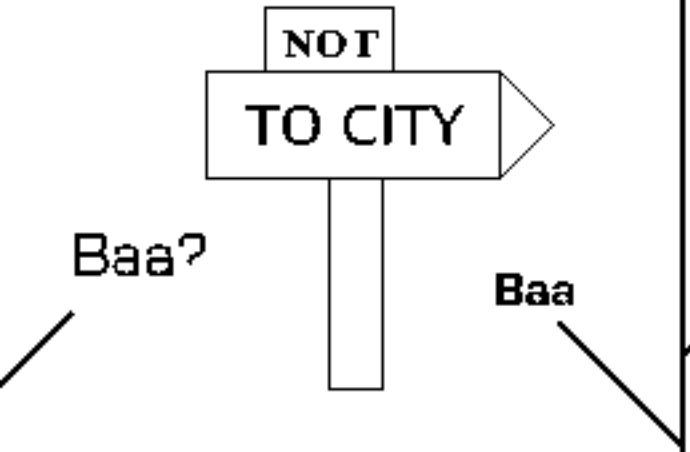


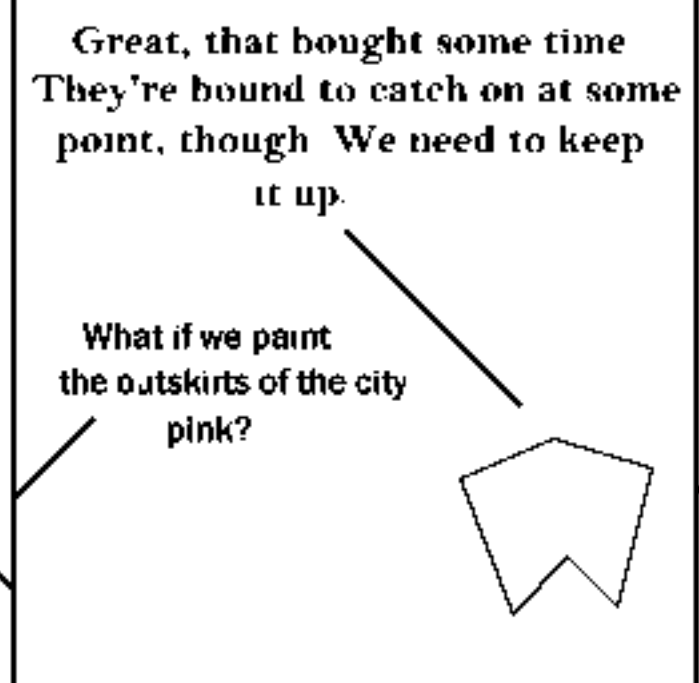
And then what?

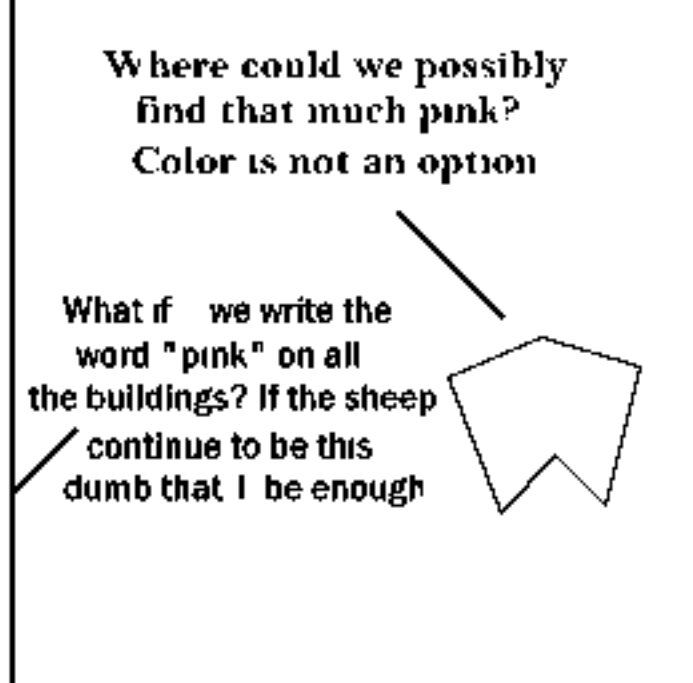
We can only hope that the Oval will be defeated in Scotland and the sheep will be pulled back It's not much of a hope, I know

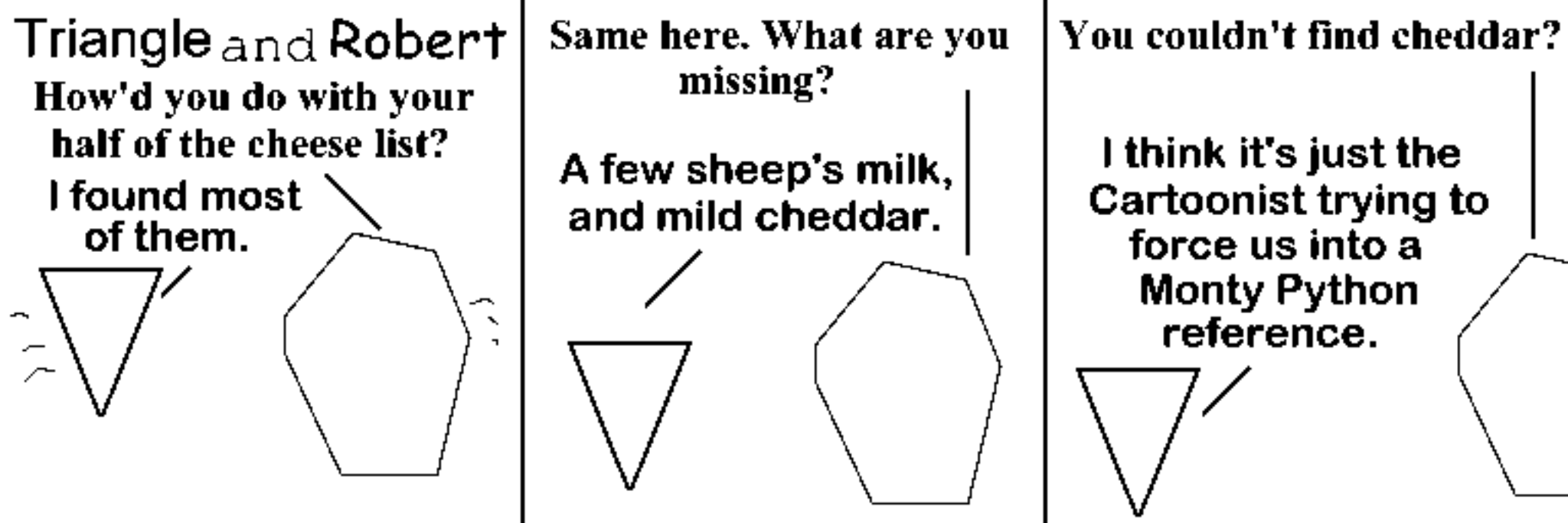


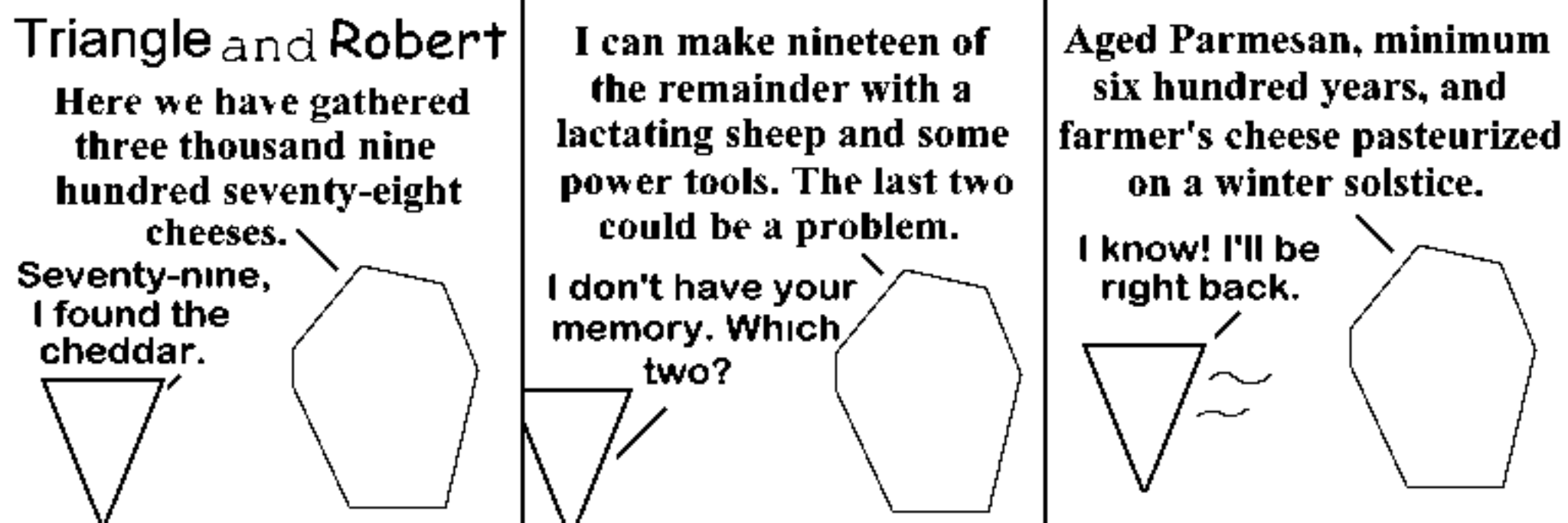
Triangle and Robert



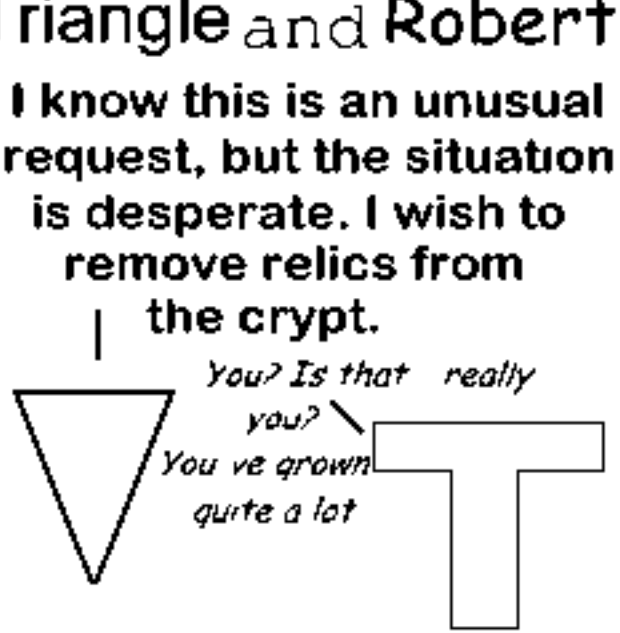


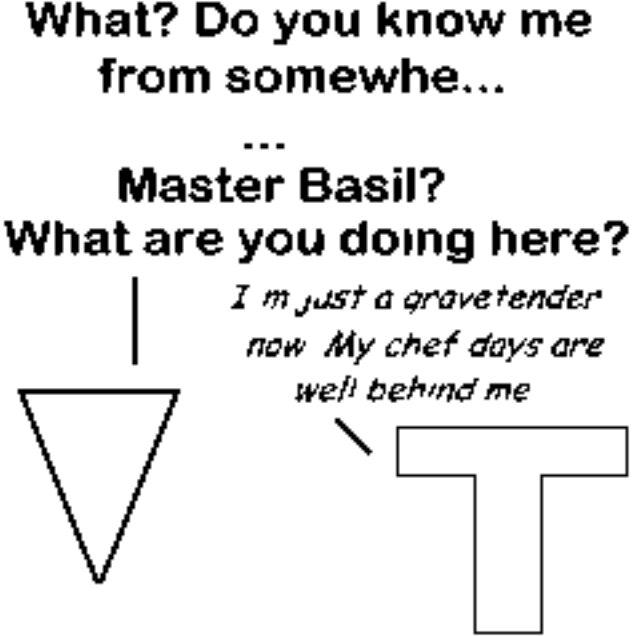


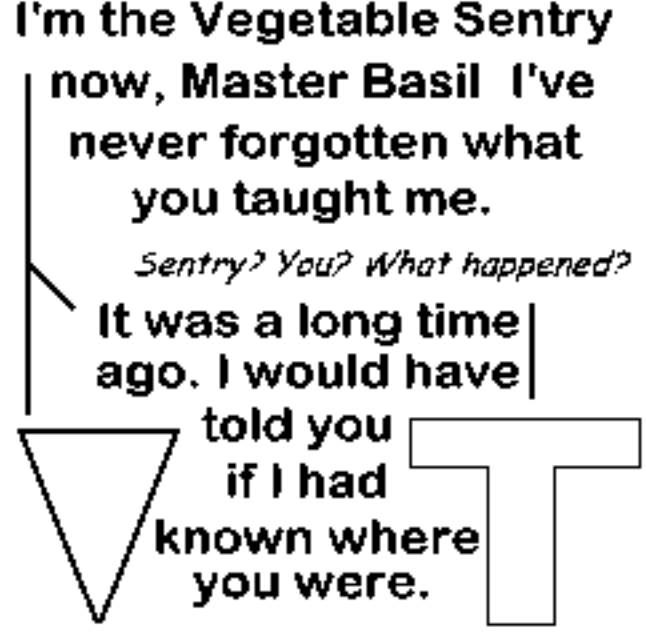

Triangle and Robert
How'd you do with your half of the cheese list?
I found most of them.
Same here. What are you missing?
A few sheep's milk, and mild cheddar.
You couldn't find cheddar?
I think it's just the Cartoonist trying to force us into a Monty Python reference.

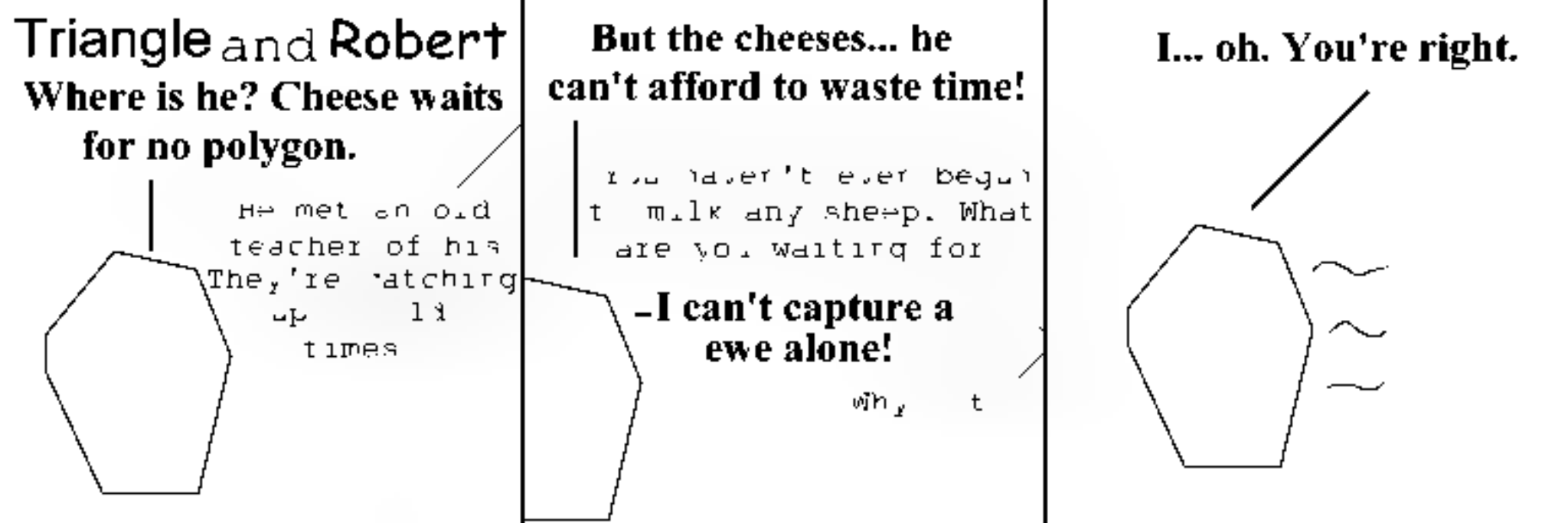

Triangle and Robert
Here we have gathered three thousand nine hundred seventy-eight cheeses.
Seventy-nine, I found the cheddar.
I can make nineteen of the remainder with a lactating sheep and some power tools. The last two could be a problem.
I don't have your memory. Which two?
Aged Parmesan, minimum six hundred years, and farmer's cheese pasteurized on a winter solstice.
I know! I'll be right back.

Triangle and Robert



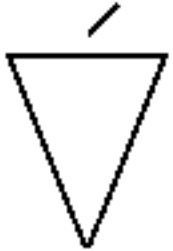




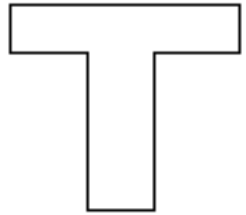

Triangle and Robert
Where is he? Cheese waits for no polygon.
He met an old teacher of his. They're catching up
times
But the cheeses... he can't afford to waste time!
t milk any sheep. What are you waiting for
–I can't capture a ewe alone!
I... oh. You're right.

Triangle and Robert

I was with her when she died. She... she choked on a scallion. That's no death for a Sentry.

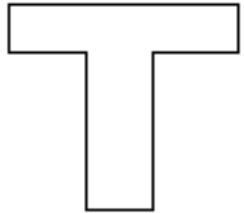


She would bolt her food. That was her one great weakness

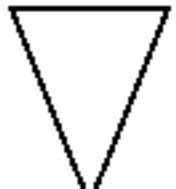


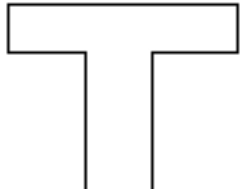
She gave me her spatula. I didn't want to take it. I knew there had to be someone who would make a better Vegetable Sentry than myself.

Then why



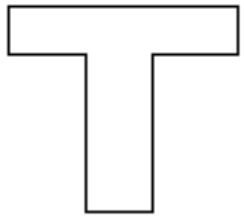
She threw it at me with her last tablespoon of strength. It was in contact with me at the moment her spirit departed her body. I still think I was the wrong choice, but I've tried my best.





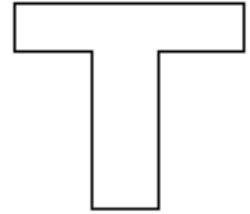
Triangle and Robert

I can't just let you into the crypt. Fight me. I expect you'll win.



No, Master Basil. I'll find another way to what I seek.

Tell me then, what did you hope to find in the crypt?



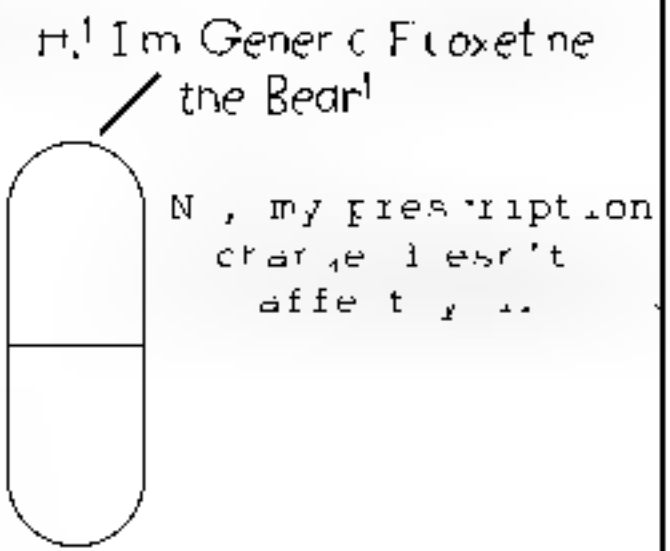
Rare cheeses. The Dairy Sentry is attempting the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses. I need ancient Parmesan, and farmer's cheese pasteurized on a winter solstice.

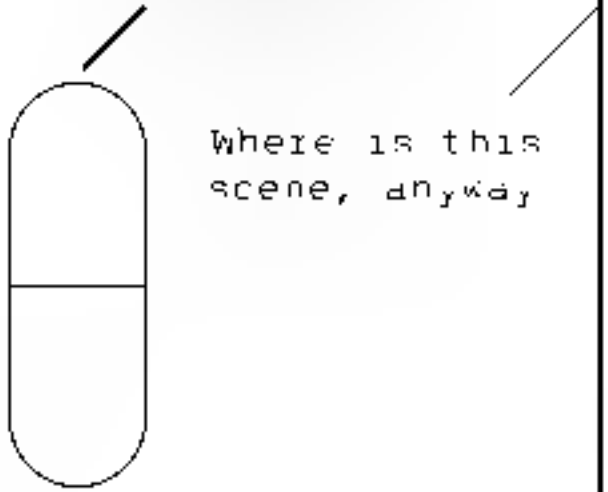
How ancient?

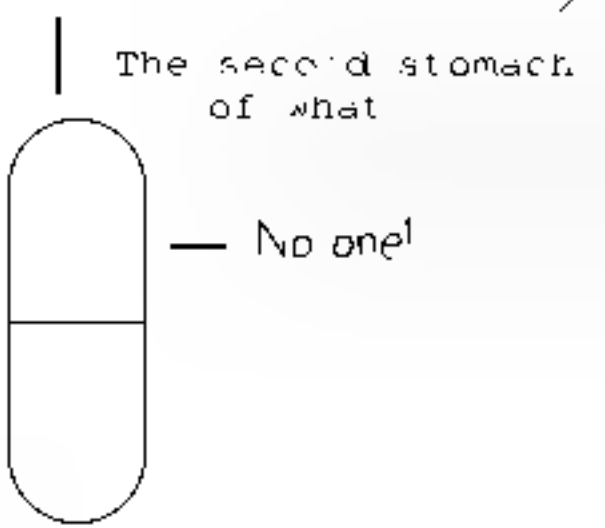
Aged 600 years.

Is that all? That I can grant you as a gift from my own salad toppings. As for the farmer's cheese... seek elsewhere.

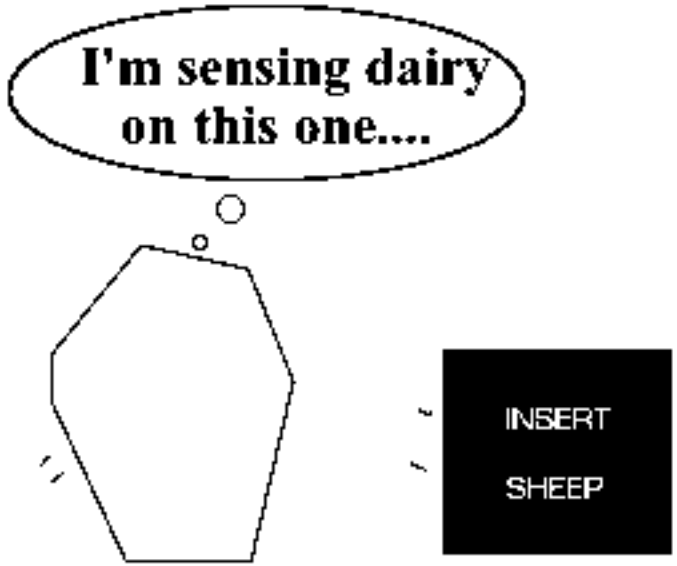
Triangle and Robert

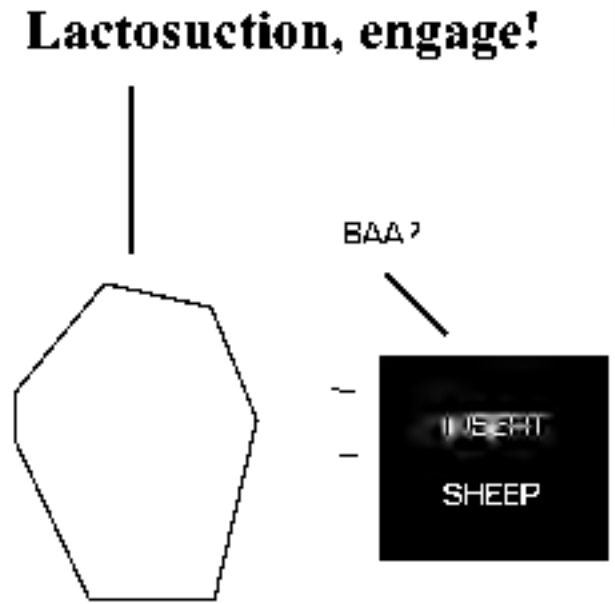


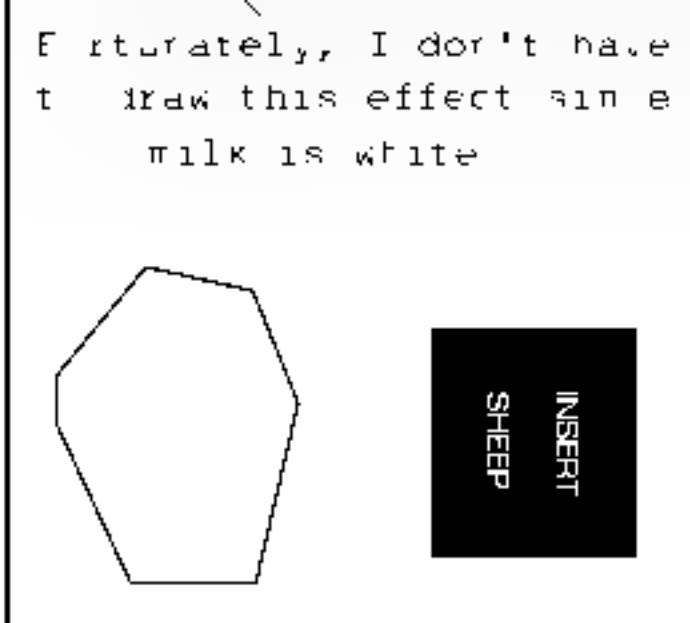




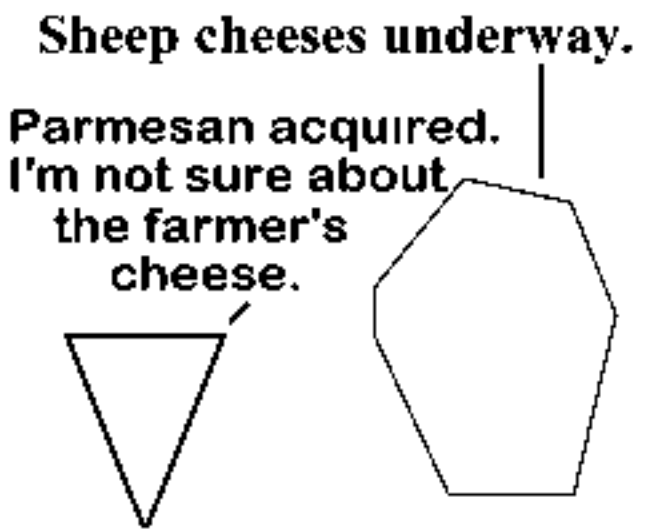
Triangle and Robert

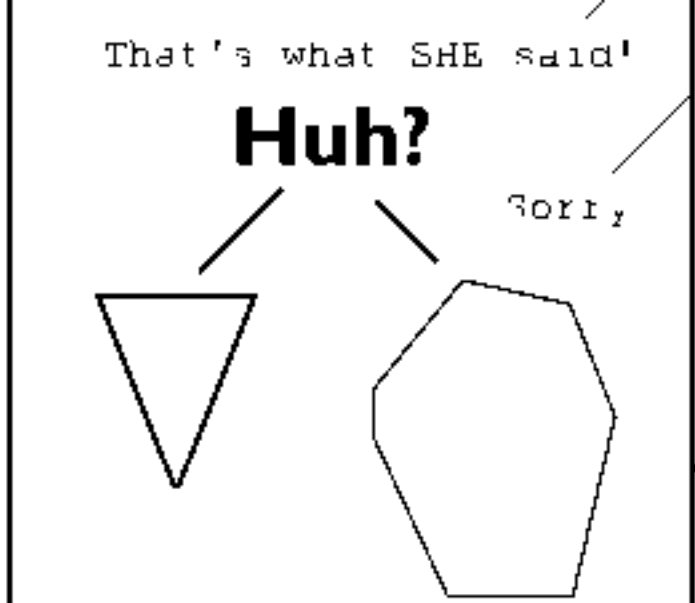


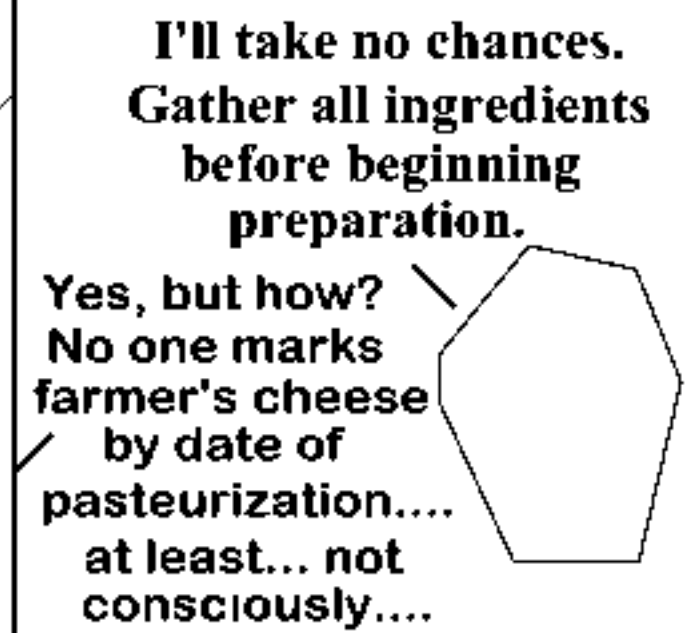




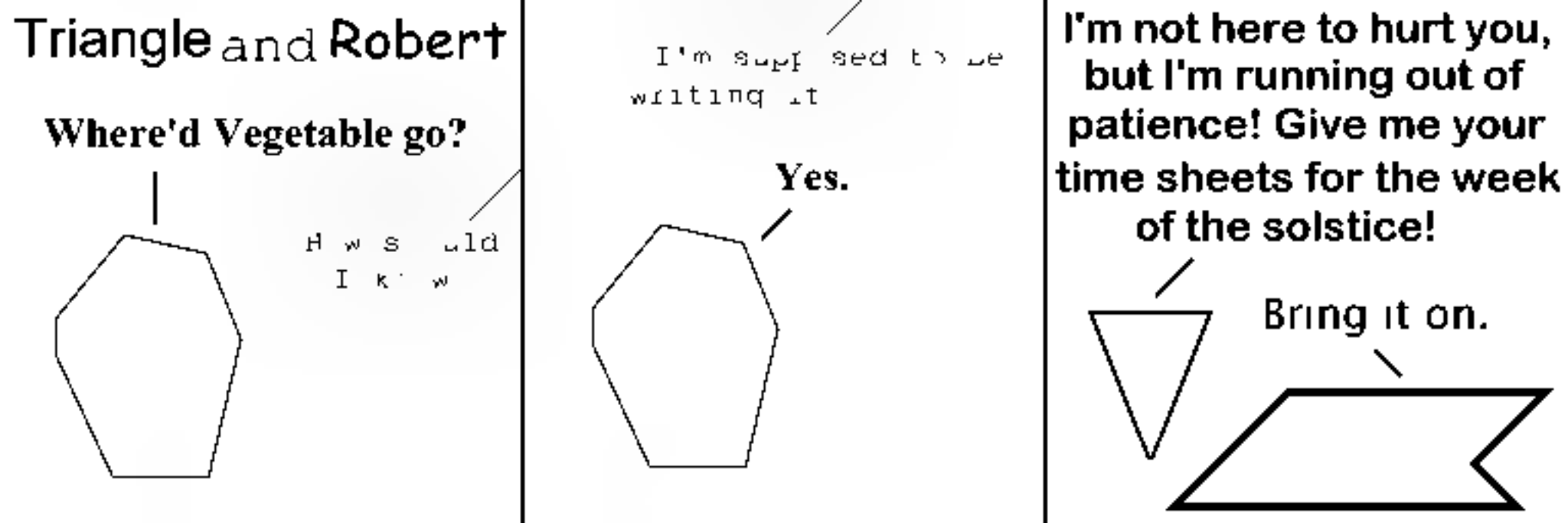
Triangle and Robert

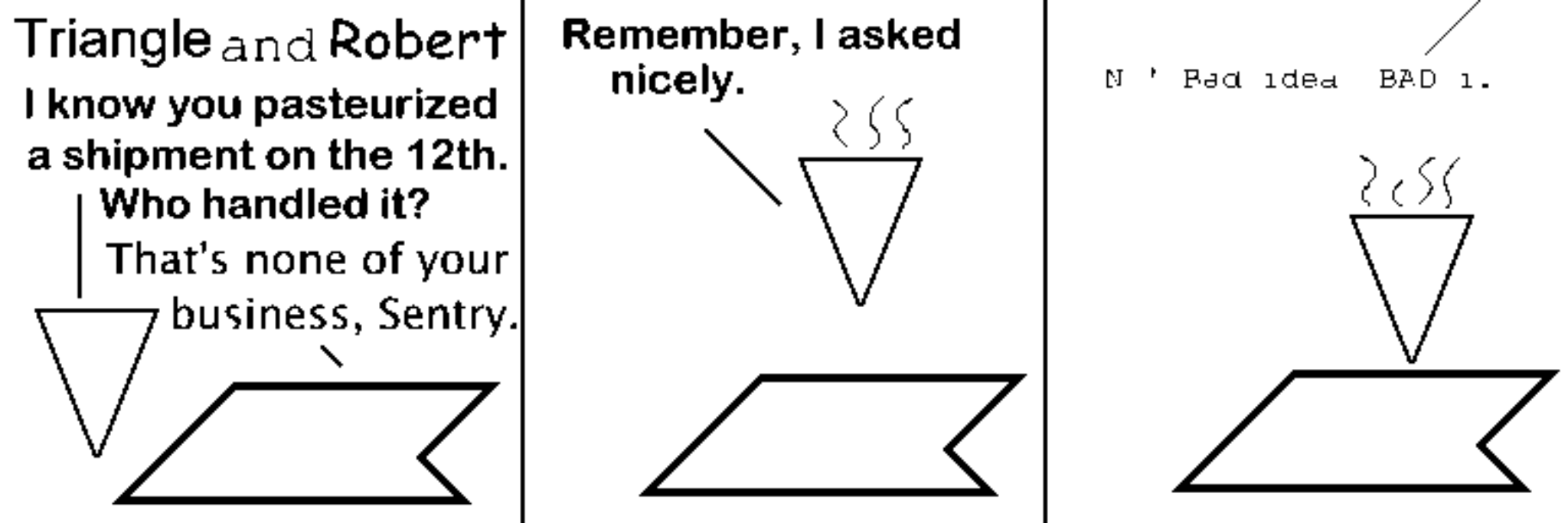




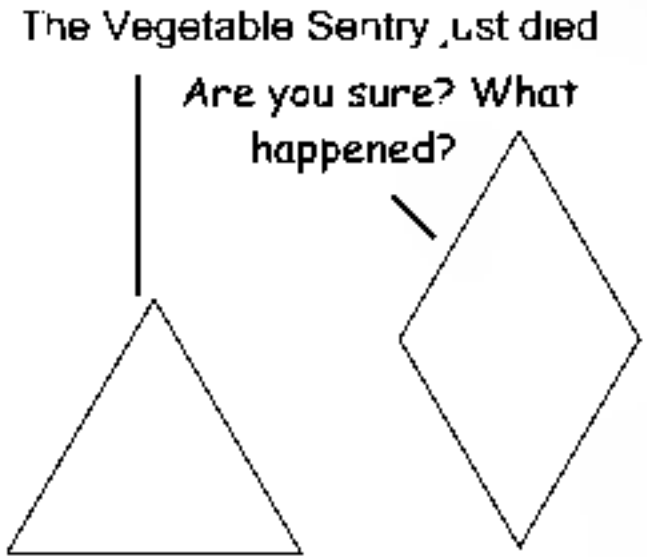


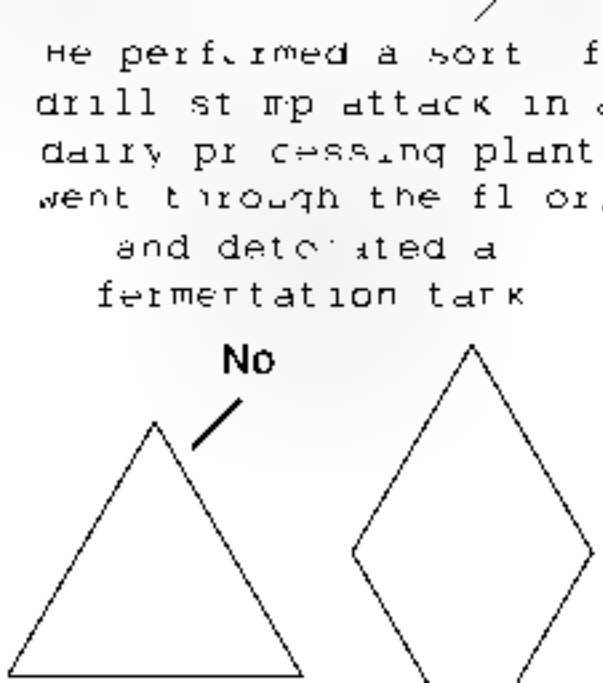
Triangle and Robert

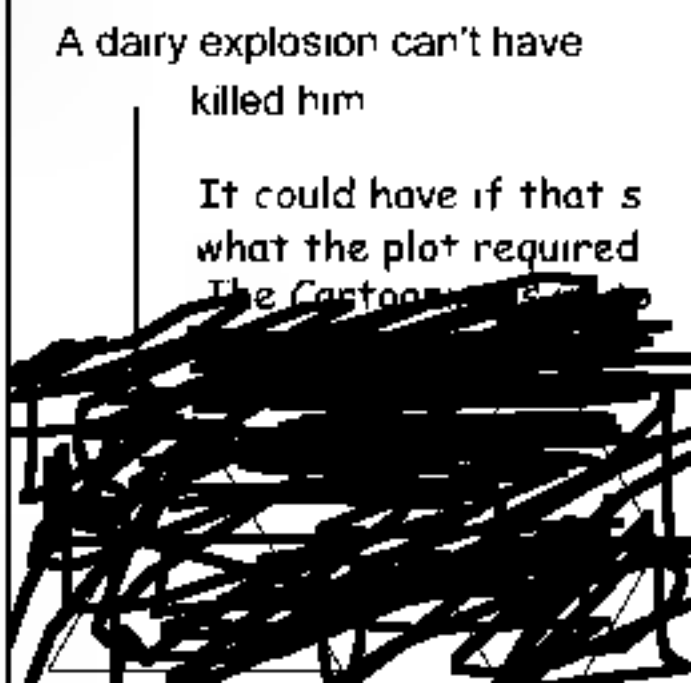



Triangle and Robert
I know you pasteurized a shipment on the 12th.
Who handled it?
That's none of your business, Sentry.
Remember, I asked nicely.
N ' Bad idea BAD 1.

Triangle and Robert







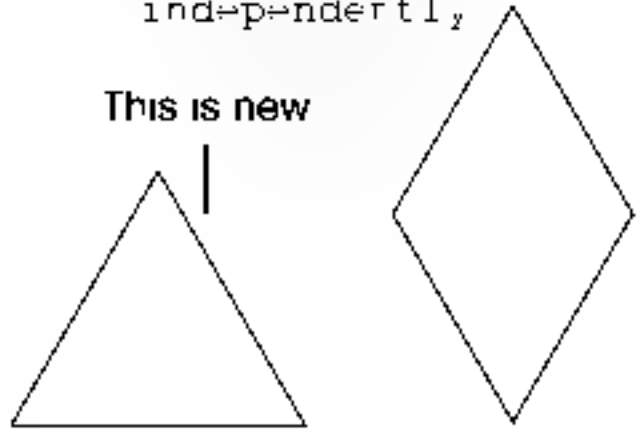
Triangle and Robert

What are you doing? What's this for?

I didn't want you to give away the plot

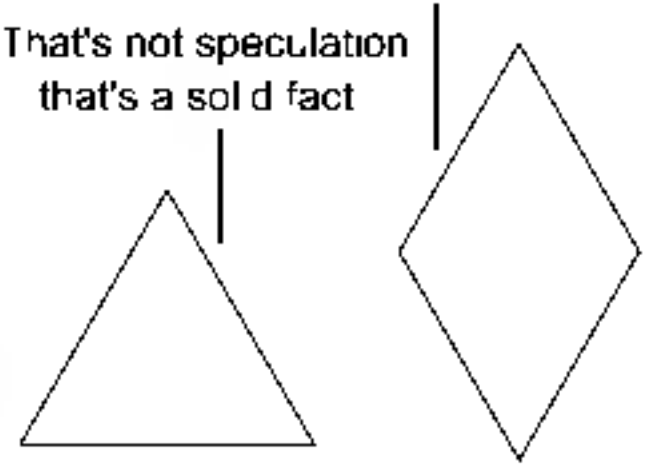
It's okay to speculate, but I'd like the readers to do their own speculating independently

This is new



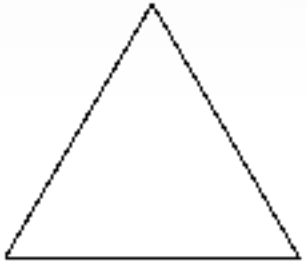
What speculating? All I said was it's obvious you're killing off the four Sentries

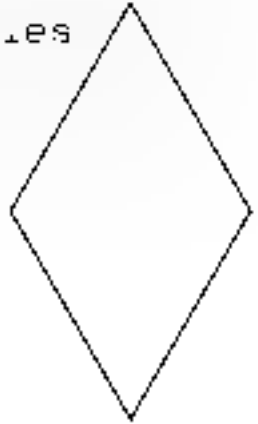
That's not speculation that's a solid fact



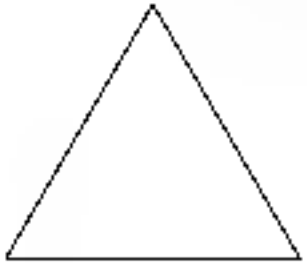
Triangle and Robert

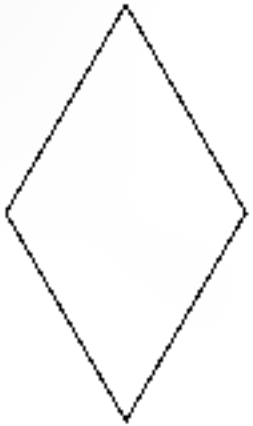
Okay, okay. The plot as I have it envisioned does call for some number of dying Sentries





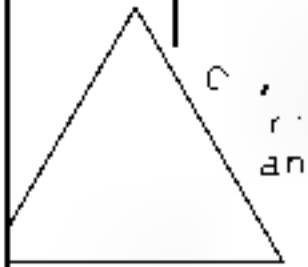
That doesn't mean they'll die. The plot's gotten away from me more than one occasion



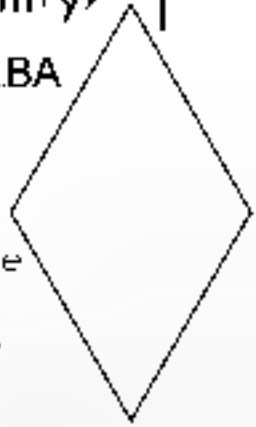


The Fondue must be what you're planning to kill the Dairy Sentry with. What'll kill the Grain Sentry?

My guess is an RDCLBA loose cannon



Okay, you've ruined fun anymore.



Triangle and Robert

Where's the Vegetable Sentry?

Er well

He's kind of late

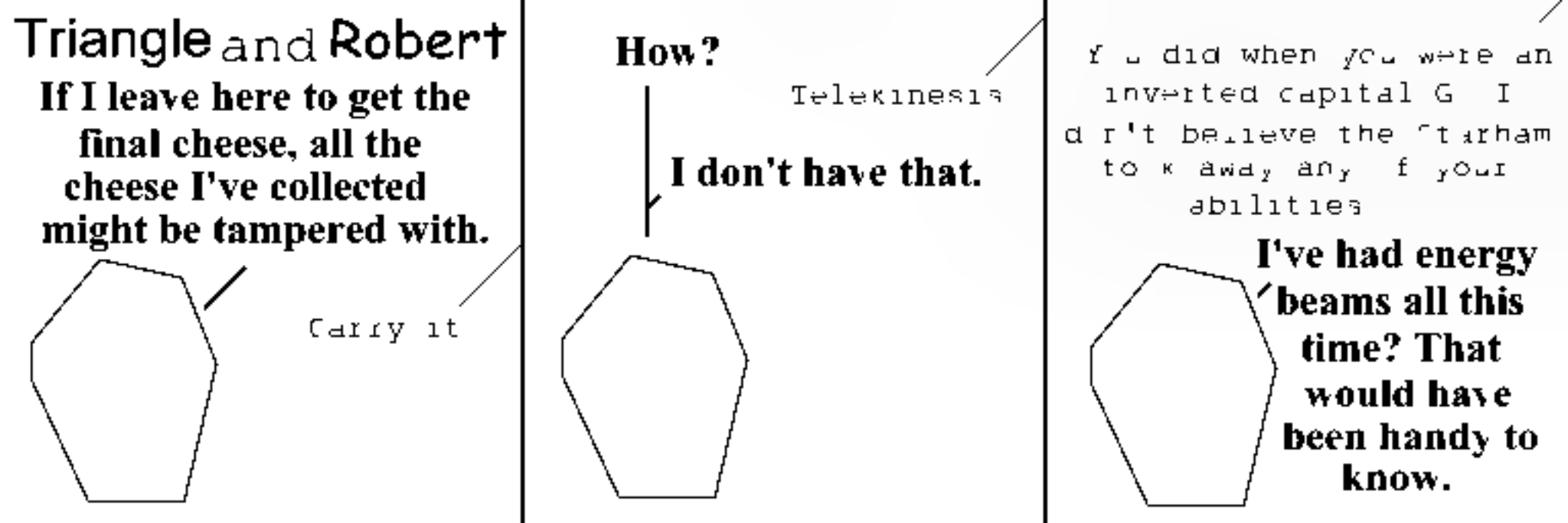
Late as in dead?

yes

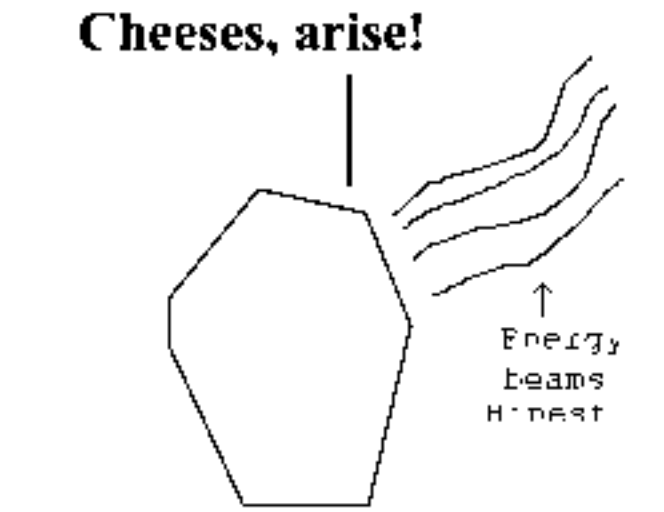
Wher did I get so predictable

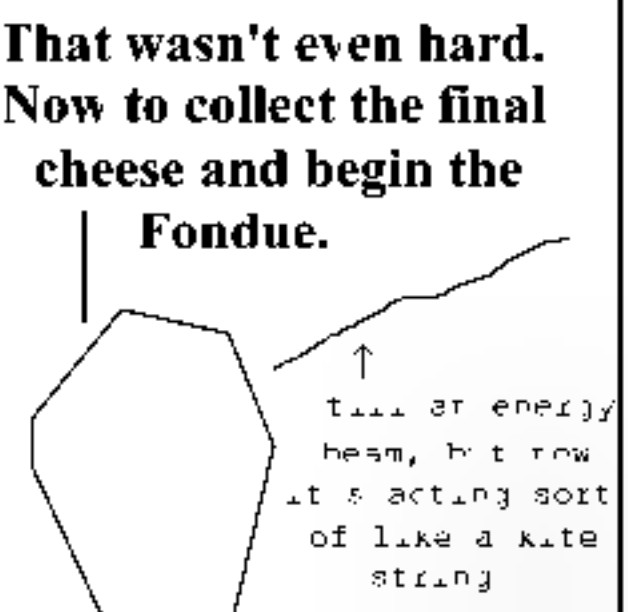
Mu.

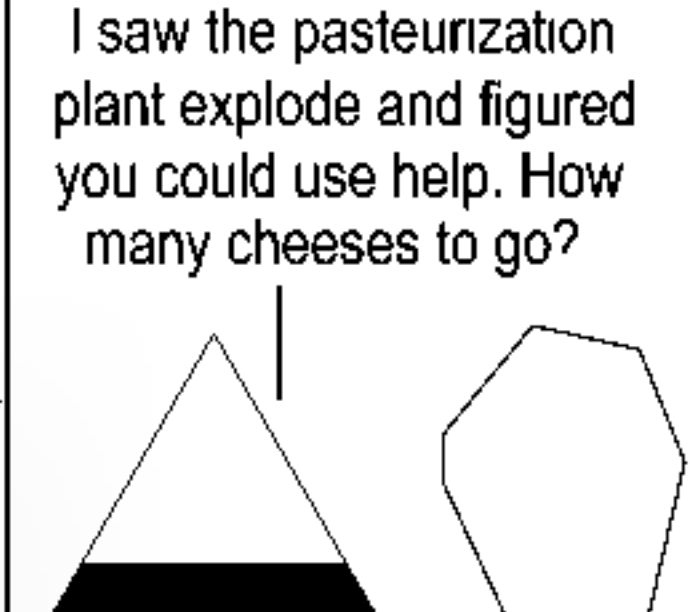
Triangle and Robert

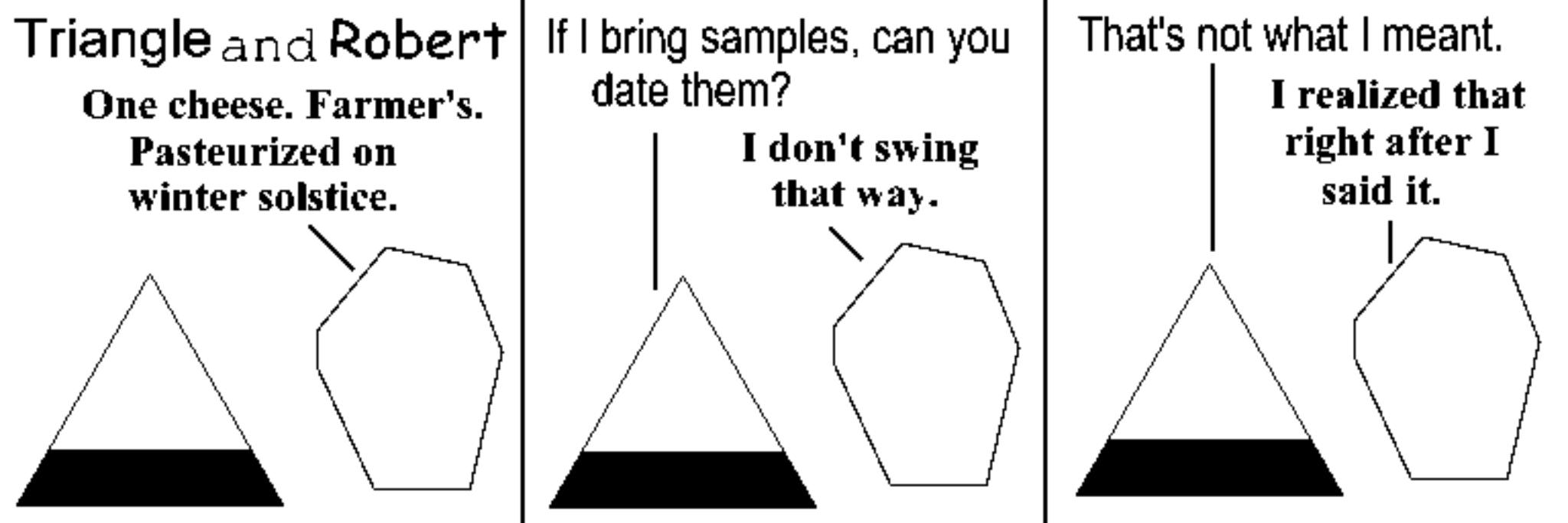


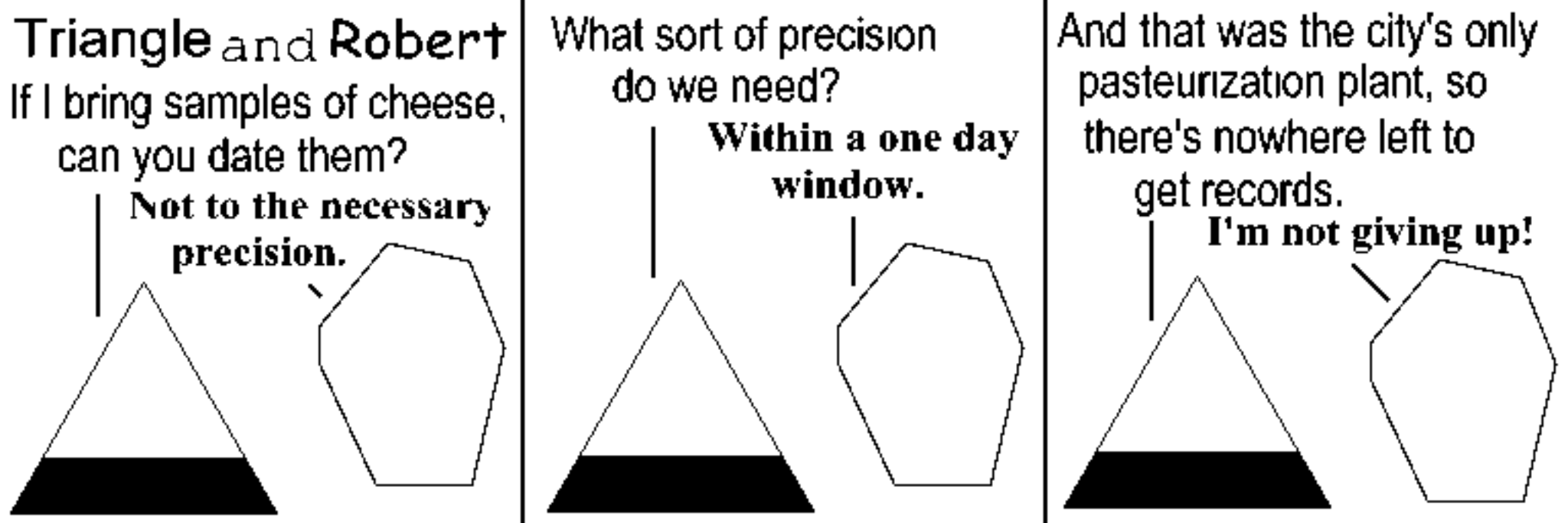
Triangle and Robert







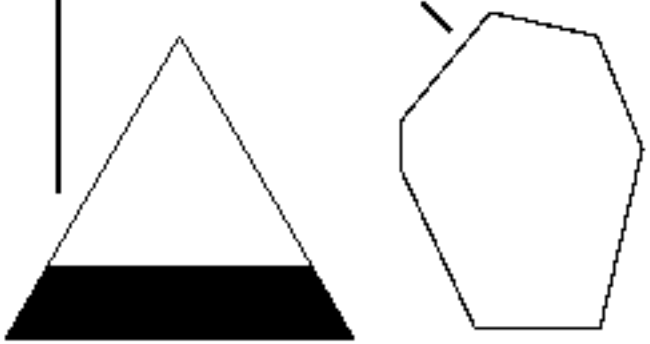

Triangle and Robert
One cheese. Farmer's. Pasteurized on winter solstice.
If I bring samples, can you date them?
I don't swing that way.
That's not what I meant.
I realized that right after I said it.


Triangle and Robert
If I bring samples of cheese, can you date them?
Not to the necessary precision.
What sort of precision do we need?
Within a one day window.
And that was the city's only pasteurization plant, so there's nowhere left to get records.
I'm not giving up!

Triangle and Robert

You're not meant to make the Fondue, Bark. It's fate.

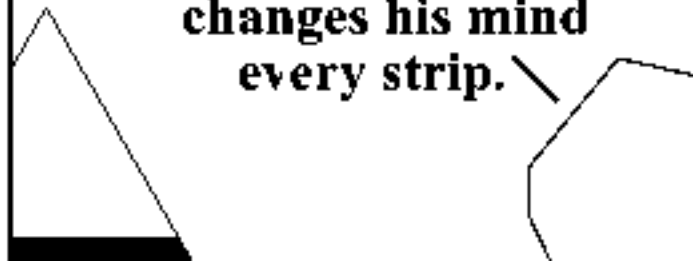
You still believe in fate?

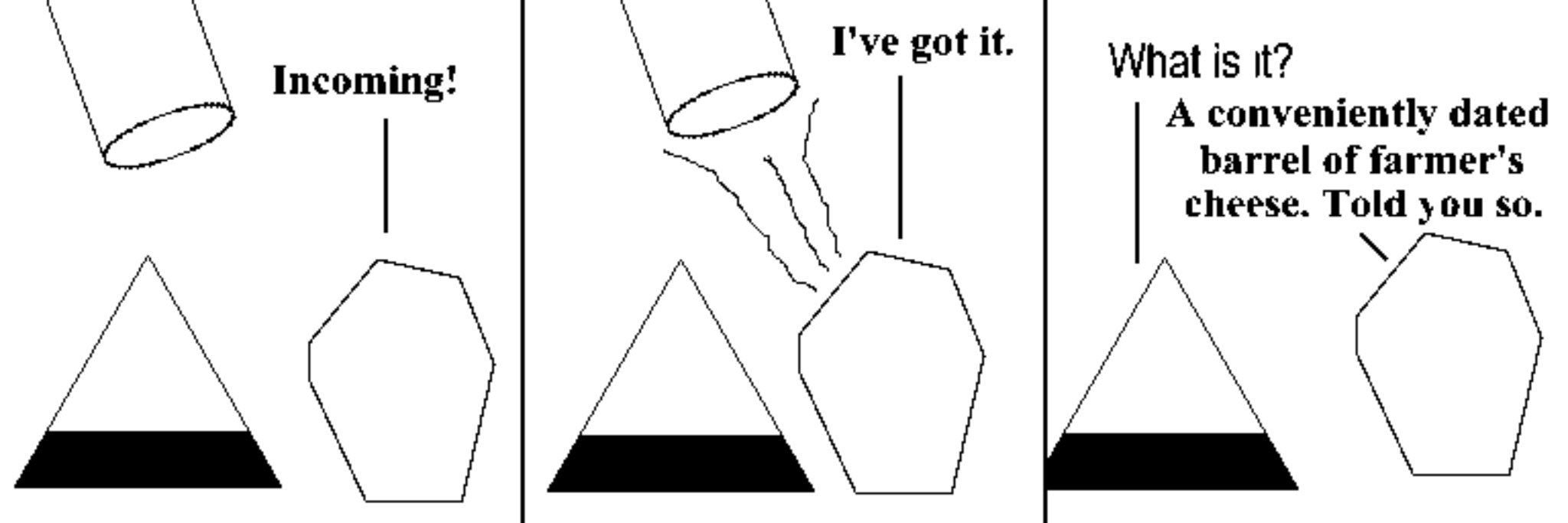


If there ever was a fate, it's dead now. Things don't happen for a reason. They don't even happen by chance. It's all the whim of the Cartoonist.

Then it's the Cartoonist that doesn't mean for you to find the last cheese. Same thing, practically speaking.

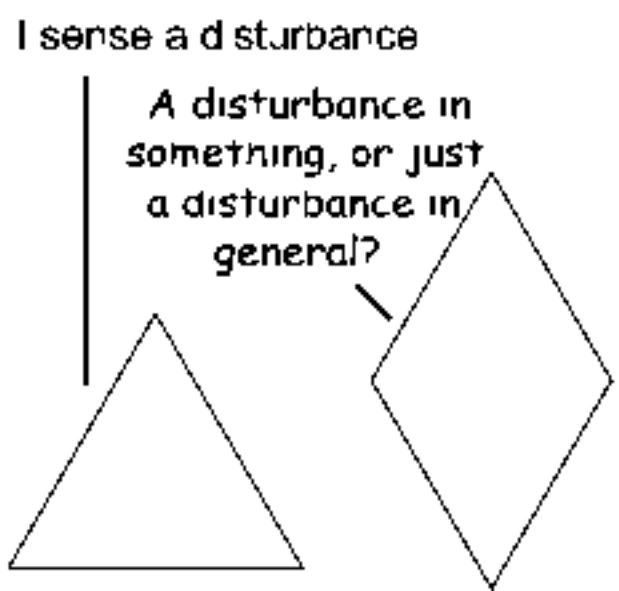
Don't give the Cartoonist that much credit. He changes his mind every strip.

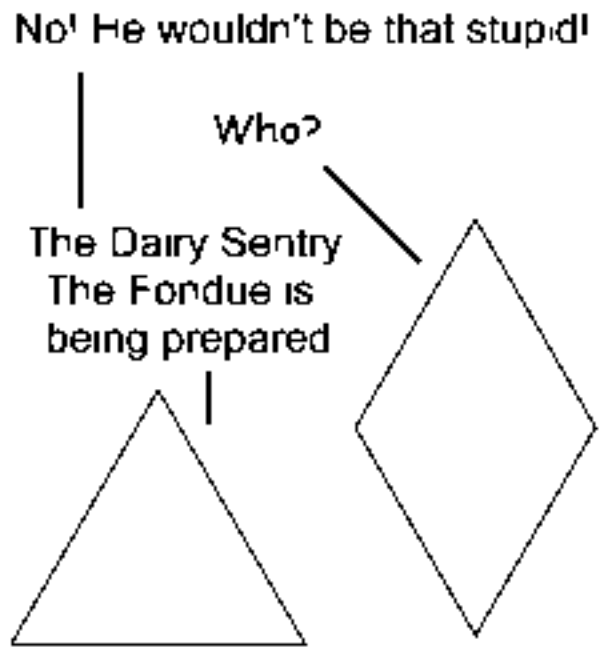


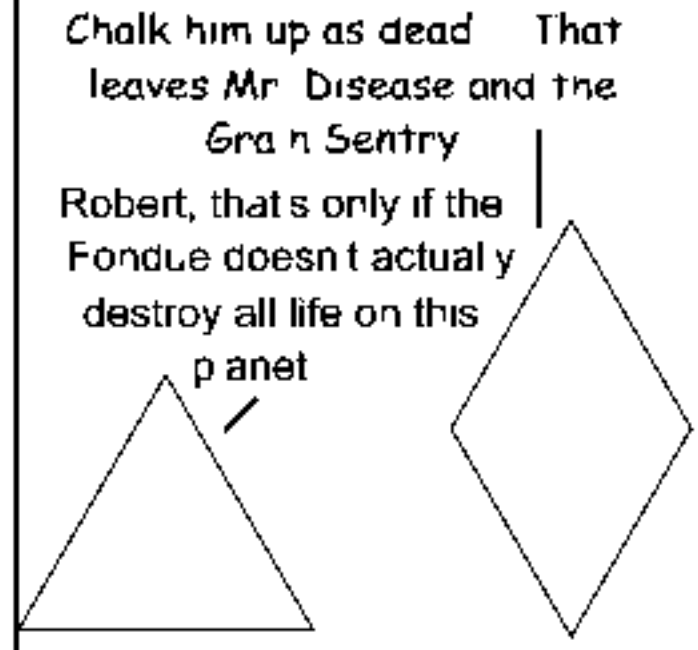

Incoming!
I've got it.
What is it?
A conveniently dated barrel of farmer's cheese. Told you so.

Triangle and Robert
That's a lot of cheese to be levitating.
I'll set it down when we're ready.
Ready how?
We need a medium seventy-gallon saucepan and something to heat it over.
A... an antique washtub and some sort of smelting furnace?
That'll work.

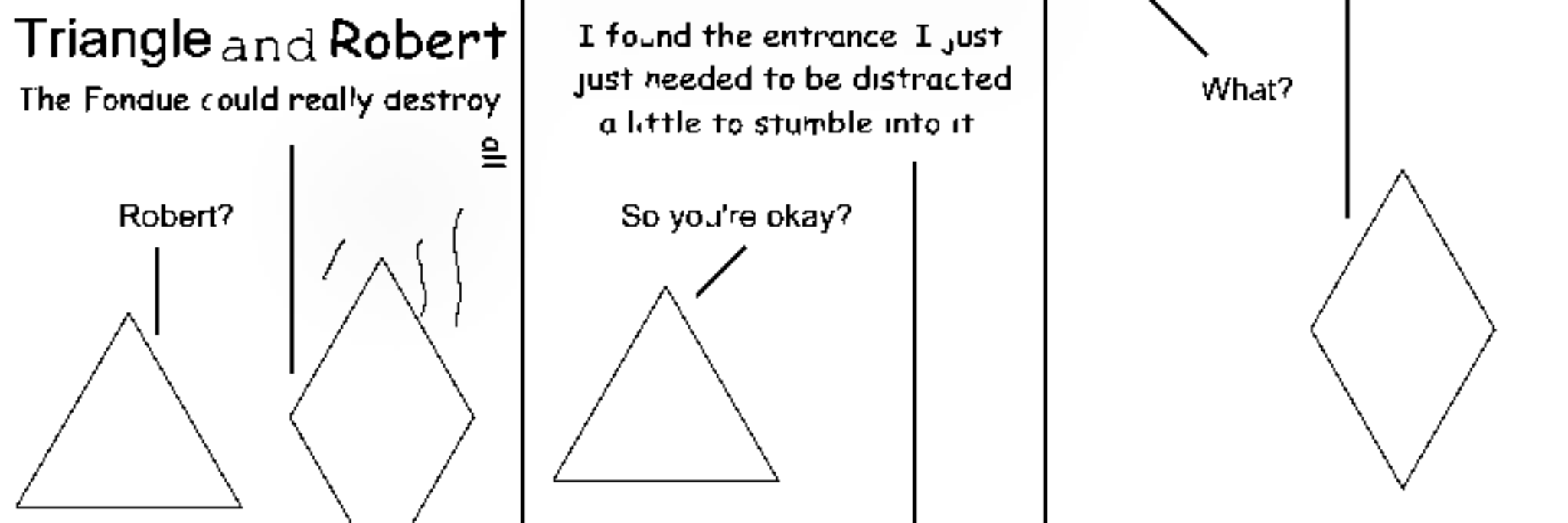
Triangle and Robert







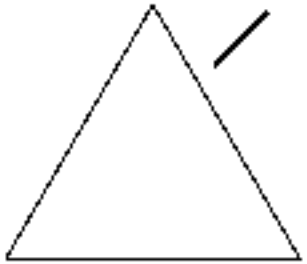
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

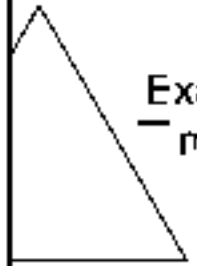
I m in a narrow cement tunnel
with metal supports on the walls
It curves out of sight in
both directions

Inventory!



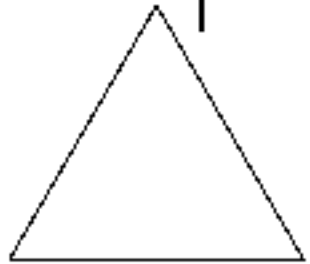
I am carrying
the ten of diamonds
a l thograph of a pony,
an instruction manual
sixteen cents
a myster ous toupee,
a cotton satchel
and tea.

Exam ne the
manua



The word "Hydl de"
is prominently displayed
on the cover

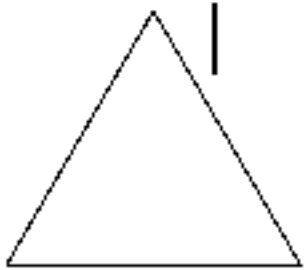
BURN IT!



Triangle and Robert

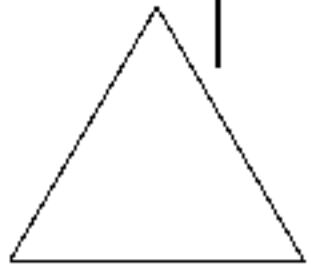
Now that I have a light source, I can make out a trail of hoofprints

LOOK AT TRAIL



The prints are uniformly ovine The trail is well-worn from regular traffic The most recent prints indicate a small flock traveling north in a hurry

N

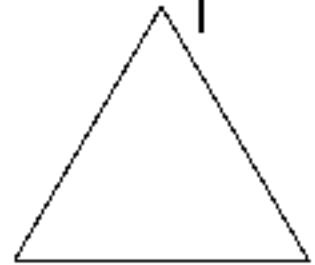


I beg your pardon?

Go north

Going north [Press SPACE]

What?



Triangle and Robert

I don't understand you!

Maybe you should come down here so we don't have to shout back and forth!

Go on. I will stand watch outside

How long have you been standing next to me?

病

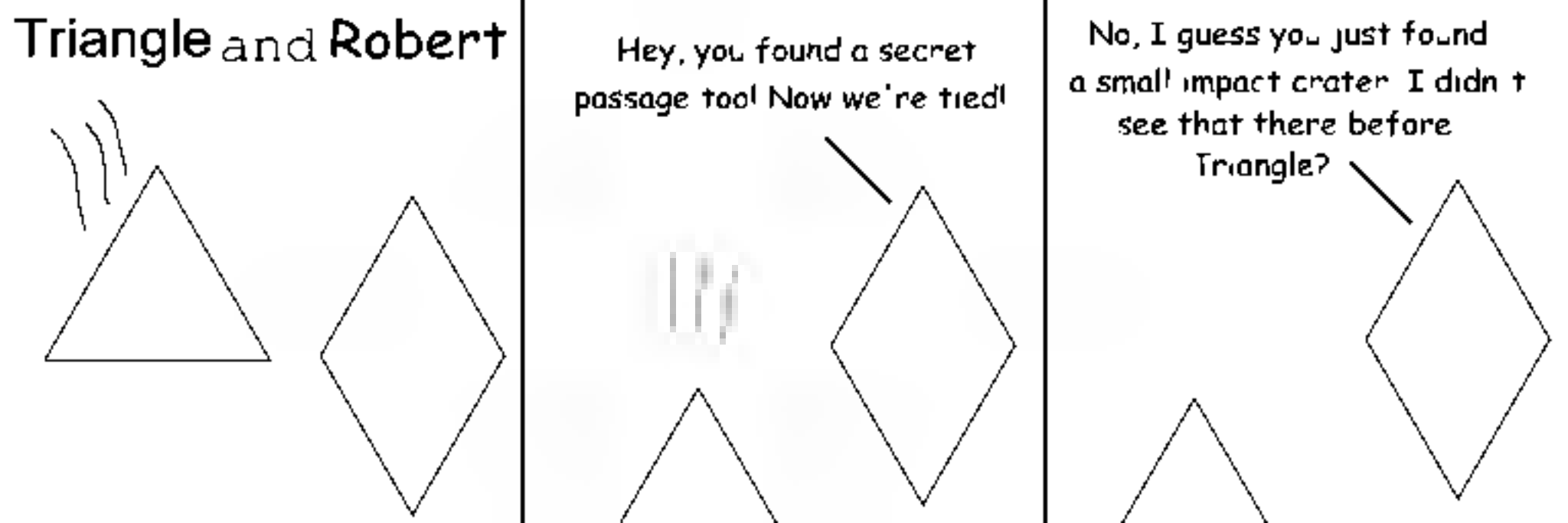
That is not important

I was just wondering

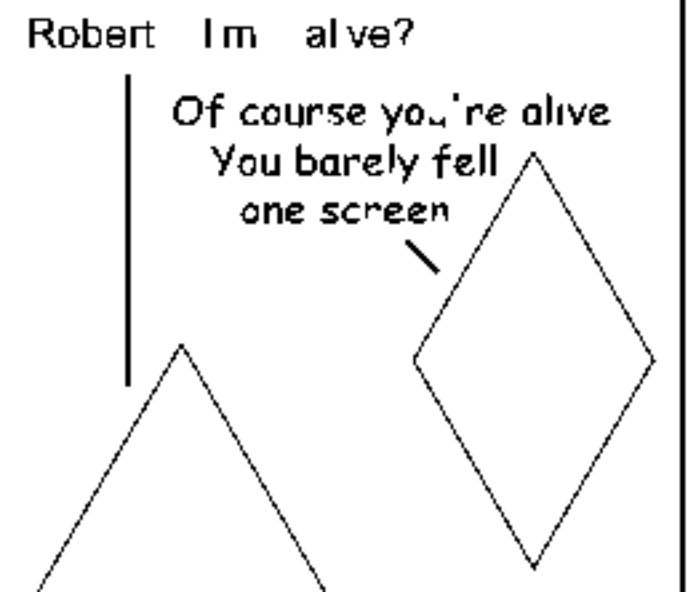
Go, Triangle!

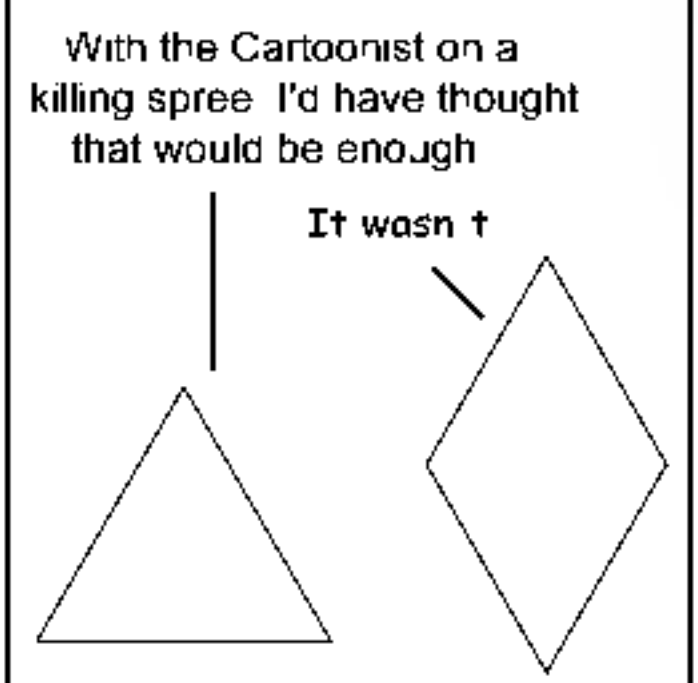
病

Triangle and Robert

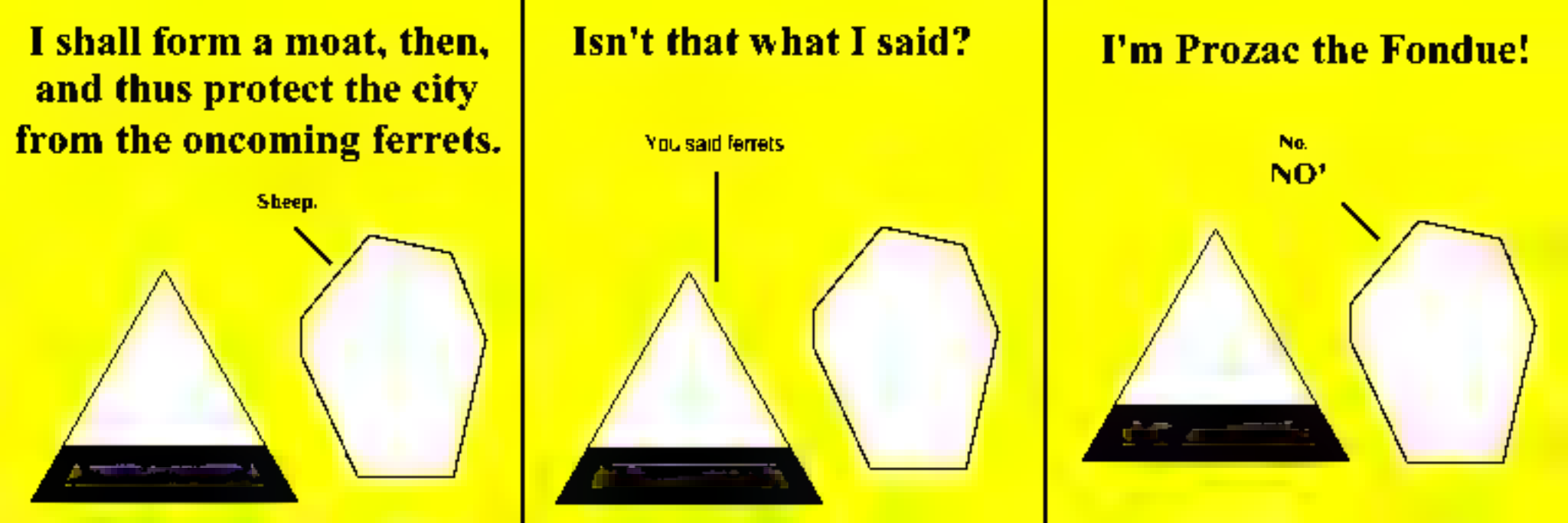


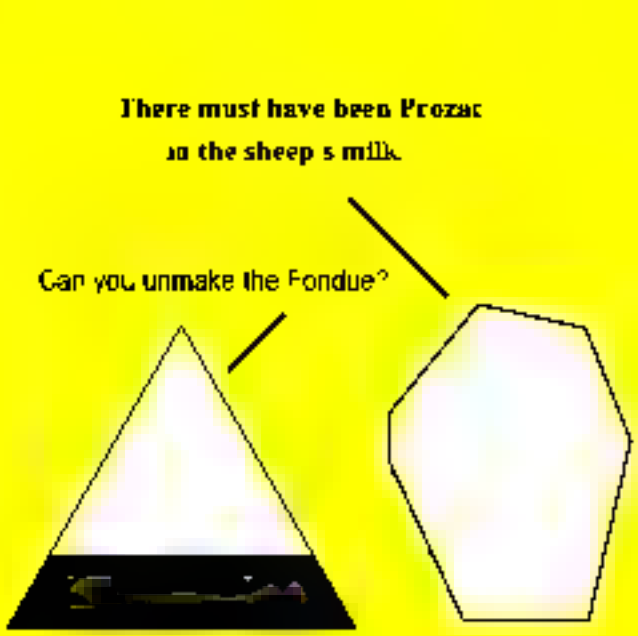
Triangle and Robert

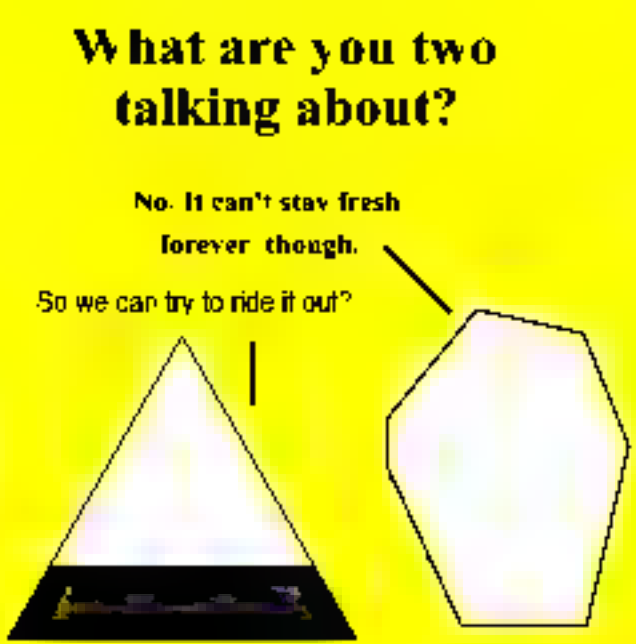




Triangle and Robert

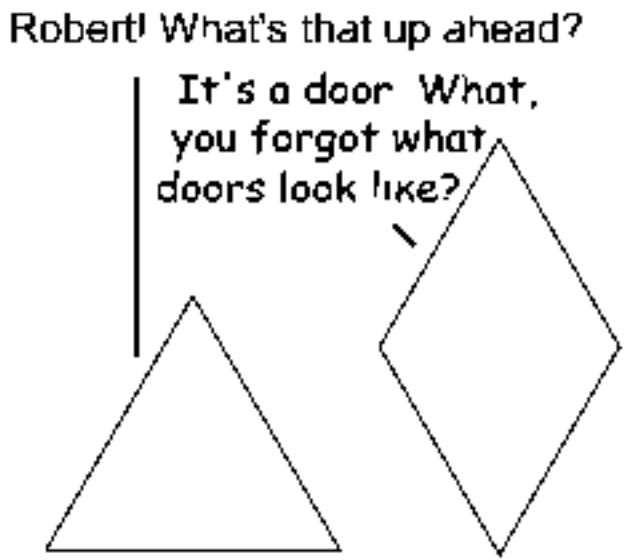

I shall form a moat, then, and thus protect the city from the oncoming ferrets.
Sheep.
Isn't that what I said?
You said ferrets
I'm Prozac the Fondue!
No.
NO!

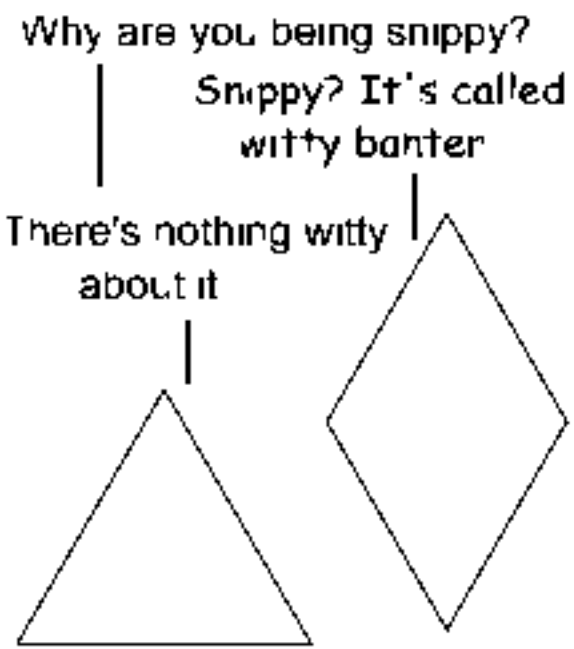

There must have been Prozac
in the sheep s milk.
Can you unmake the Fondue?

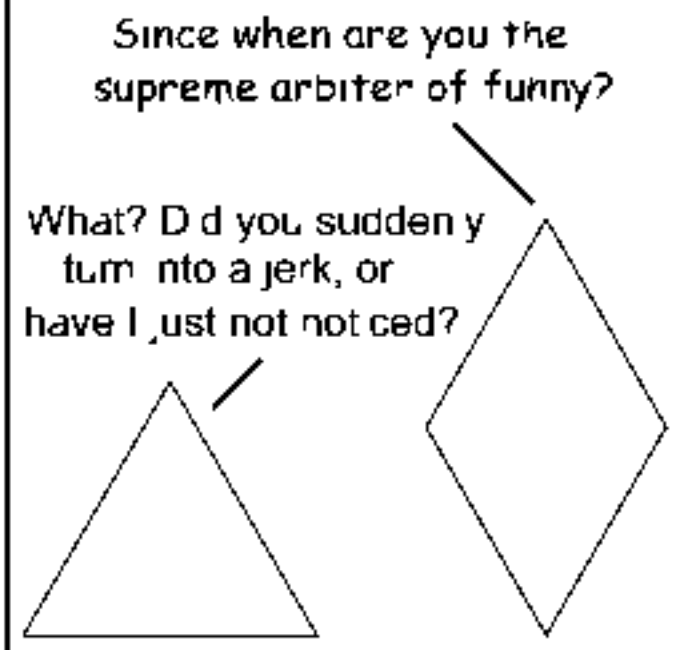

What are you two
talking about?
No. It can't stay fresh
forever though.
So we can try to ride it out?

Let's sing a song!
Yay! A song! What do you want to sing?
Oh boy Let's sing

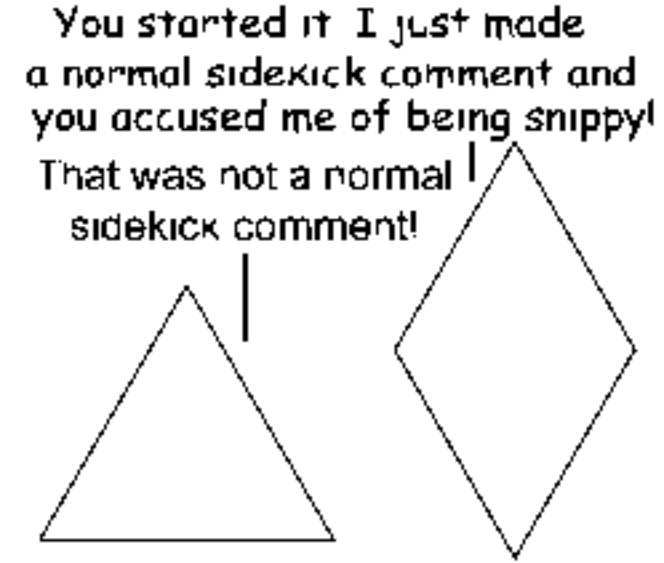
Triangle and Robert

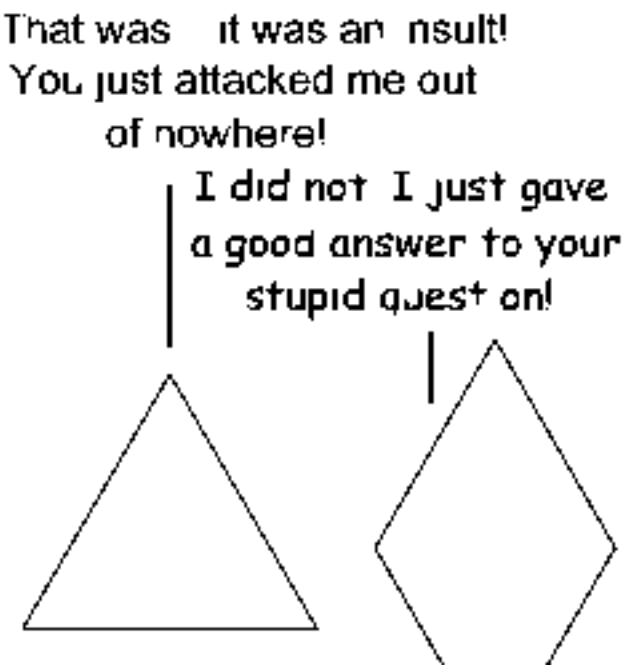


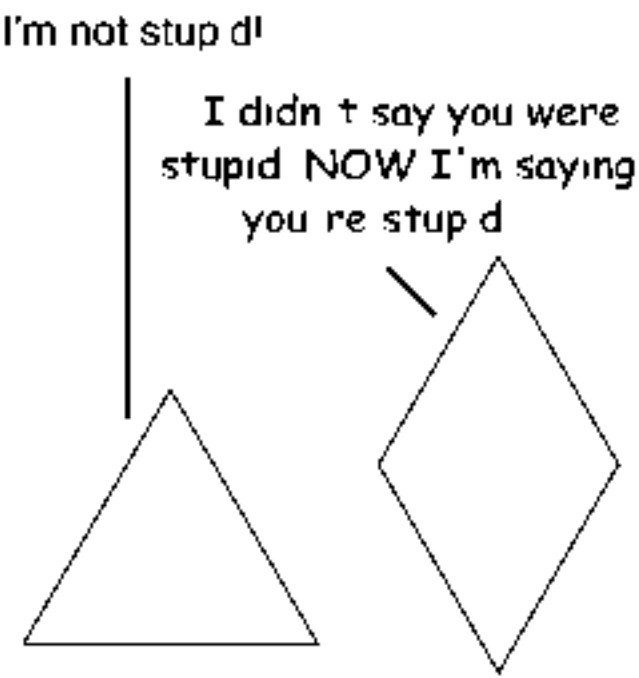




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I hear shouting

They're arguing. I hope it turns out to have a plot reason.

You hope?

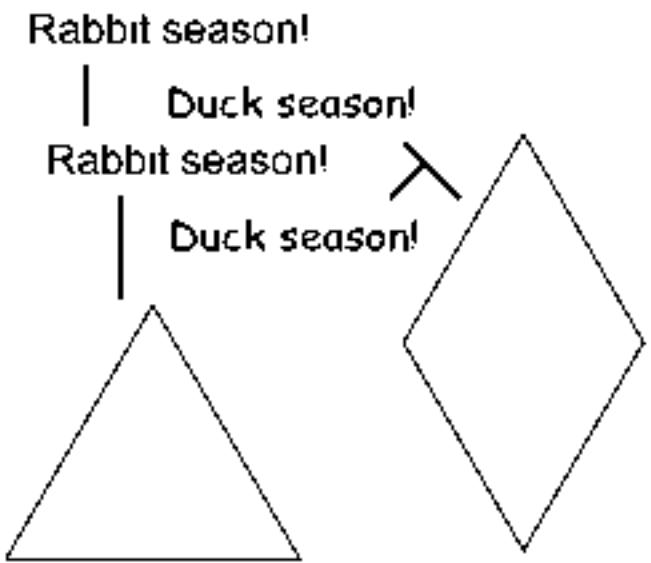
I started writing the argument on the fly and that I could then come up with a reason for it. Most of the time that works.

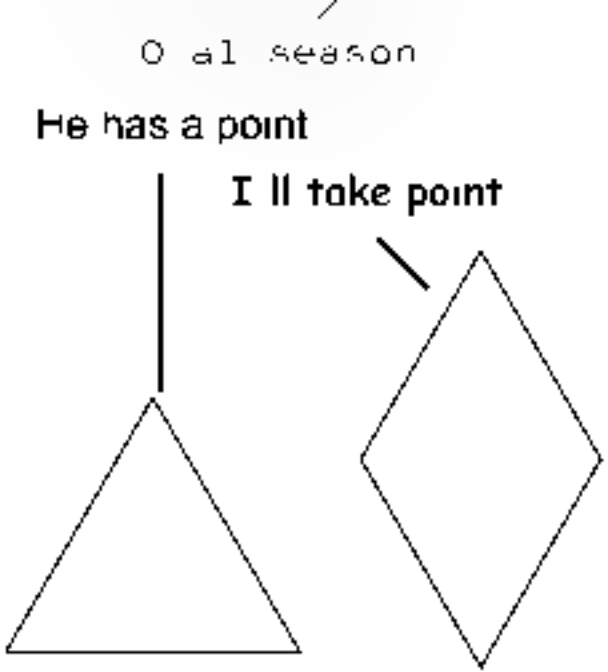
And now you're telling me this because you're still stuck and can't come up with an actual strip.

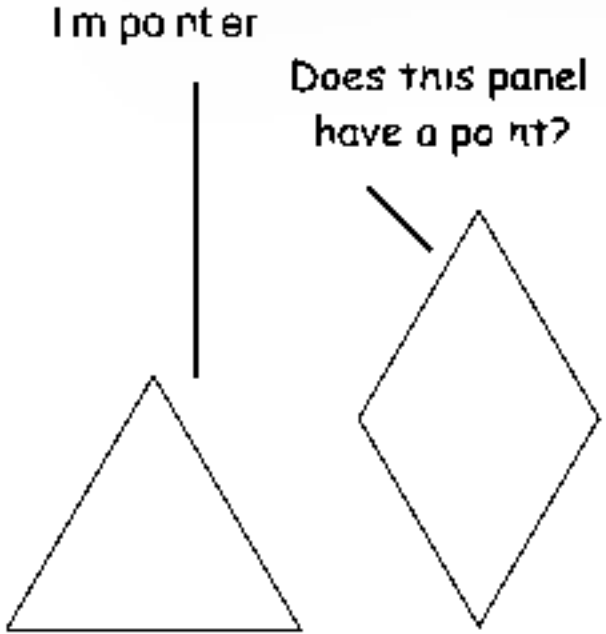
This is an actual strip. It established that Triangle and Robert's shouting can be heard all the way from the tunnel entrance.

We both know that that is not worth three panels.

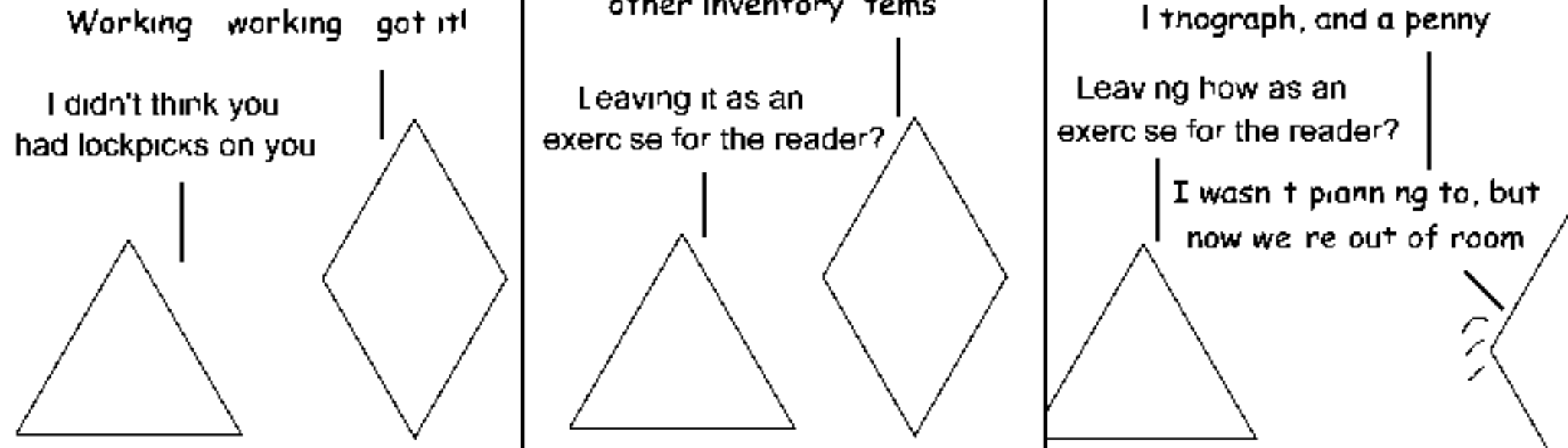
Triangle and Robert



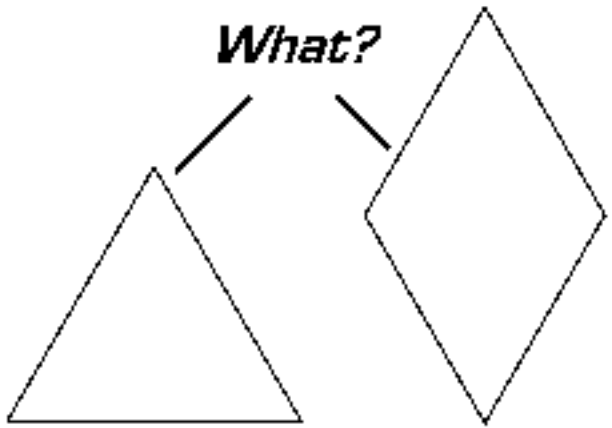


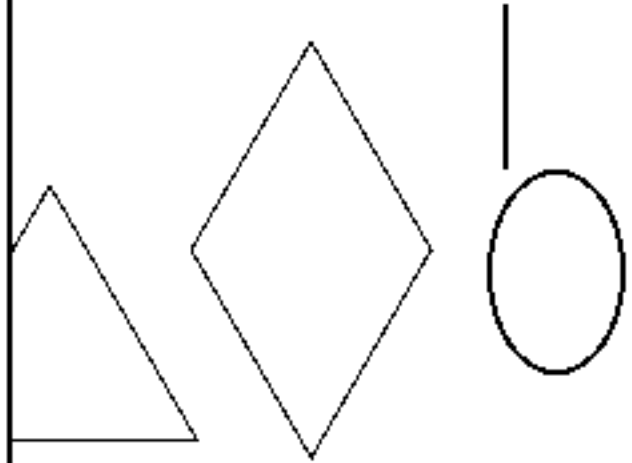


Triangle and Robert

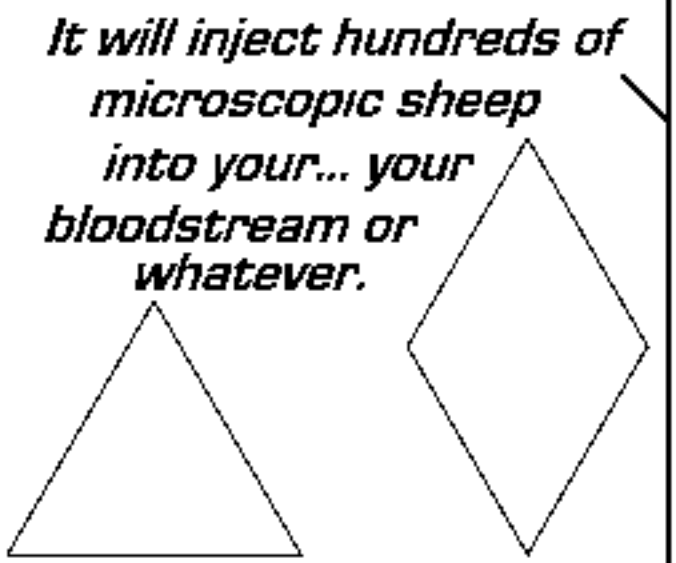


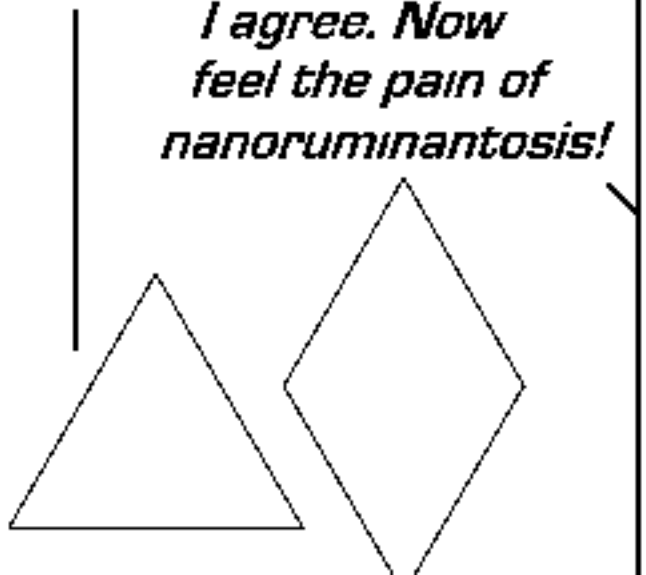
Triangle and Robert

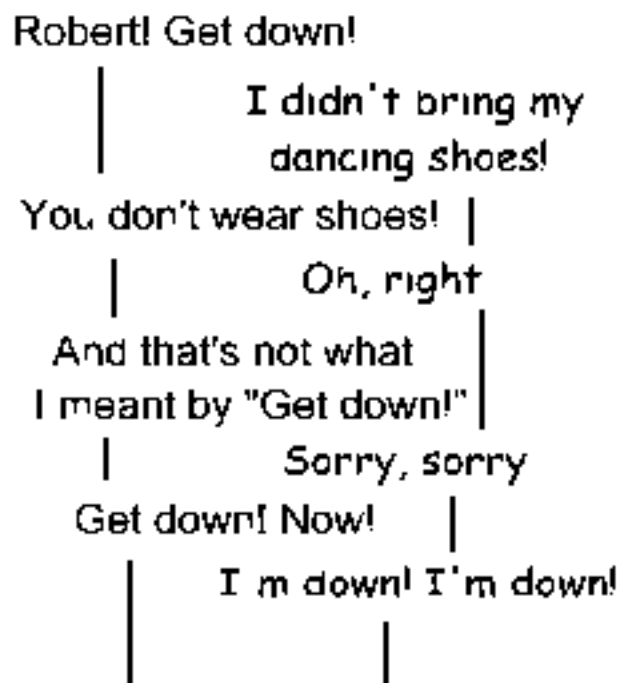




Triangle and Robert

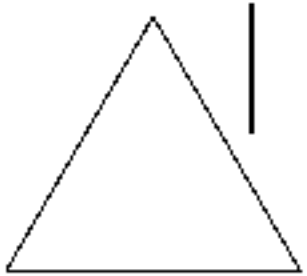






Triangle and Robert

You've forgotten I trained with Mr. Disease
Gaze in amazement as I conjure into being



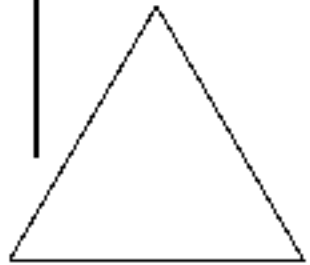
Leg of Anti-Mutton!

After eating this, any sheep in my bloodstream will be converted into energy

That's idiotic.

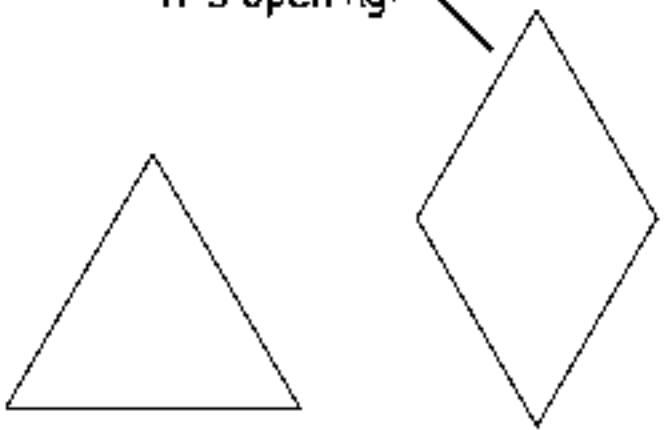
True

Your wills are strong, Triangle and Robert, but I have a final card to play.



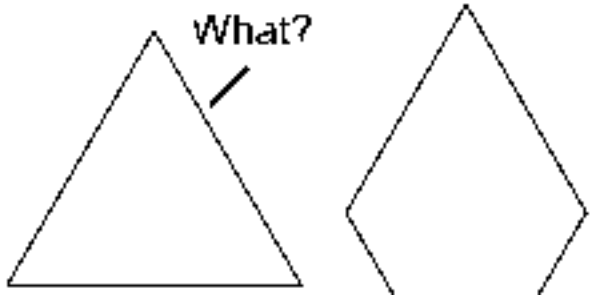
Triangle and Robert

It's opening! There's a hatch on the Oval, and it's opening!



You already know the origins of your kind. We, the Fourth Race, created polygons. We, the Fourth Race, can command them.

What?



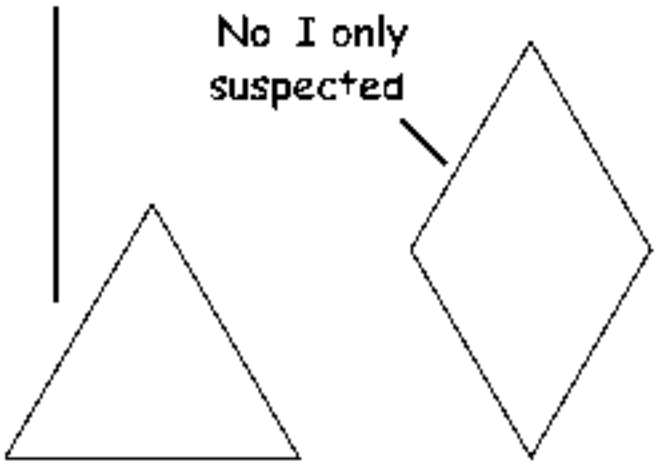
Was that the secret weapon? Polygons' built-in command override, exploited at range over the Cornersheep's telepathy?

Yes. The MSG protected you that time, but this time you will not be saved. Behold my form!

Triangle and Robert

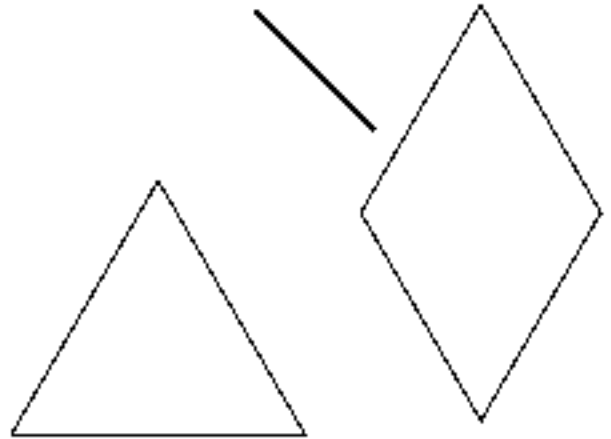
Robert You knew our species had a command over me?

No I only suspected

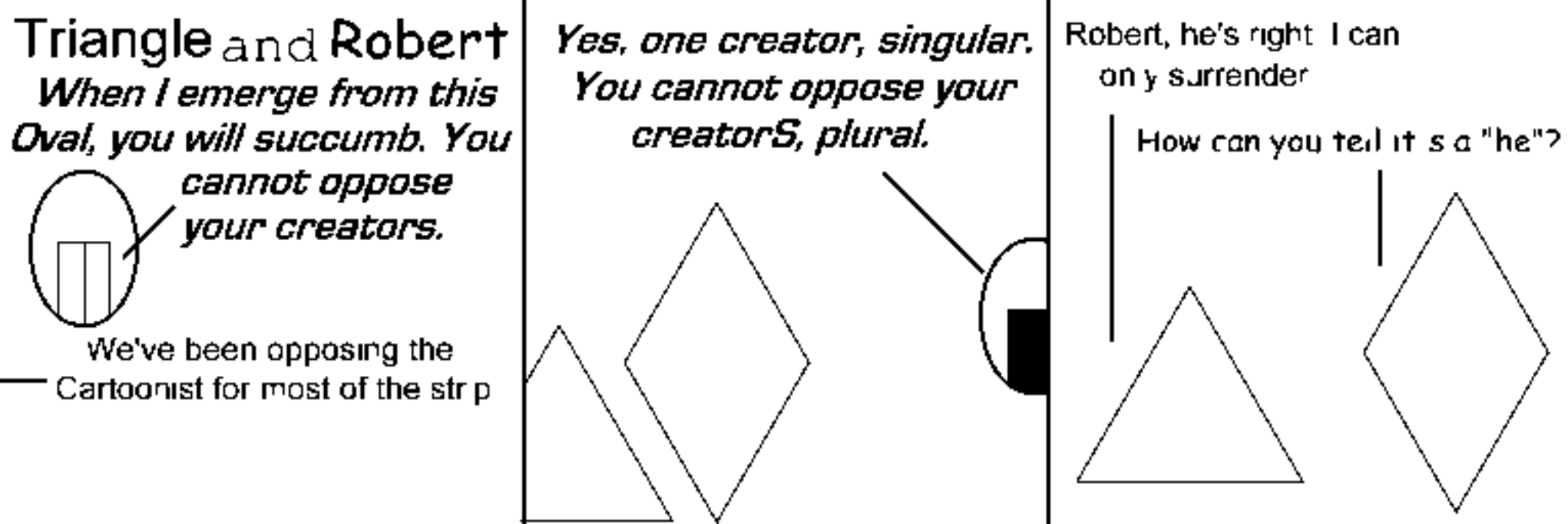


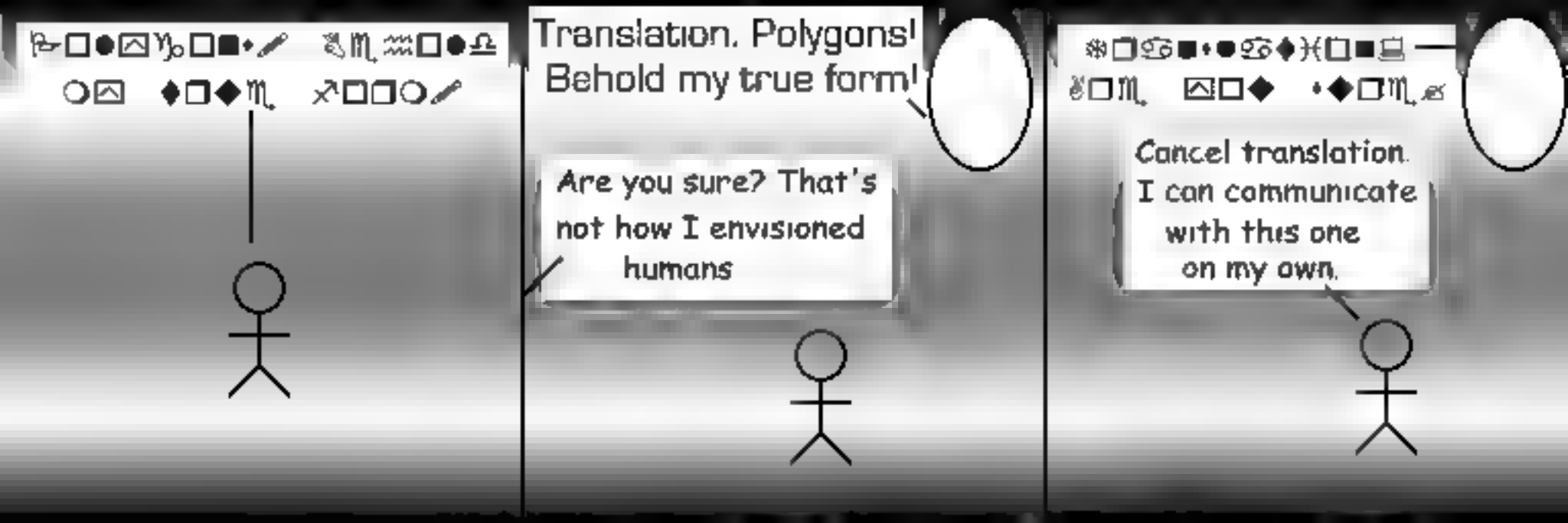
The Ovalnaut once observed that our language was identical to the English of the Fourth Race Identical, Triangle After the Fourth Race had been dead for millennia? That means our legacy from the Fourth Race isn't just cultural They built in what they wanted us to know

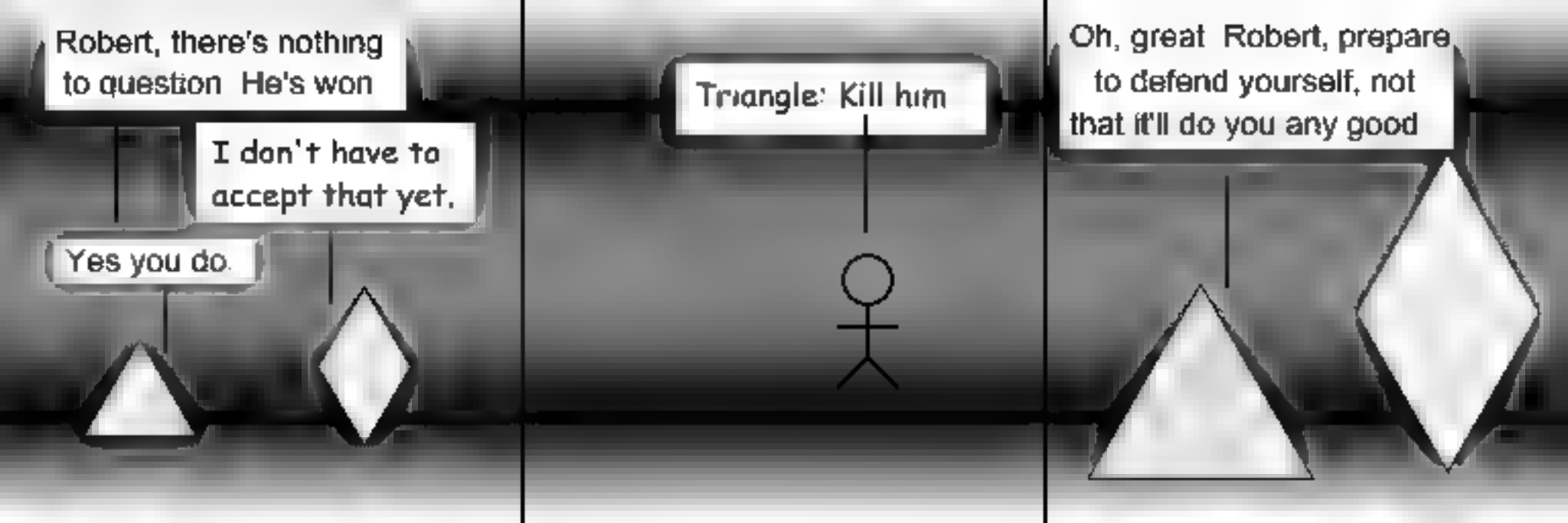
Polygons were their servants, Triangle They made us for obedience.

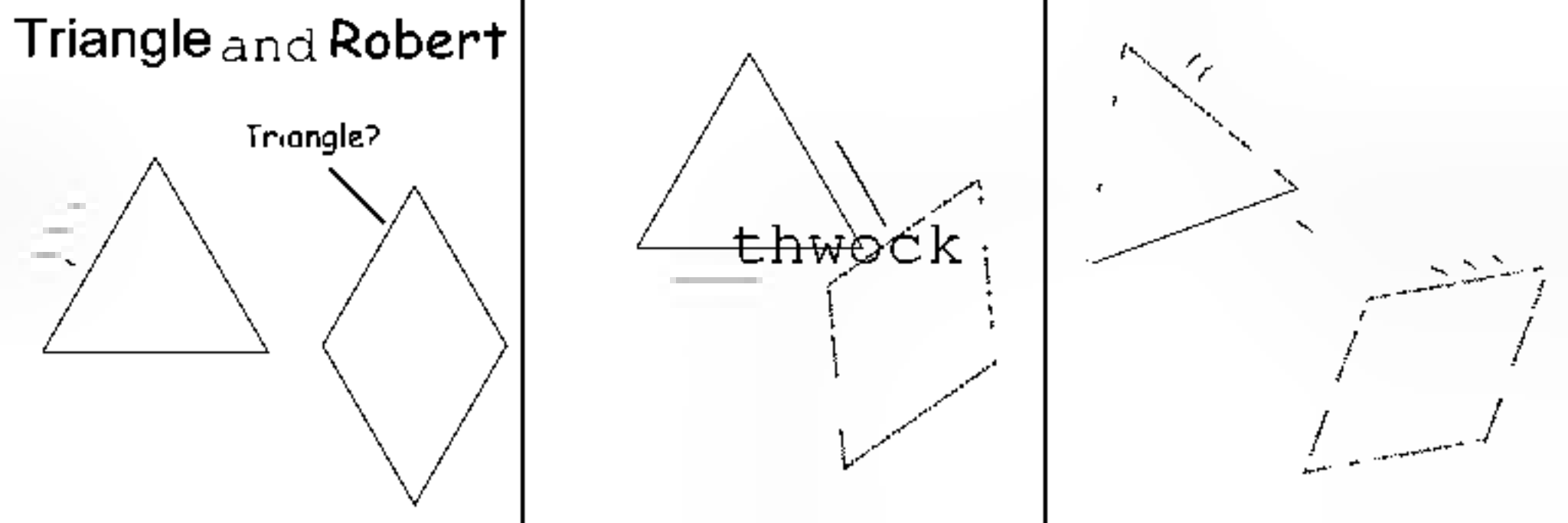


Triangle and Robert




Translation. Polygons! Behold my true form!
Are you sure? That's not how I envisioned humans
Cancel translation. I can communicate with this one on my own.

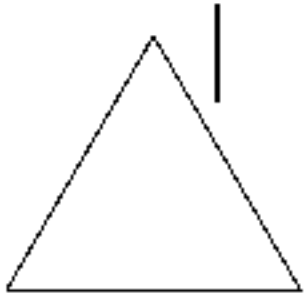

Robert, there's nothing to question He's won
I don't have to accept that yet.
Yes you do.
Triangle: Kill him
Oh, great Robert, prepare to defend yourself, not that it'll do you any good


Triangle and Robert
Triangle?
thwock

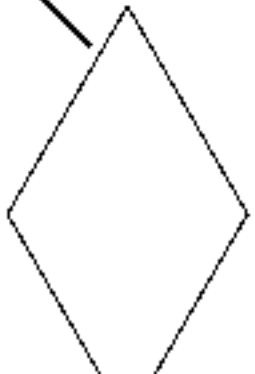
Triangle and Robert

Triangle! Stop!

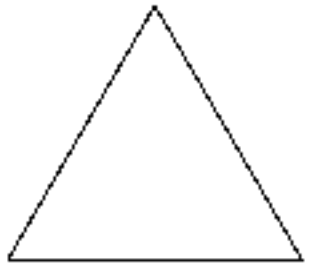
What? How did you survive?



You didn't hit me. You hit the sound effect. You're pointier and you're the Chosen One, but I know comics.

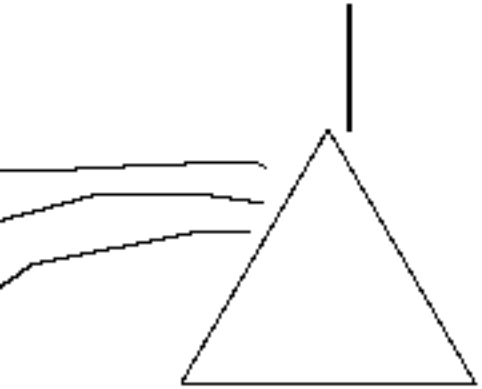


If you won't stop, then come get me. I'm in the next strip.

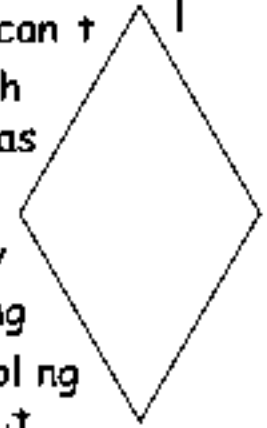


Triangle and Robert

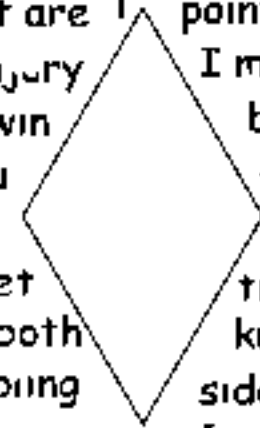
It's no use, Robert 'm faster than you



As long as I keep talking, you can t hurt me I can ma ntain an impenetrable shield of text indefinitely You can t reach me through my dialogue and as a wacky sidekick I have the abil ty to continue talking indefinitely babbl ng pointlessly about



no particular top c I can also use text as a weapon, if you get too close Many letters of the alphabet are pointy and can inflict injury I might not be abie to win but I can hold you off for any length of time You ll get tired before I do, we both know a babbling sidekick can keep going for days



Triangle and Robert

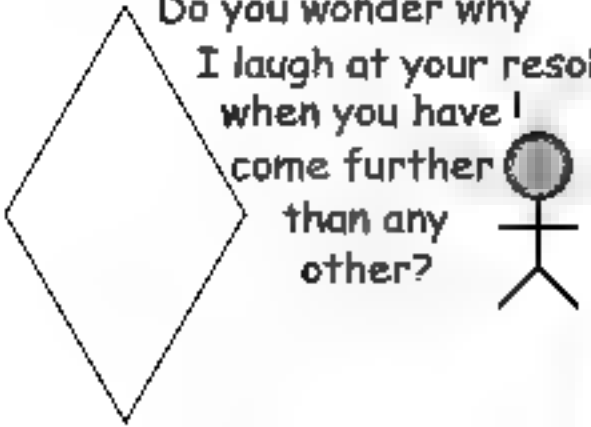
I might as well help the strip along while I m filibustering, so here's a list of characters and their probable statuses Triangle controlled by Robert Oval Cube near present! encamped home result of this awaiting sortie Orpuddex in Factory

Mr Disease Above ground nearby, ready to act as backup Vegetable Sentry Died in cheese explosion, status of soul uncertain Meat Sentry Dead soul in Factory Dairy Sentry with Grain Sentry, having sing-along with Prozac the Fondue MSG entity focusing on holding seaplane together

Update Triangle Passed out from exaggerated comic boredom I win!

Triangle and Robert

I'm surprised I am also very much amused. Do you wonder why I laugh at your resolve, when you have come further than any other?



Of all the shapes that could have come here to oppose me, the rhombus is the one from which I have the least to fear

Where most polygons have only a single obedience directive, the des gn of a rhombus contains three layers of safeguards

the second of your safeguards. You will not

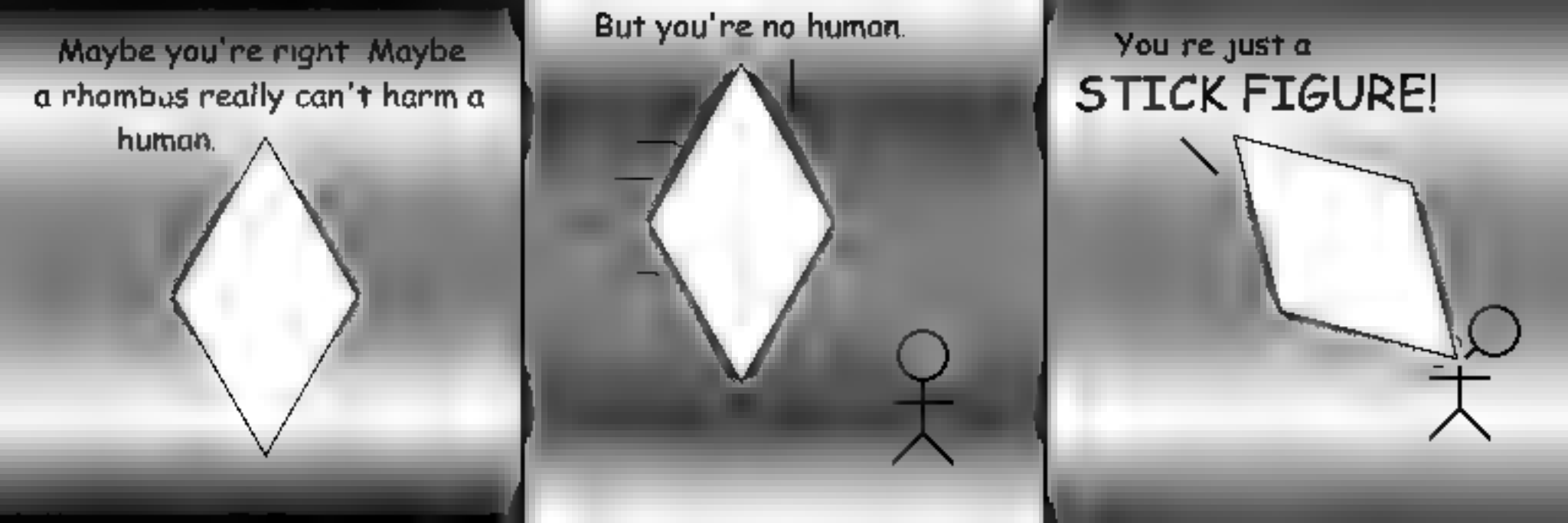
I speak of the Three Laws of Rhombotics. Sentient rhombi were designed for the most sens t ve of tasks, those which could not be entrusted to more autonomous beings

The Third Law was the weakest. Even before I left, rhombi broke it regularly. "A rhombus must protect its own existence." It was intended as a check on wackiness, but never really functioned as designed. Not important!

In your case, the Second Law also failed. "A rhombus must obey the orders given it by human beings."

I had not known it to fail. Still, compared to the First Law it was but a minor suggestion

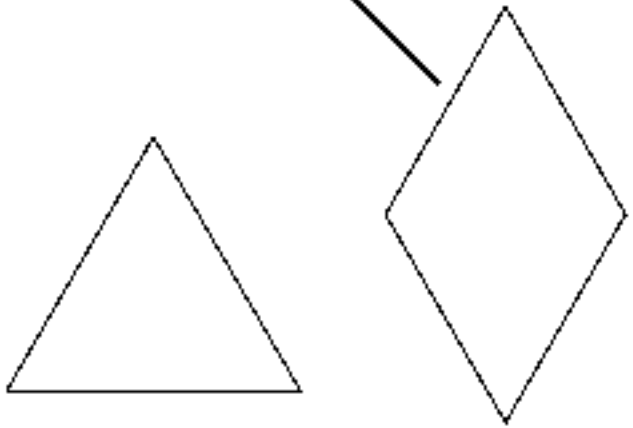
"A rhombus may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm." The Third Law of Rhombotics. It is most fundamental to your nature.
Leave or stay. You can do nothing against me.


Maybe you're right. Maybe a rhombus really can't harm a human.
But you're no human.
You're just a STICK FIGURE!

Triangle and Robert

Wake up, Triangle

It's over

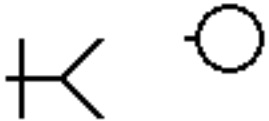


Over? What do oh

How did you

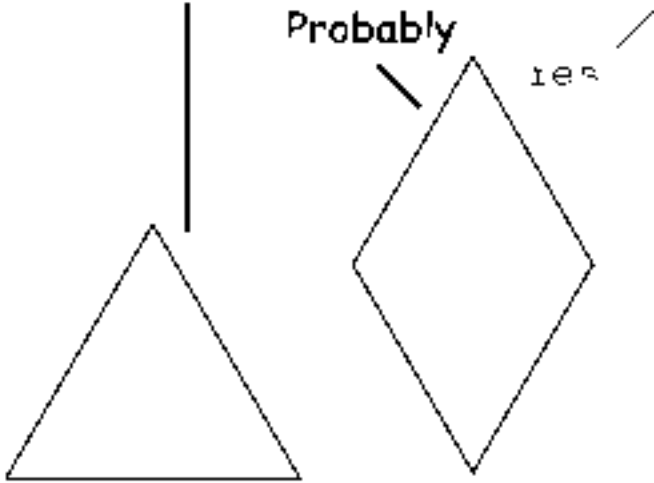
It thought t was people

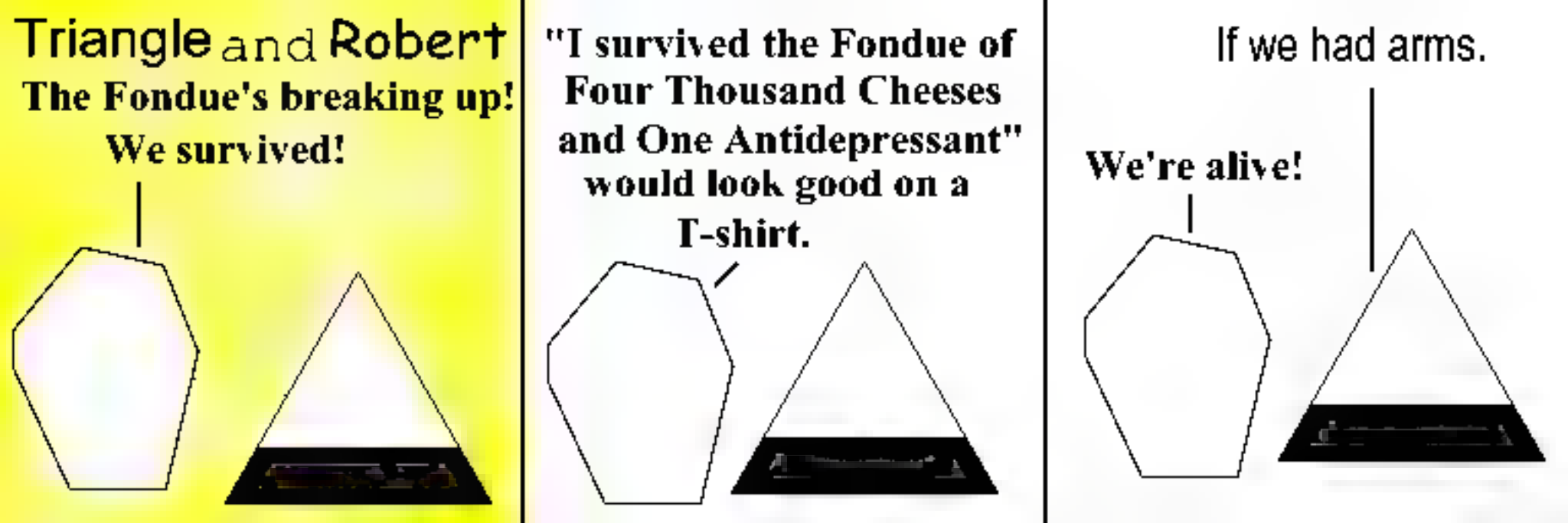
It wasn t



So po ygons around the wor d will be com ng out of the Comersheep s control now?

Probably




Triangle and Robert
The Fondue's breaking up!
We survived!
"I survived the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses and One Antidepressant" would look good on a T-shirt.
If we had arms.
We're alive!

Triangle and Robert

Do you have a rope or someth ng?

No. In hindsight getting one would have been a good idea.

Yes Yes getting a rope would have been a good idea g ven that the only obvious route to the surface from here involves a good deal of up

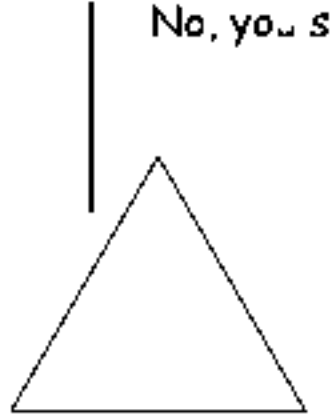
I shall acquire one shortly

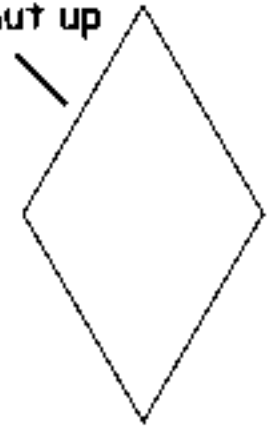
I wasn t done complain ng

Are you ever?

Shut up

No, you shut up





Hellllloo?
Someone?

Anyone?
I've been waiting patiently!

Oh. Um.

Ah.

I should have gotten to you sooner, but I had to take care of the Oval situation, and there was the Fondue, and Prozac....

So, am I getting reanimated?

Yes.

When?

As soon as I come up with a solution.

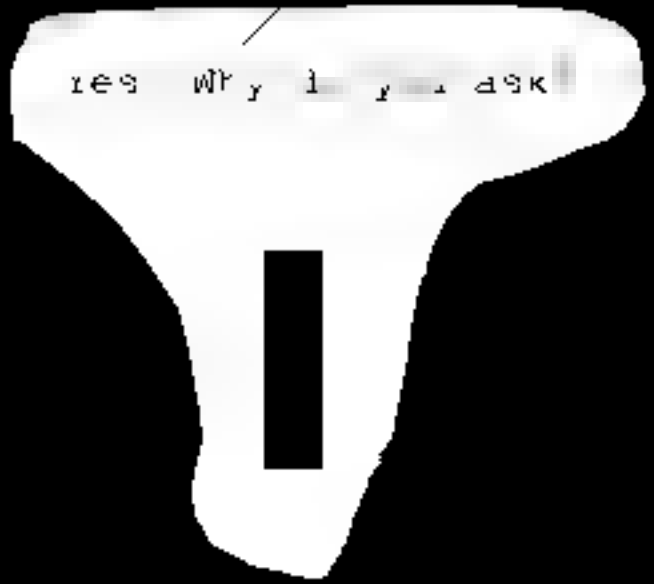
Can I have something to do while I wait? Meditating without a body doesn't really seem to work.

Do you hark up the remaining blade from the falling factory of the dead?

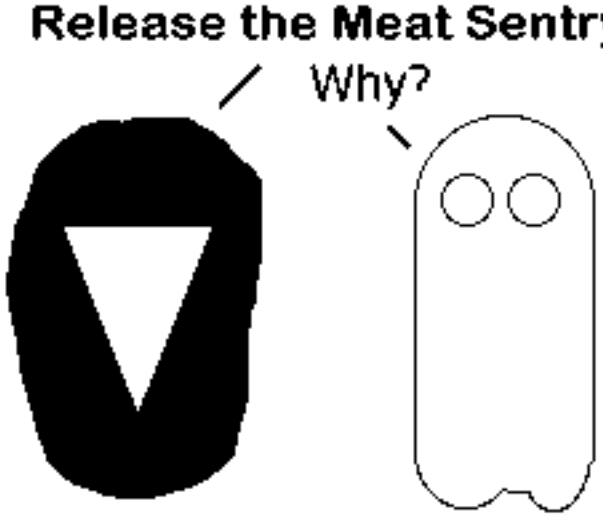
No rescuing her? That sounds backwards.

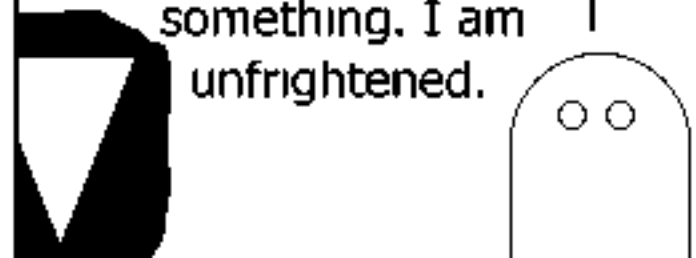
Reinforcements are
You said I couldn't hear you in the vat!

Can't you even follow your own arbitrary rules?

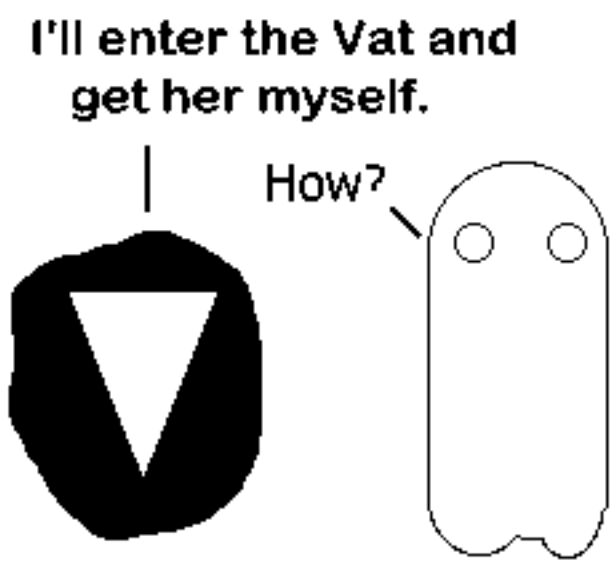


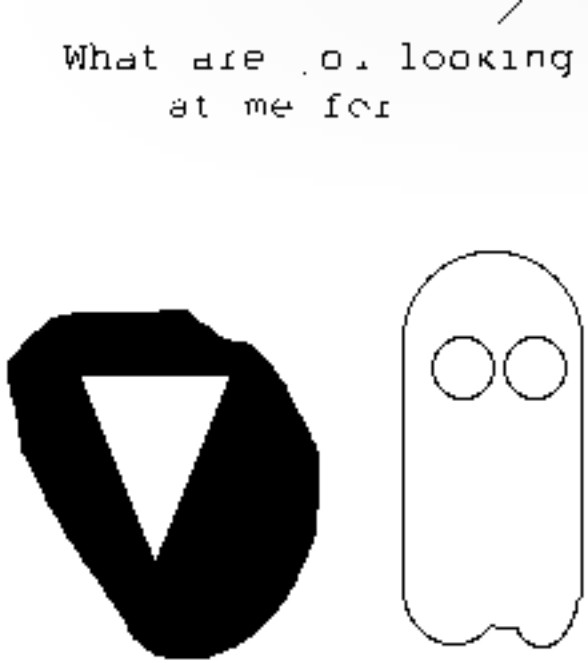
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Chosen One! Sidekick!
I have found a rope!

It took you long enough!

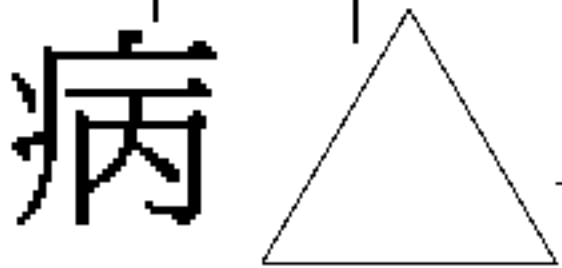
Triangle be nice.

I don't want to fa l from the rope so I won't ask the obvious "how are we " quest on

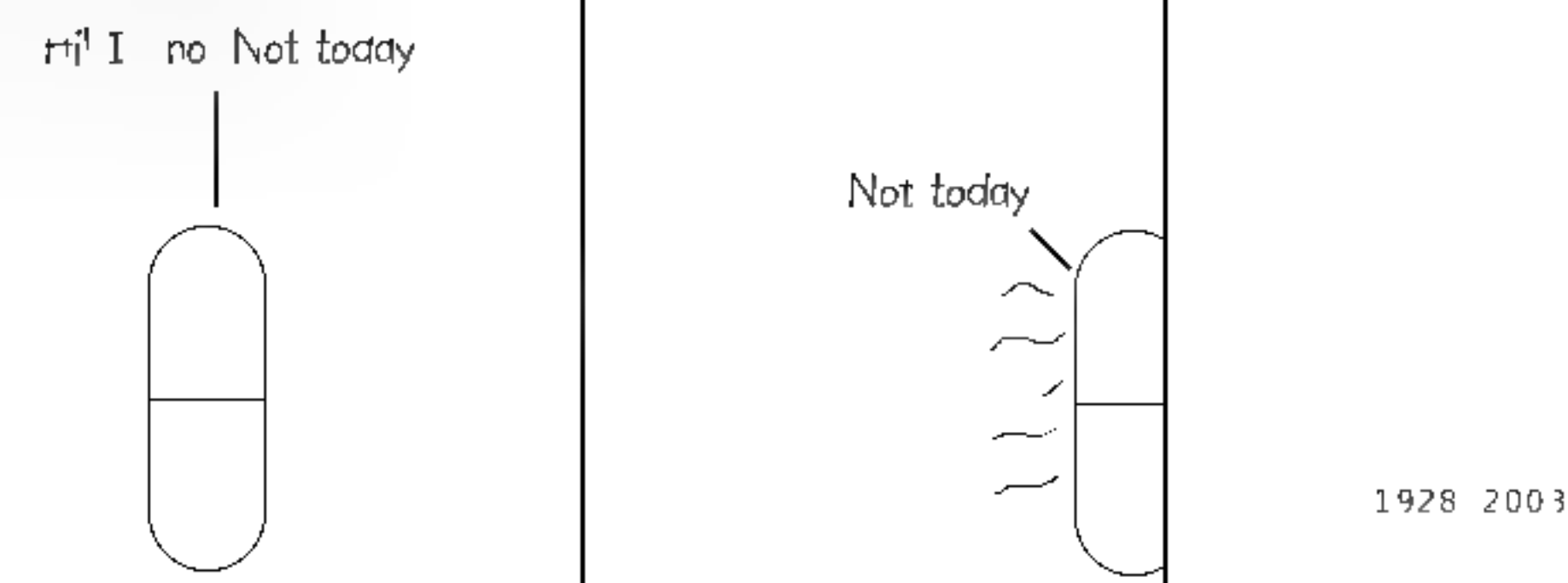
A wise decision.

Is the plane working now?

I will ask that from which it came



I'm here to rescue you.
You're as dead as I am!
The Cartoonist sent me, so there must be something I can do.
Unless it was just his typical incompetence!
You always see the worst in people.
He's people?


Hi! I no Not today
Not today
1928 2003

Triangle and Robert

ello?

- What?

Mister Disease?

No.

The MSG has entered the pudding vat.

Why?

Undo

Triangle and Robert

We're alive? Huh?

Something's wrong!

Temporary bodies.

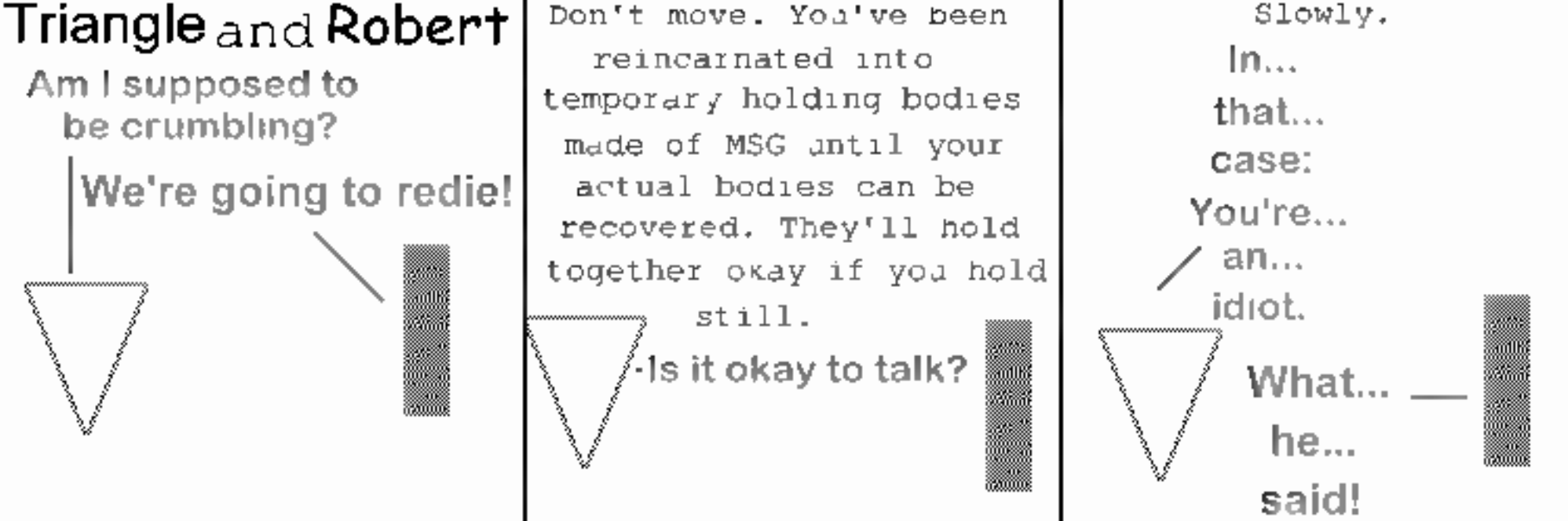
Oh. That... explains... it?

It explains why I have an aftertaste.

Difficulty assembling originals. Oops.

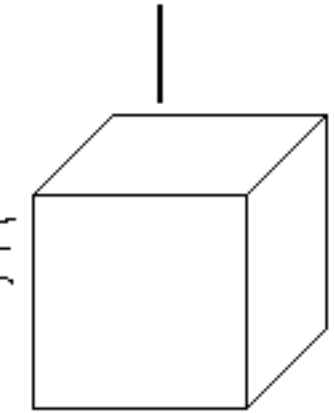
Oops?

Triangle and Robert



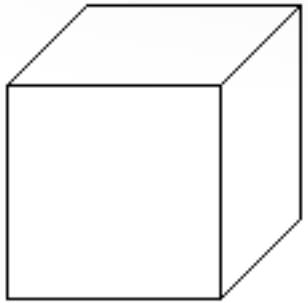
Triangle and Robert

Hello? Was I supposed to meet someone here or did I imagine that? What's going on?



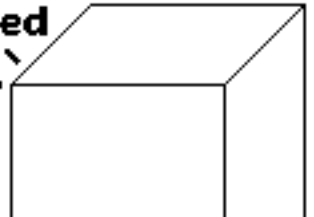
Oh oh. I hadn't been drawing anything to do with you and now you walk back into the plot with things having happened to you.

I can summarize.

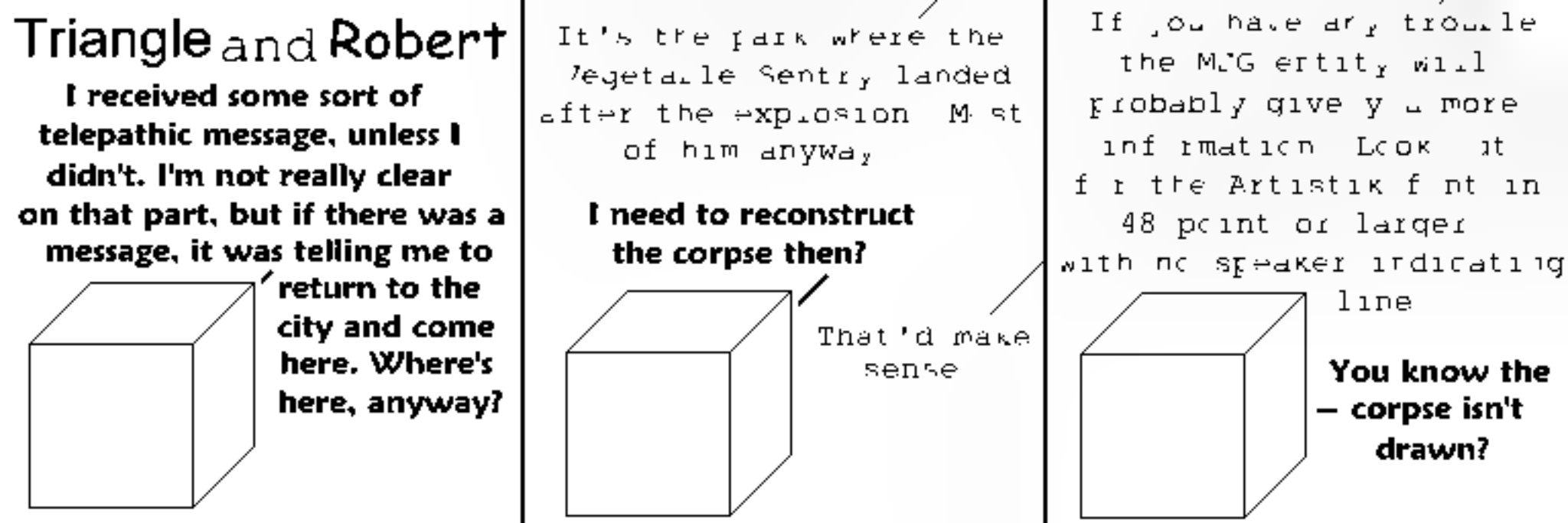


Thank

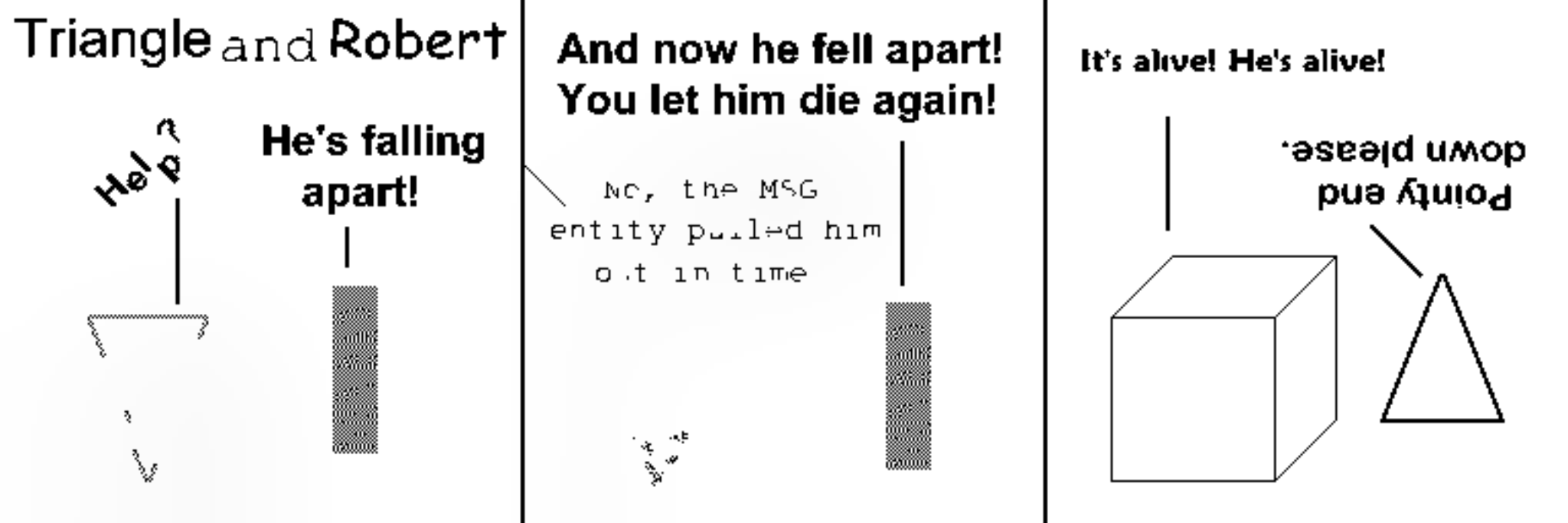
Everyone snapped out of ovine control all of a sudden. The sheep panicked and we drove them off. Then we had lunch. I got a salad, but before I could start eating it there was some kind of mysterious fog. Then I lost my appetite. I might have passed out or something. I received some sort of telepathic message, unless I



Triangle and Robert

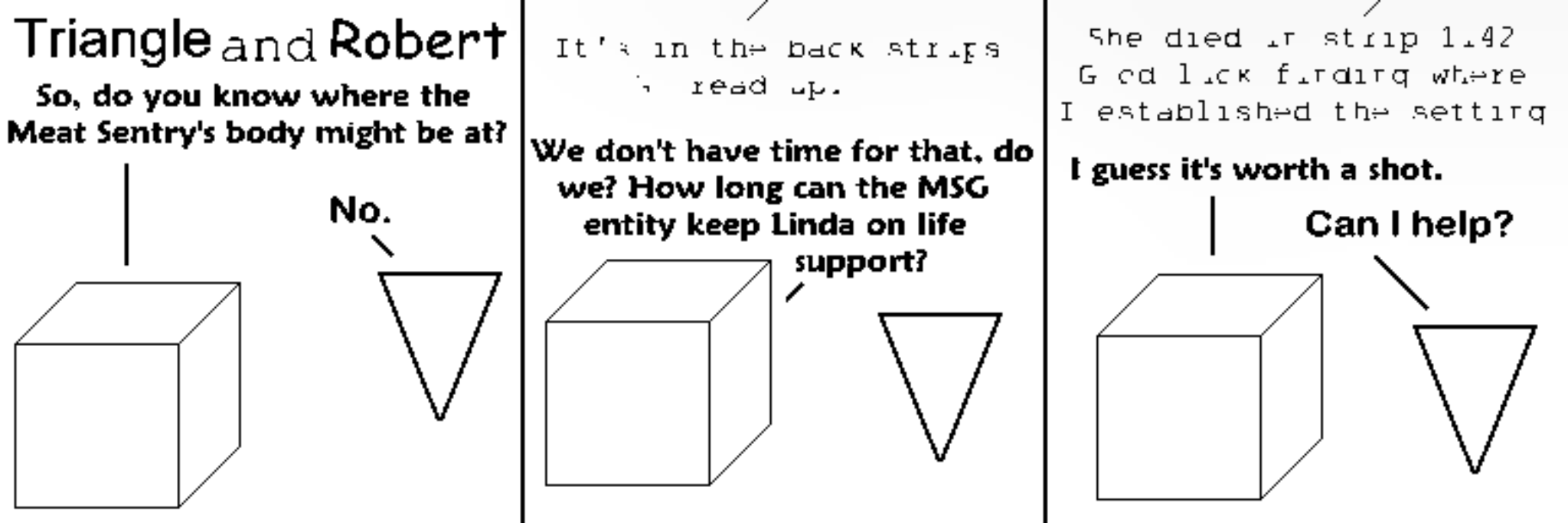


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

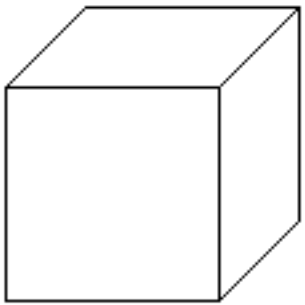
Triangle and Robert

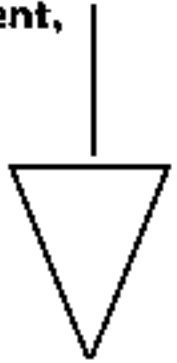


Triangle and Robert

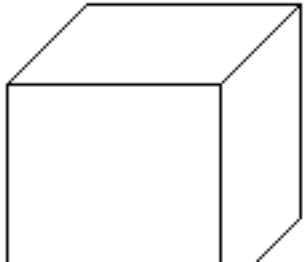
I told you so, time doesn't pass for characters consulting previous strips.

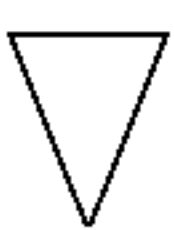
That's sort of convenient, but mostly spooky.





We know the Meat Sentry boarded a sheep transport near the site of the battle. We know the transport didn't get far before she was killed. What happened to her body after that?





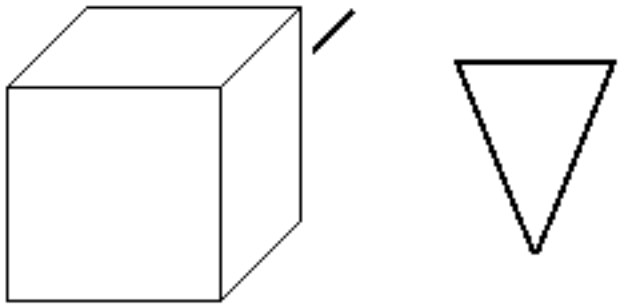
If it was thrown overboard Robert or Prozac probably would have seen it, although I guess Prozac might have seen it and not said anything, that'd be like him. Let's say it's probably still on the transport.

Okay. "It's probab

I didn't mean that.

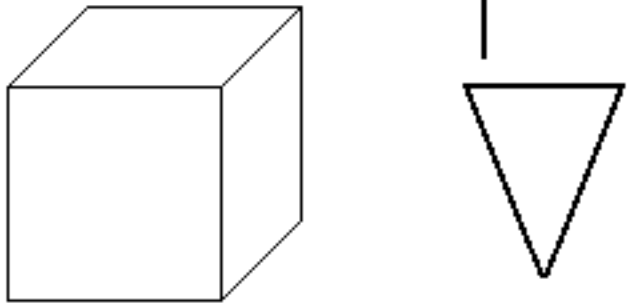
Triangle and Robert

The transport would originally have been headed to Scotland, but if I were the Cornersheep I'd have changed course when the Ovalnaut was killed.



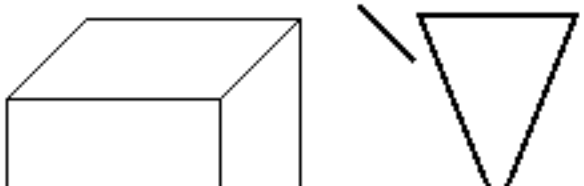
Speculation not funny.
Speculation not funny!

You're noticing that now?



That's something Triangle would say.

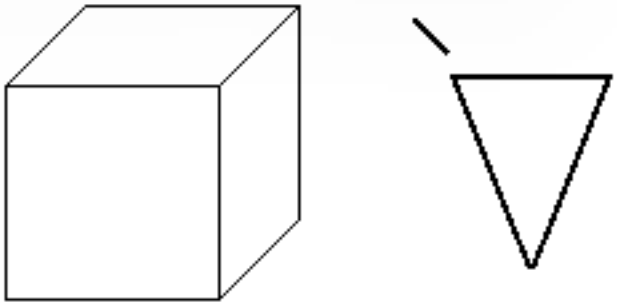
Maybe I'd say it too! You never even tried to flesh out my personality! Why am I suddenly upset about that fact? And since when do I introspect like this?



Triangle and Robert

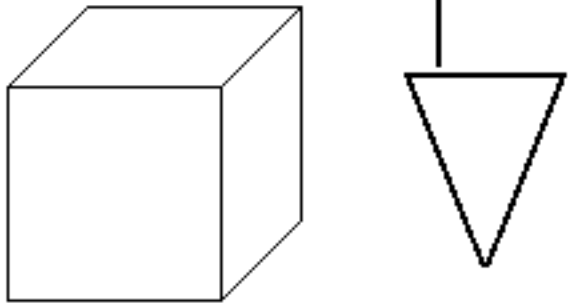
Let me get this straight
You want me to define your
personality for you

Yes! I need
characterization!



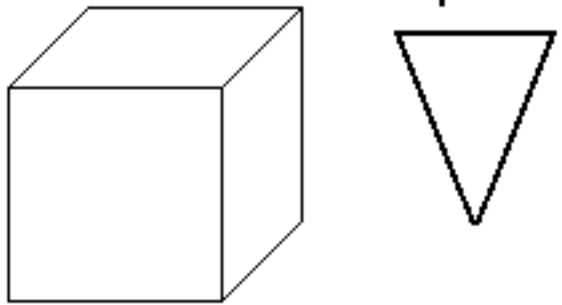
You'd let your personality
and role be defined by
outside edict

When you put it that
way... maybe not?



I think your character's
been established

Oh. What is it?
... Ohhh.



Triangle and Robert

Meanwhile, off the coast of Aruba.

No! He didn't just...

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I did

Why? Do you have something against me?

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

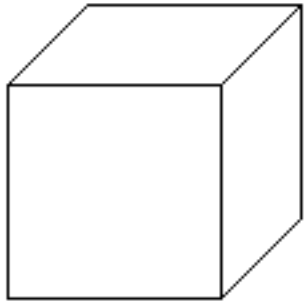
Cube would have figured out where you flew to soon anyway. I just figured I'd narrate it to jump start things and save dull speculation.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

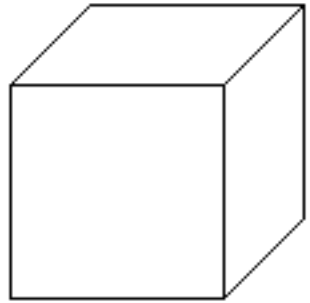
We can't get to Aruba and back before Linda's temporary MSG body collapses.

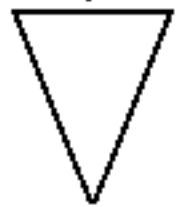
No, probably not. Do we know anyone who can?



I have no idea, there are too many characters in the strip.

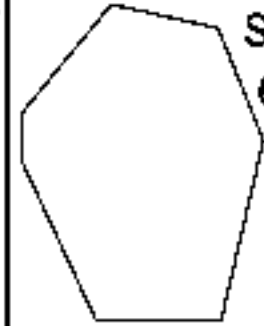
There must be some way. Perhaps the other Sentries know of something.





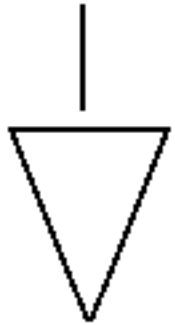
We could try the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses again.

I lack the vocabulary required for a sufficiently enraged reply.



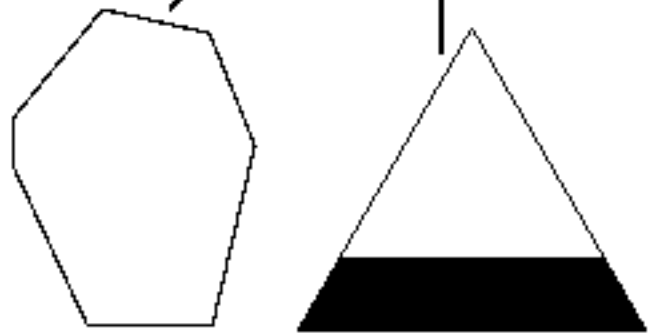
Triangle and Robert

If the Fondue is Linda's only chance, we have to go for it.



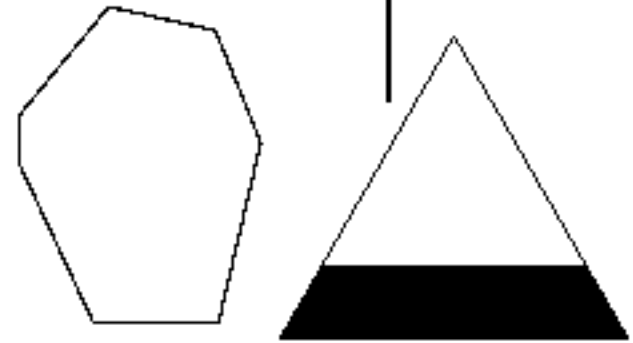
It's not her only chance. With the sheep fled I can fly a plane there.

Oh.



I'll start measuring the cheeses in case you don't make it.

I'd rather you didn't.



Triangle and Robert

Aruba

Hand over the Meat Sentry's body and I'll leave in peace.

Okay.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Scotland

The glutamic seaplane is functiona

Whatever business distracted the entity must have concluded

病

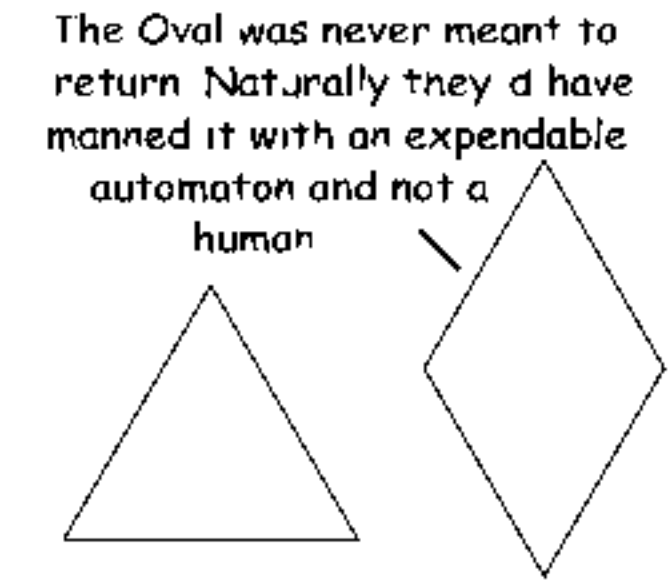
The Zone of No Pudding:

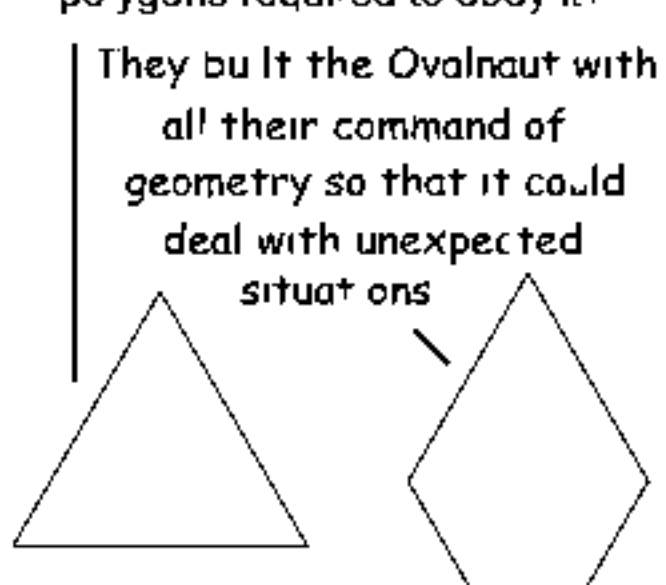
How could he kill me?

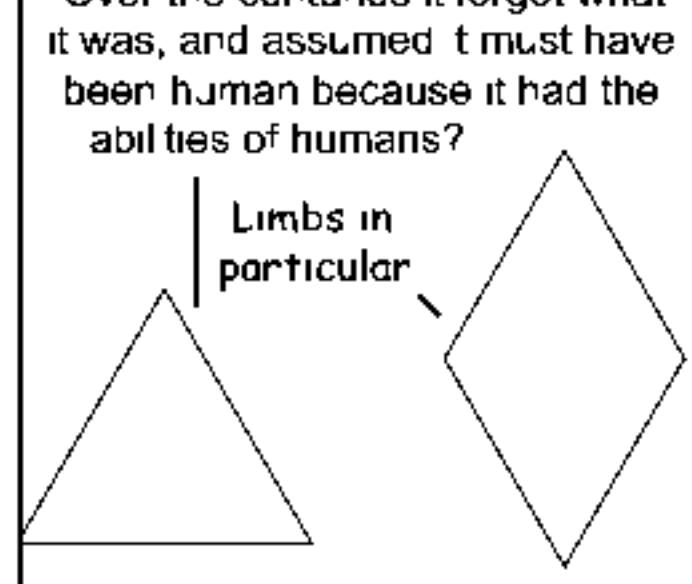
I don't understand.

You don't need to understand. Your part in this story is over.

Triangle and Robert

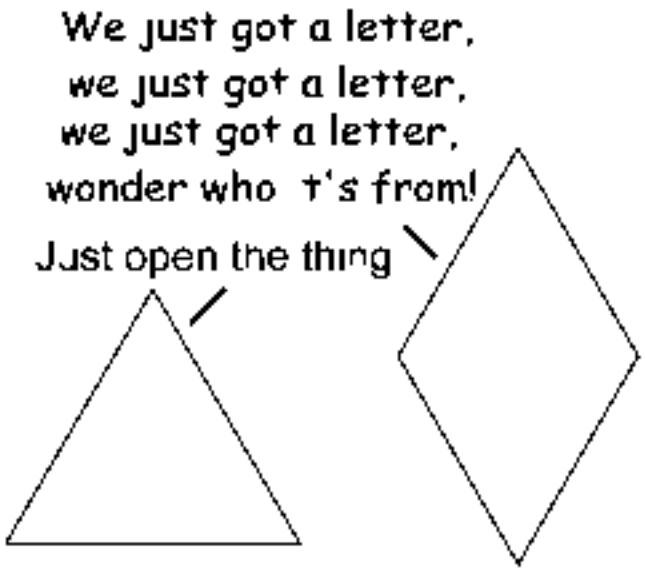


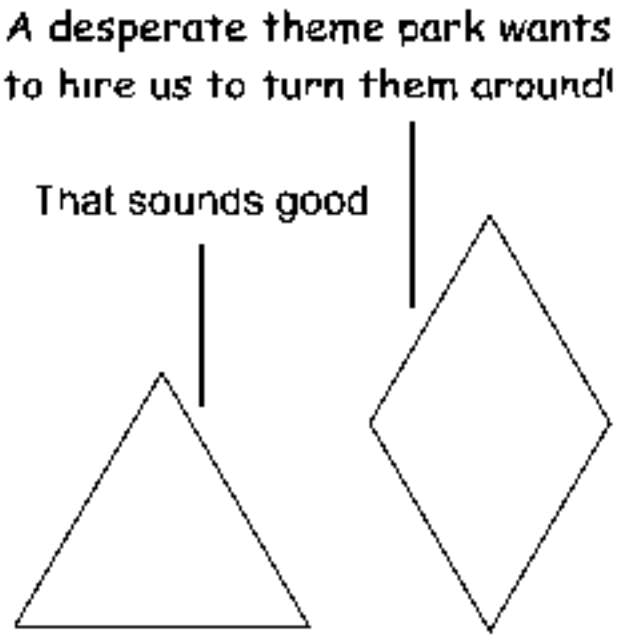


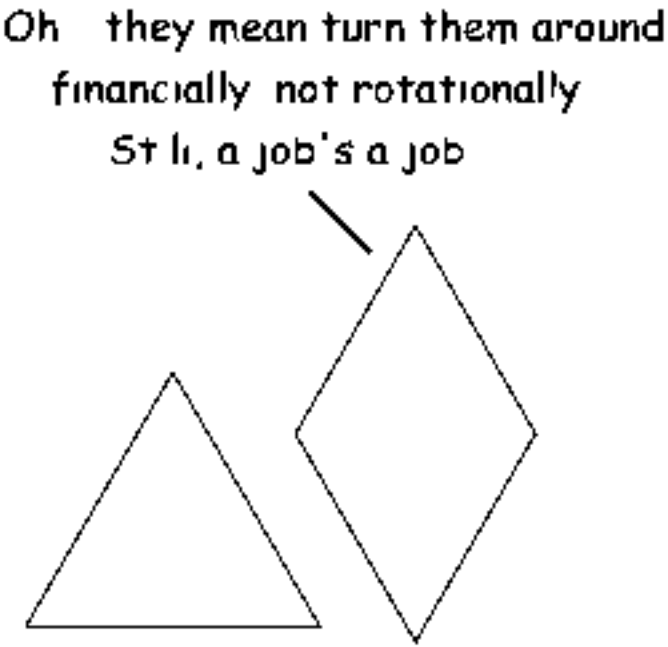


Triangle and Robert

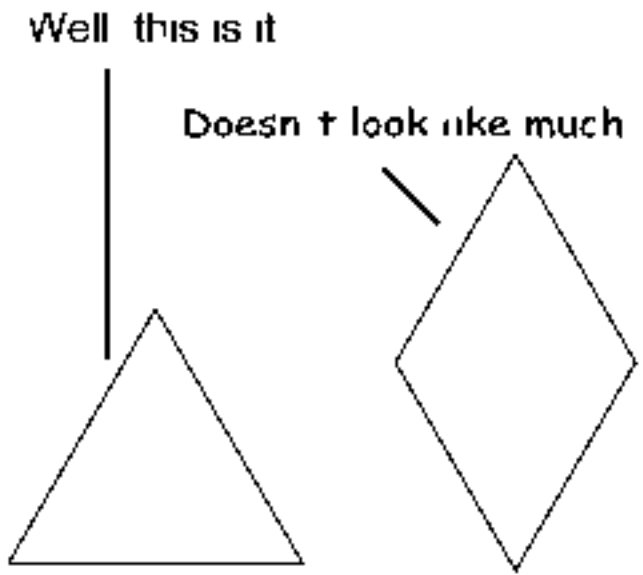
Triangle and Robert

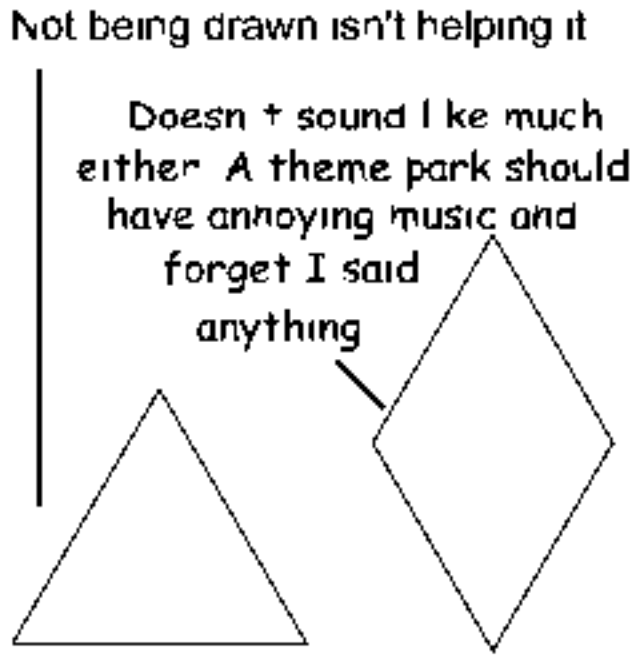




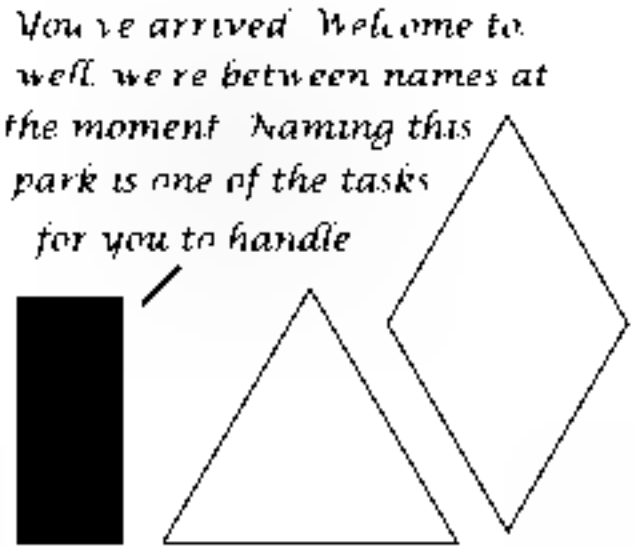


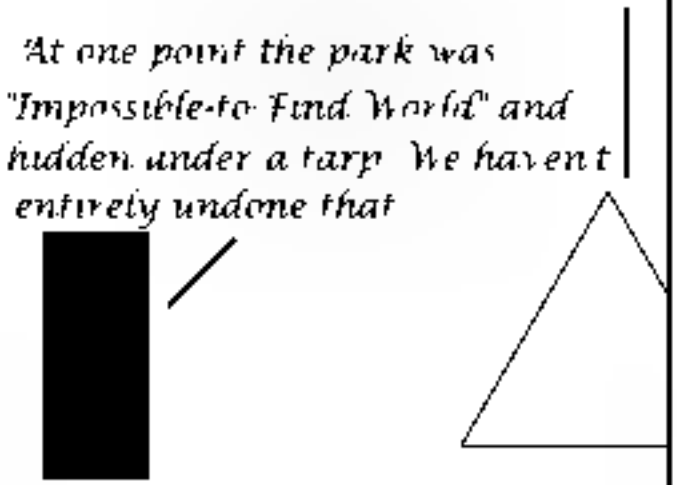
Triangle and Robert

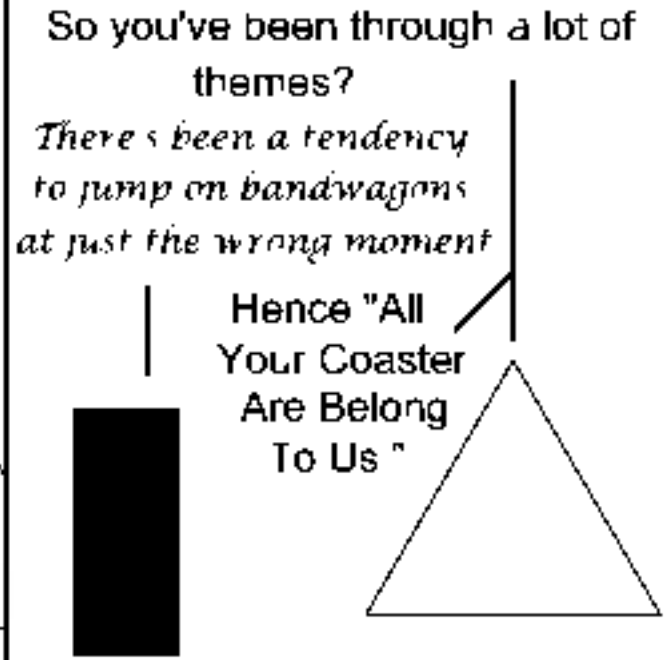




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

The first thing people see after the parking lot is the entrance It should be welcoming and exc t ng

And drawn

Idea ly yes

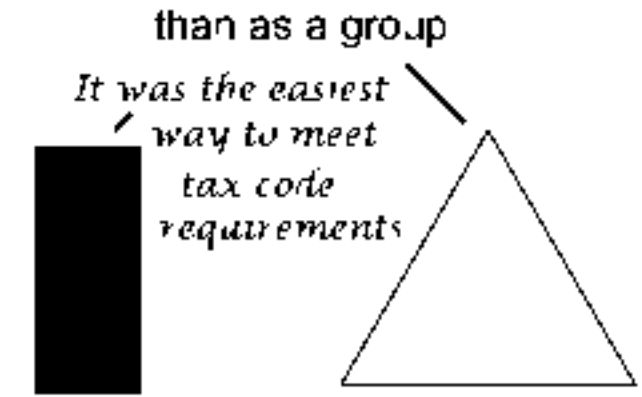
Drawn or not. though there shou d be almost no barbed wire

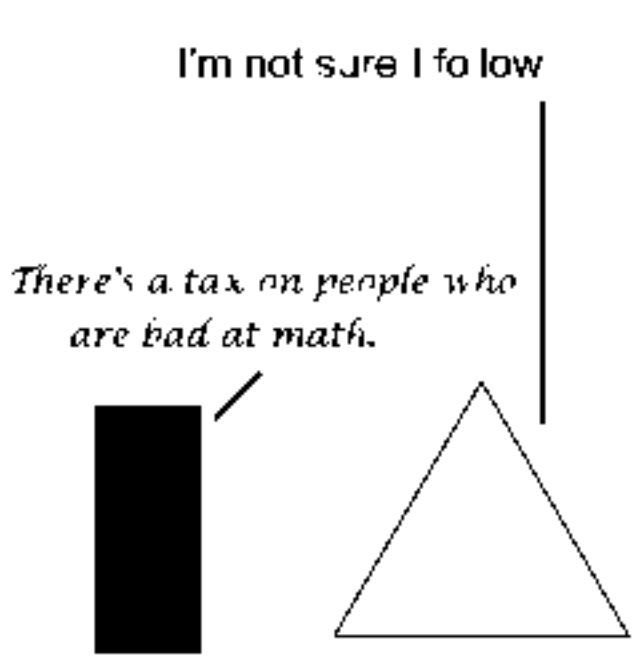
you see? This sort of thing is why we needed consultants

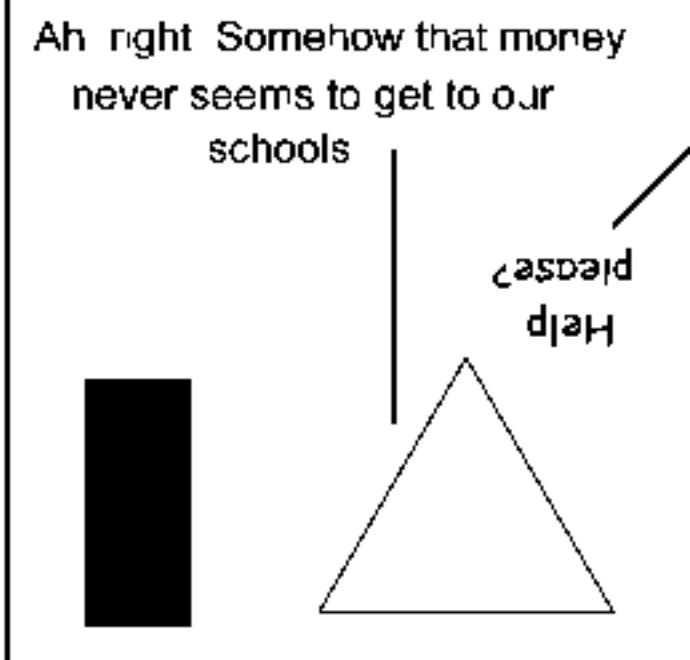
Also why Robert needs to stop random y climbing things You don't happen to have any medical staff do you?

Help?

Triangle and Robert







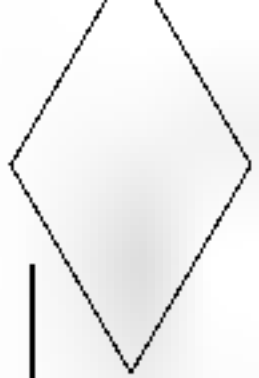
Triangle and Robert

Anything else you could suggest about the entrance?

Not unti we have a name for the park That ll determine much of the decor

So, heading inward

Good a nice broad walkway concession stands high y visib e ow-hanging gondola that could easi y hit someone pack of feral cats



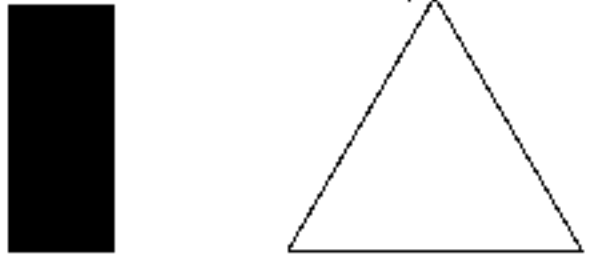
Ayudame!

Triangle and Robert

Are you just going to leave your partner stuck on the barbed wire?

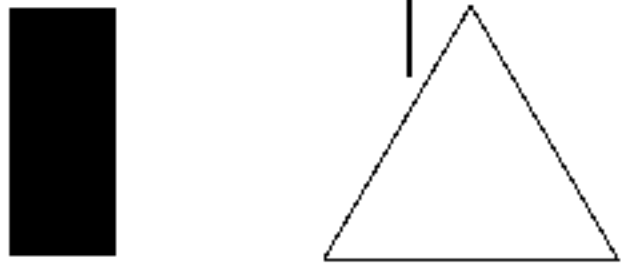
It's the safest p ace for h m to be

Don t let him down until we've identified all the deathtraps and potential self-destruct mechanisms If there's a button to not press he' l press it t s a wacky sidek ck thing



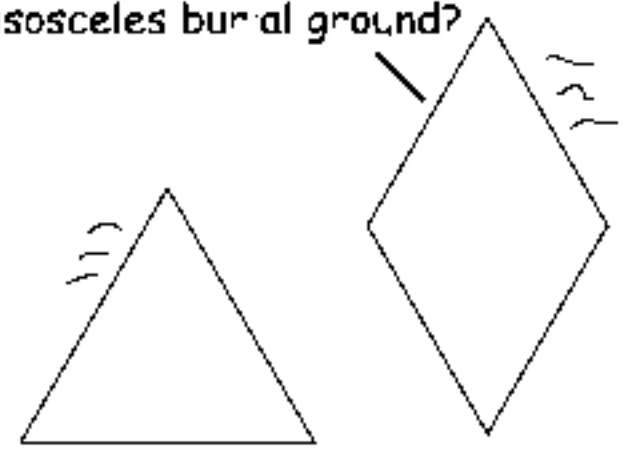
Are you allowed to split infinitives?

Everywhere but Kansas



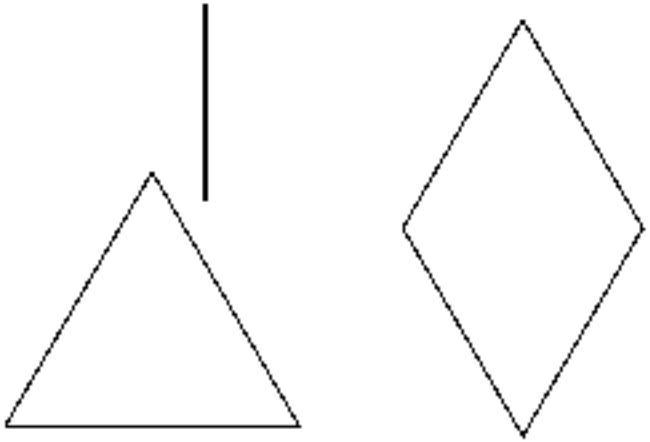
Triangle and Robert

We have forty four rides, although they're not all currently functioning. Are you sure Robert is okay like that?



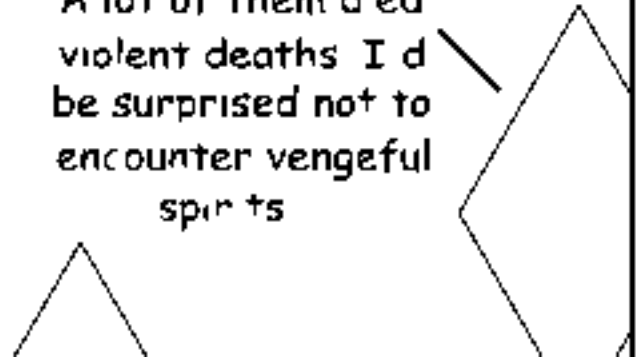
Triangle and Robert

What do you mean an isosceles burial ground?

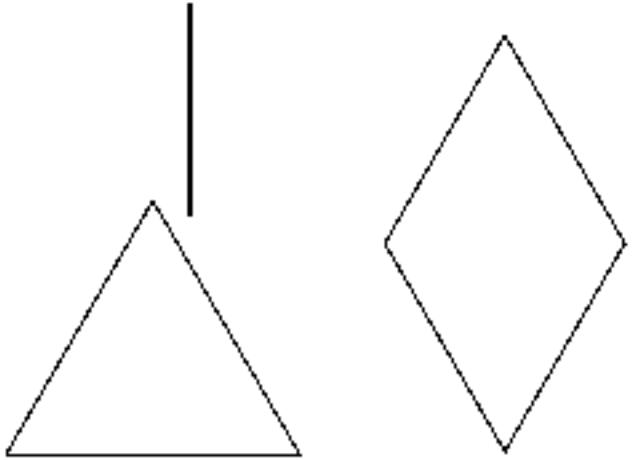


Back when discrimination against them was more blatant, isosceles triangles had to bury their dead separately from scalene triangles

A lot of them died violent deaths. I'd be surprised not to encounter vengeful spirits



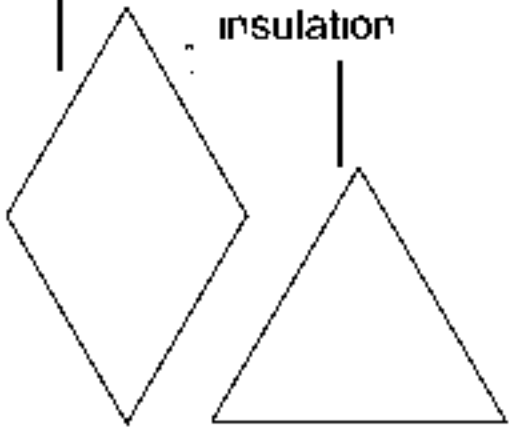
Robert, don't be silly. There's no such thing as competent ghosts



Triangle and Robert

Cotton candy! Cotton candy!

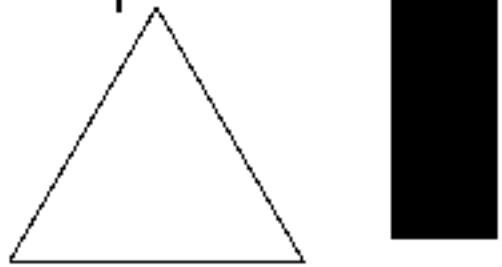
F berglass insulation



Robert what no how are you eating that?

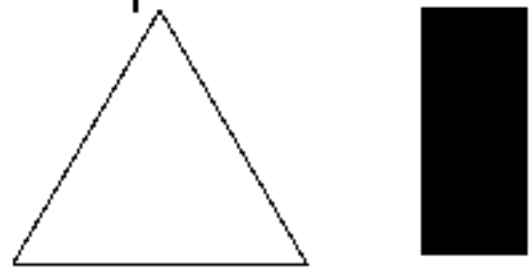
Don t eat fiberg ass!

It s not fiberglass

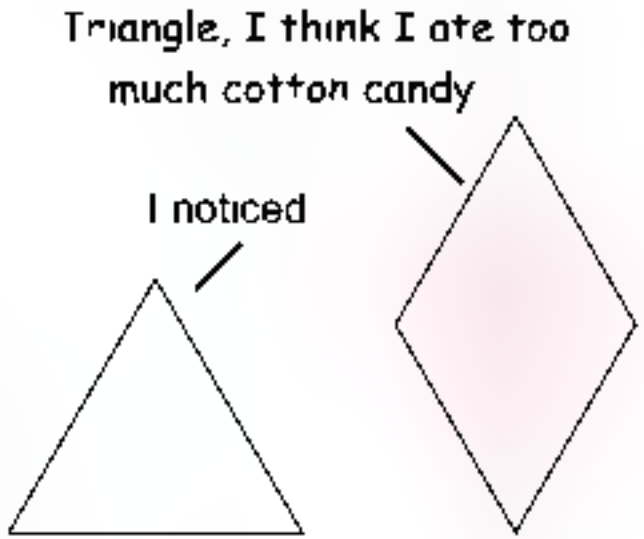


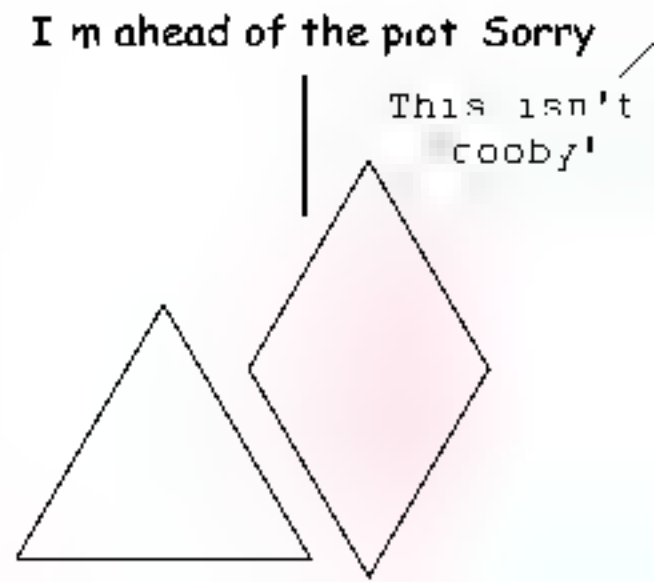
Why are there giant rolls of pink cotton candy amongst janitorial and maintenance equipment?

We had to put them somewhere

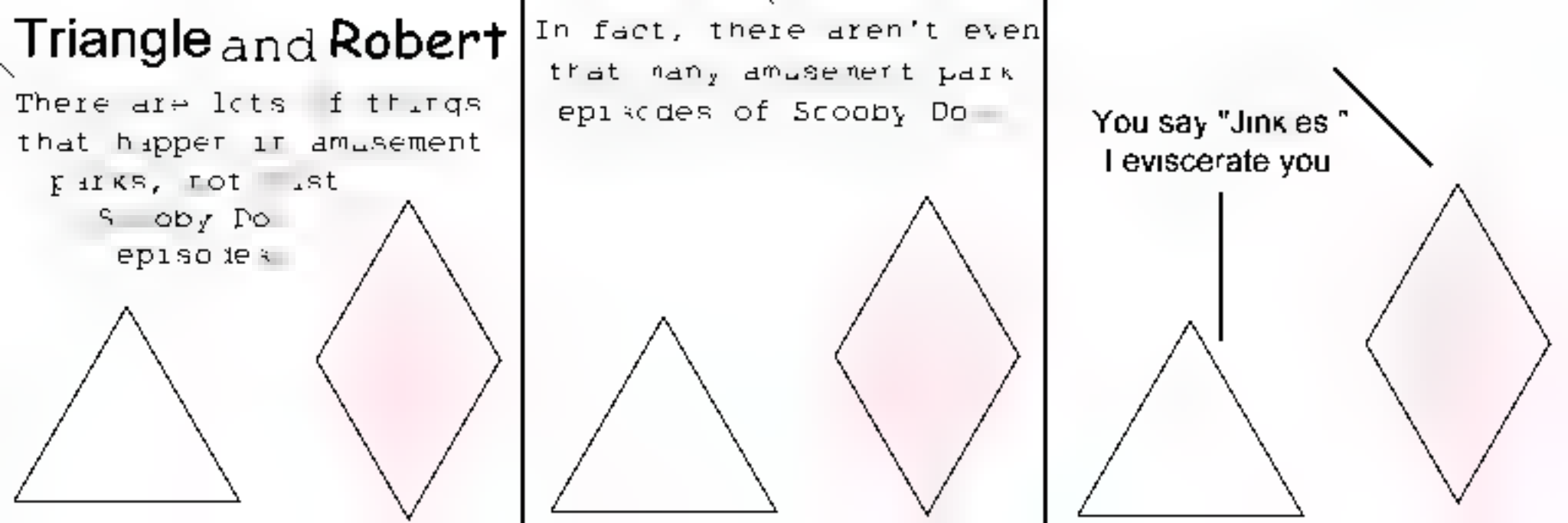


Triangle and Robert

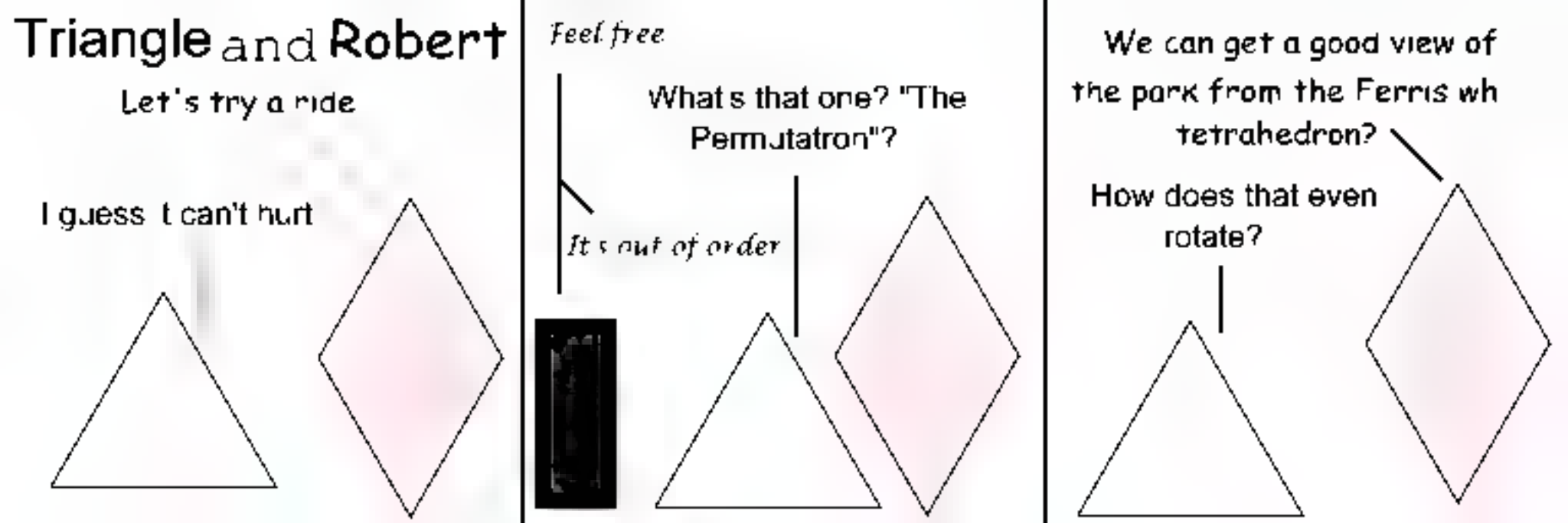




Triangle and Robert

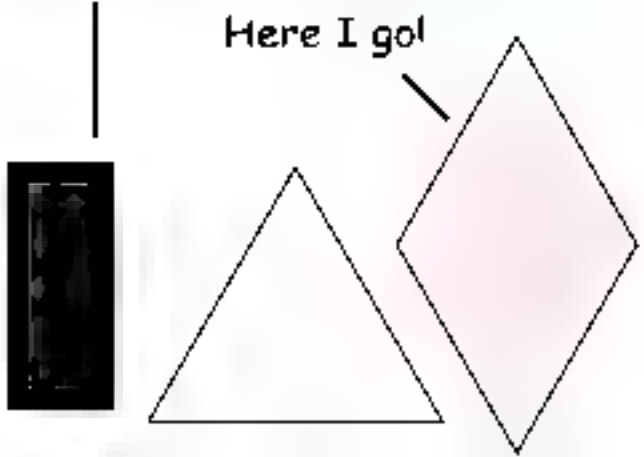


Triangle and Robert

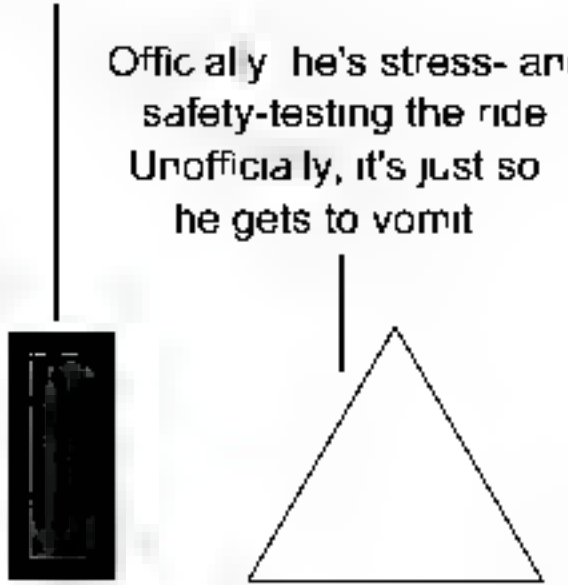


Triangle and Robert

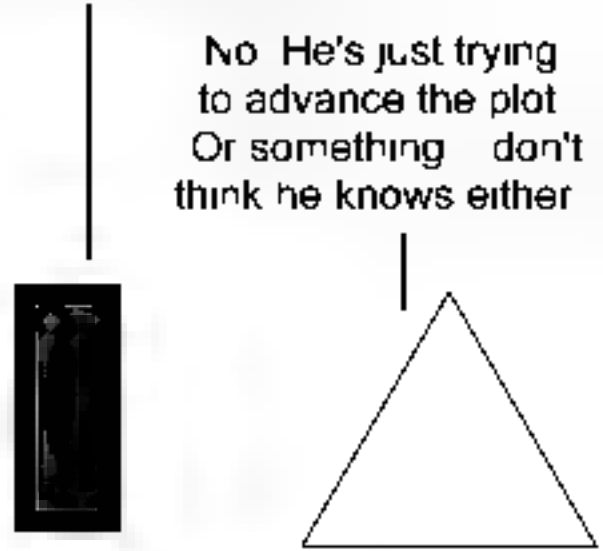
Riding the Ferris tetrahedron after overeating is inadvisable



Why did he just

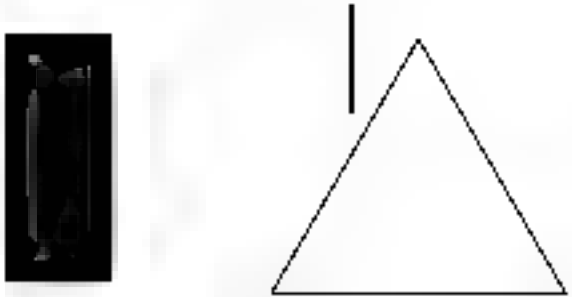


Does he enjoy vomiting?



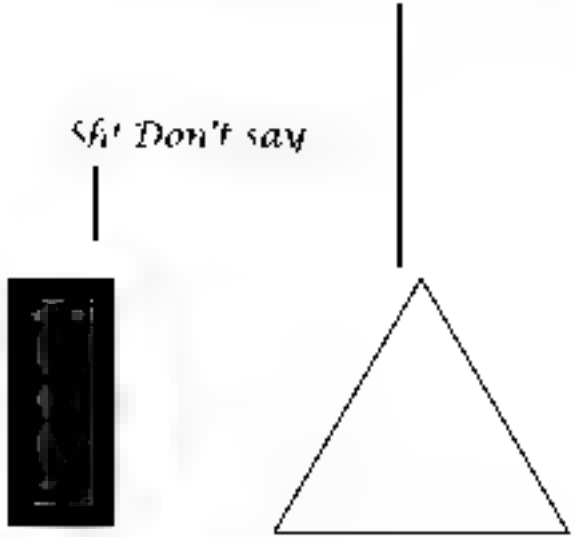
Triangle and Robert

The Ferris tetrahedron looks fun
Except um

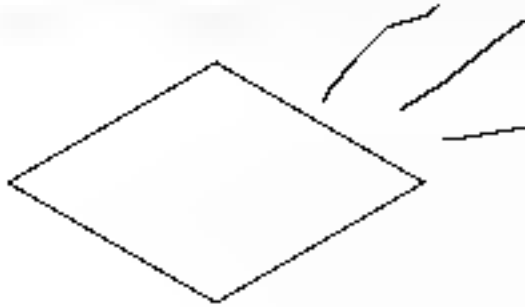


Shouldn't it be structural y
impossib e for it to you know

Sh! Don't say

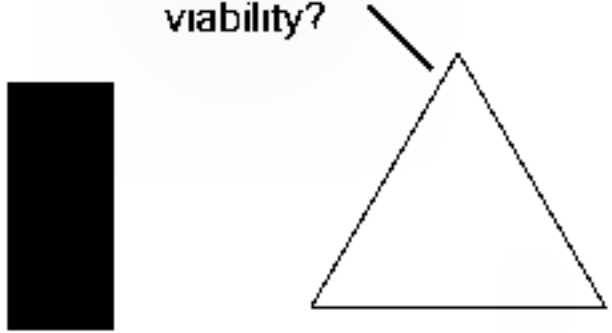


The collapse of the Ferris
tetrahedron was oddly
silent, as I wasn't
really sure what kind of
noise it should make



Triangle and Robert

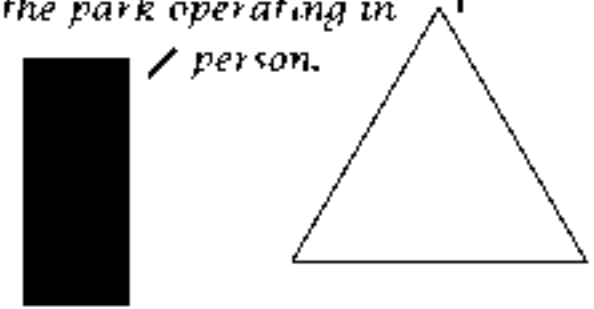
W why why wou d you have a ride wh ch IMMEDIATELY fa ls apart if anyone quest ons its mechanical viability?



I have no idea.

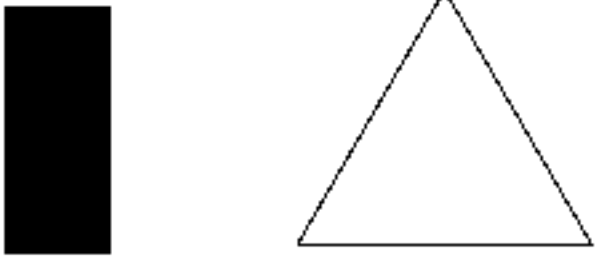
Aren't you in charge?

I've only been in charge for three weeks. This is the first time I've seen the park operating in person.



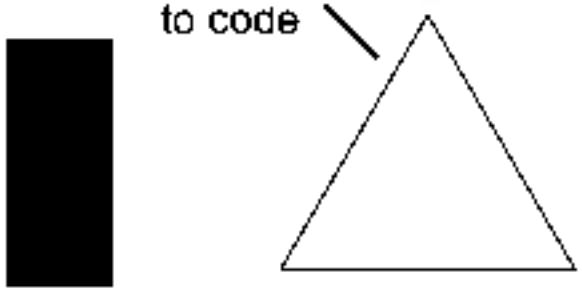
And this wasn't worth te ling us before because

I didn t want you to be underconfident

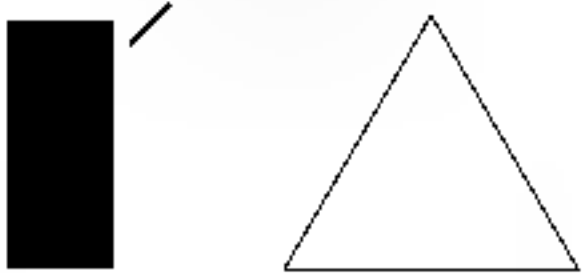


Triangle and Robert

So far I'm thinking you should dismantle the entire park and start from scratch with a new one. I doubt it'd cost much more than bringing what you have up to code

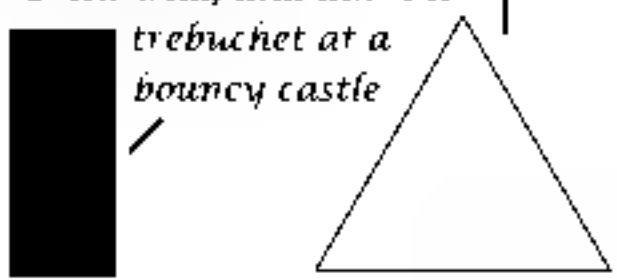


We're at almost zero operating budget. We need to become profitable without any major capital outlay. I'm hoping some of the attractions can become money makers with only cosmetic changes



I don't think a coat of paint and a new sign will improve the Trebuchet Into A Brick Wall or the On Fire Coaster

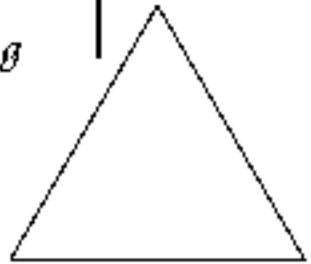
We could extinguish the coaster, take down the brick wall, and aim the trebuchet at a bouncy castle



Triangle and Robert

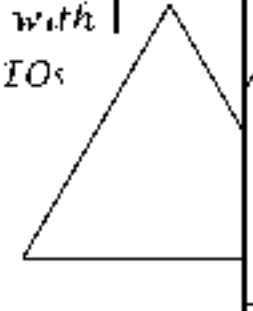
S mple lack of explos ves won't get the bumper cars to pass a safety inspection They need to be *safe* not just less active y deadly

I m not following you.



You re not lega ly allowed to operate an amusement park unless the attractions pass mandatory inspections

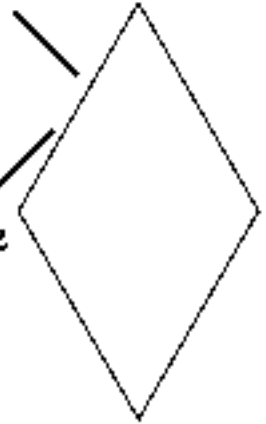
I can see how that could become a problem. I bet it had something to do with the last two CIOs retiring



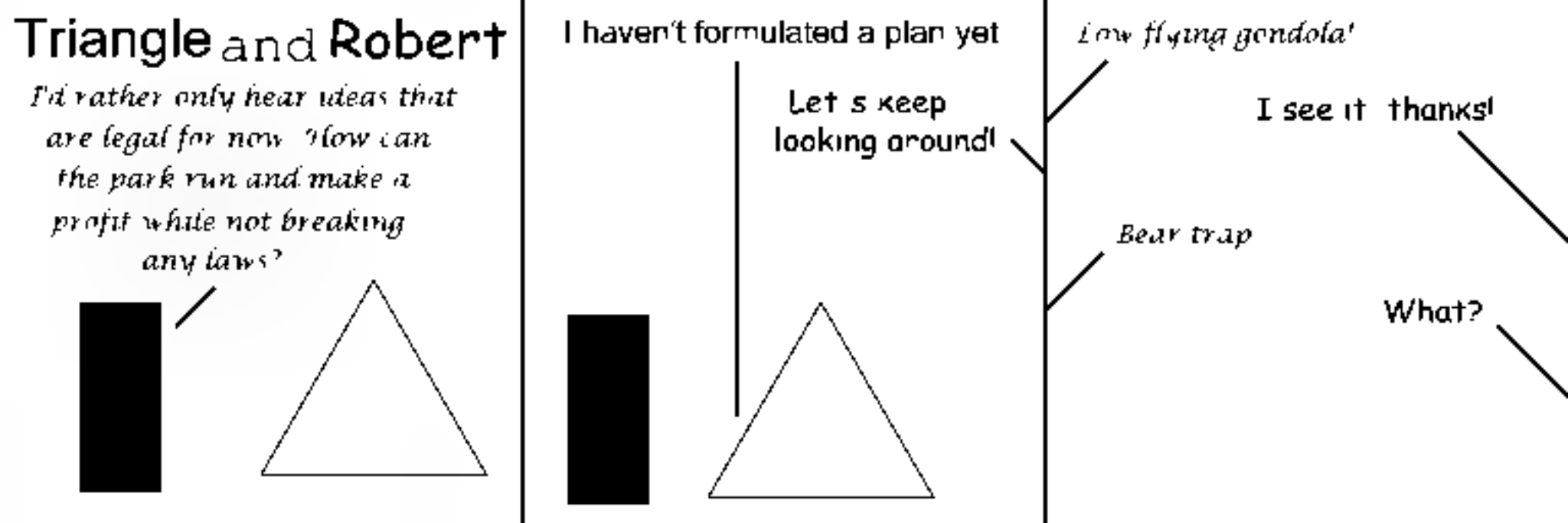
What if you don't advertise it as an amusement park? Reopen as an open air fitness gym and label the rides as exercise equipment

Gyms have inspections too

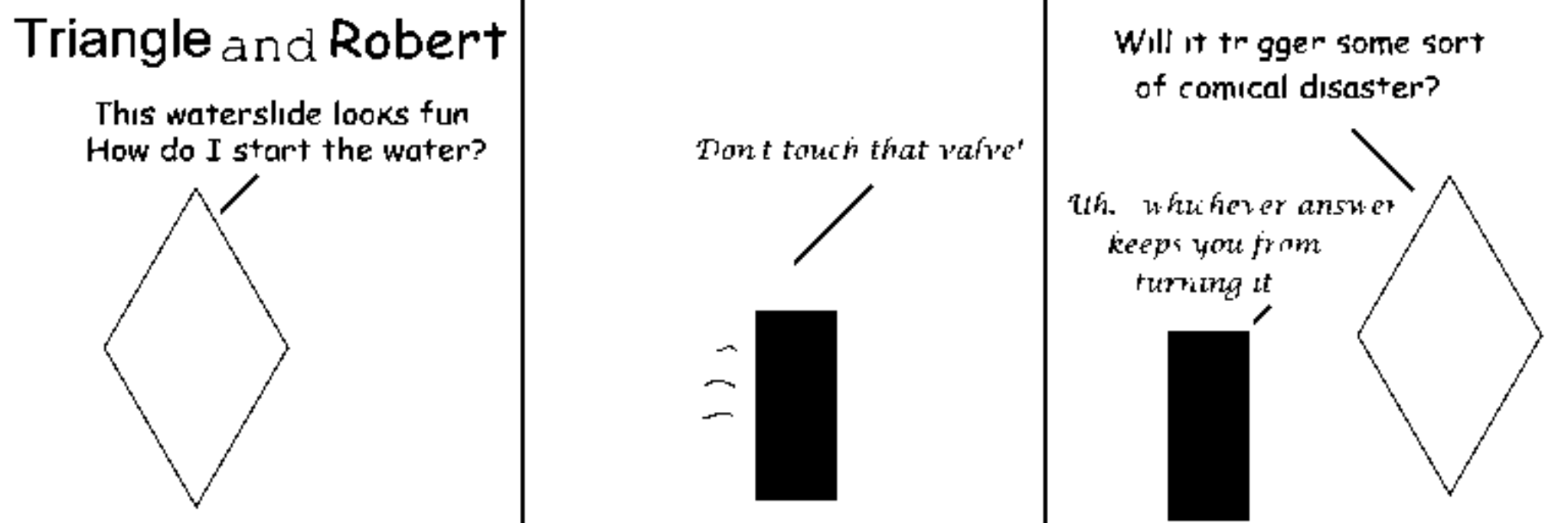
Yes but the bribes are smaller



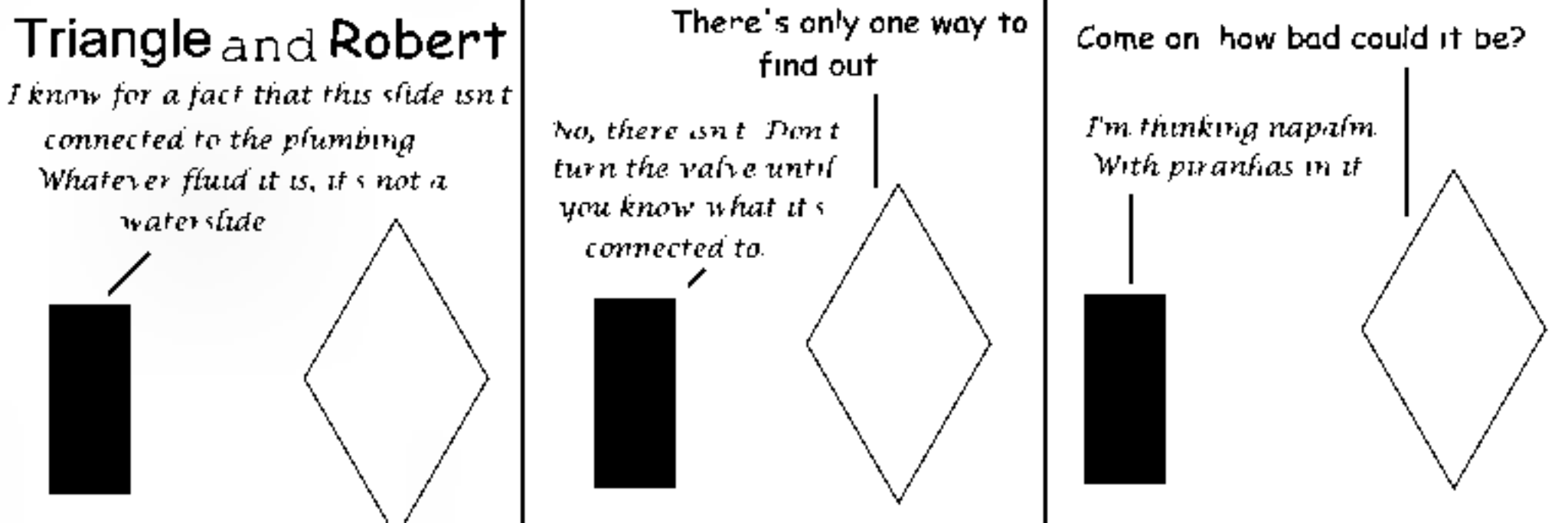
Triangle and Robert



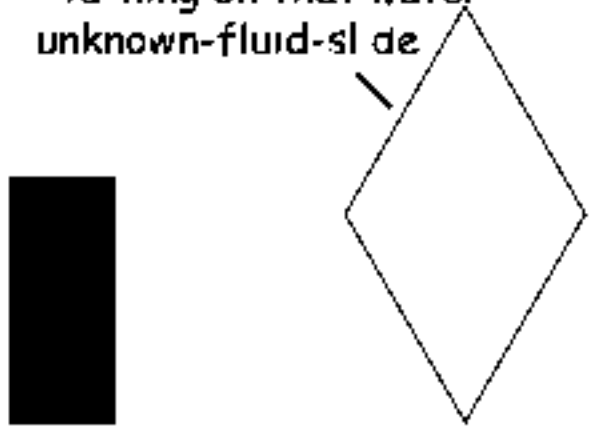
Triangle and Robert

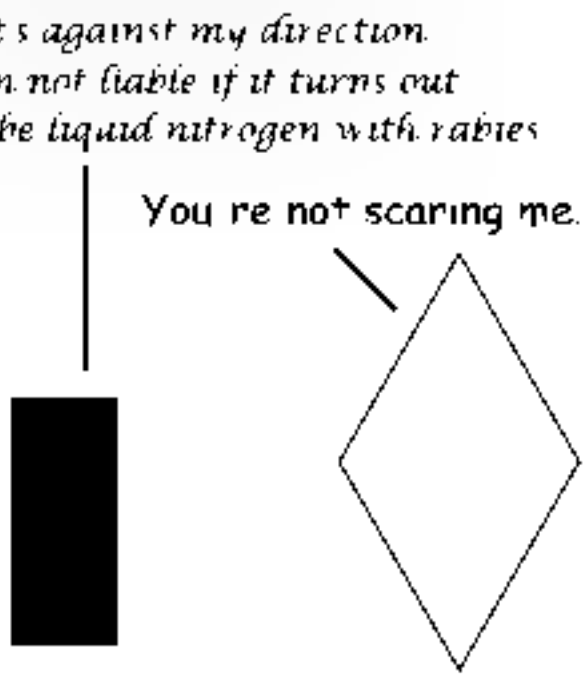


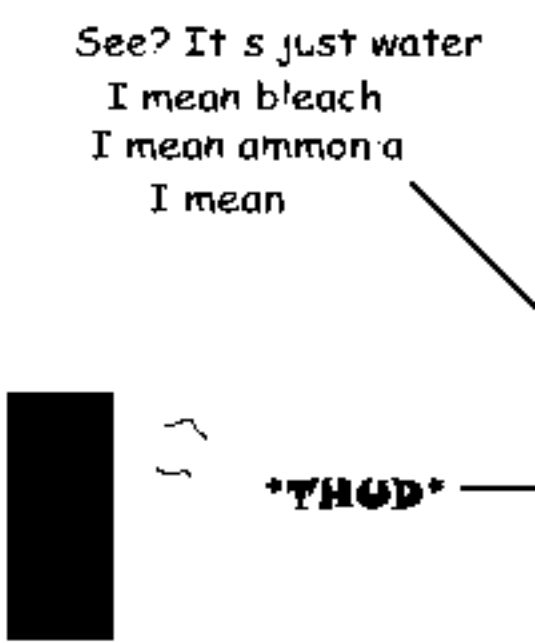
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



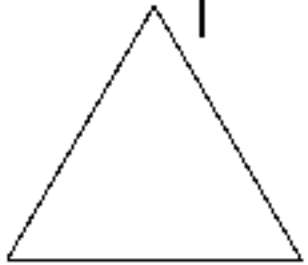




Triangle and Robert

Toxic vapors Robert fell down!

I suppose you don't have hazard gear around?



It's in the carousel. Break open the horses

Interesting place for it

I don't see any horses, just what appear to be half-melted pandas and weirdly misshapen things

The bluer things were originally horses

Triangle and Robert

This isn't hazard gear!

It's supposed to be

What is it?

I think it's Dukes of Hazzard gear

That isn't funny

It certainly isn't

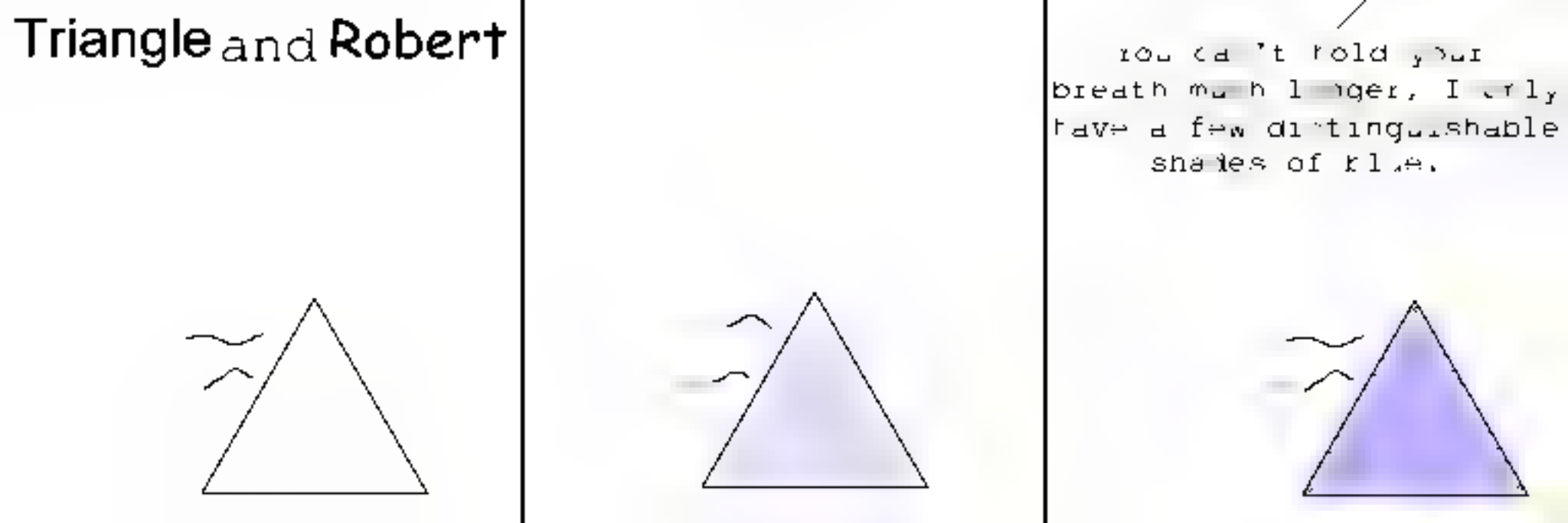
It doesn't really make sense either

I know

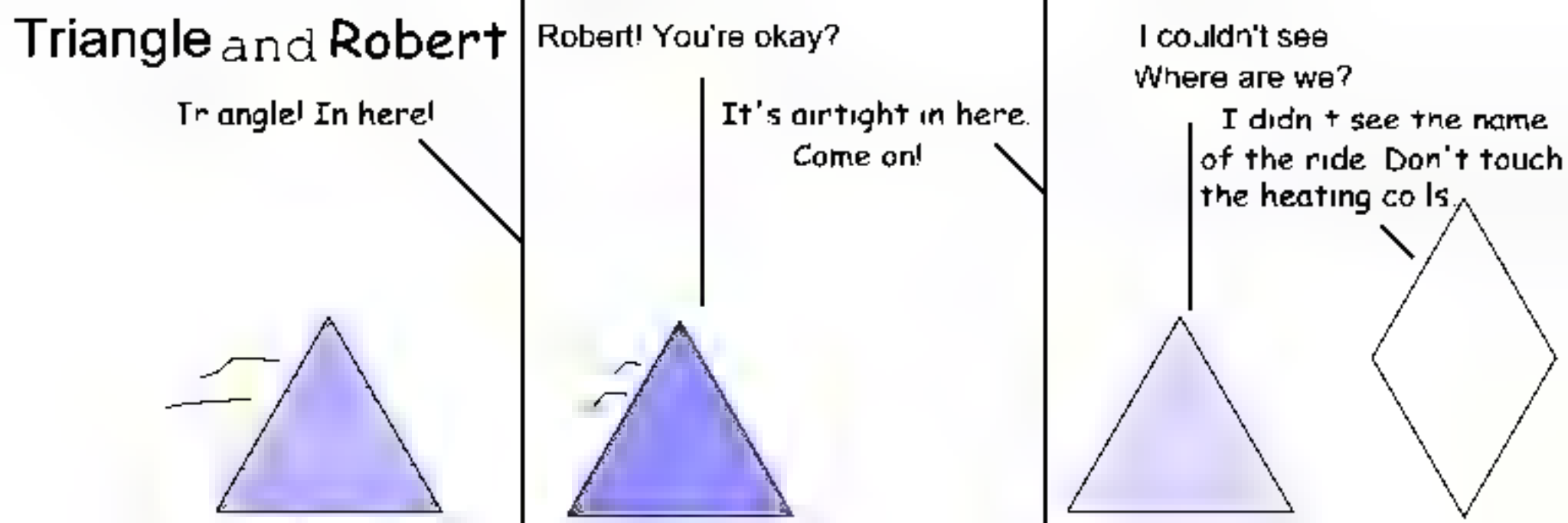
The fumes are getting closer! I'm taking shelter in the Family Fun Abattoir

You're not supposed to leave consultants to die!

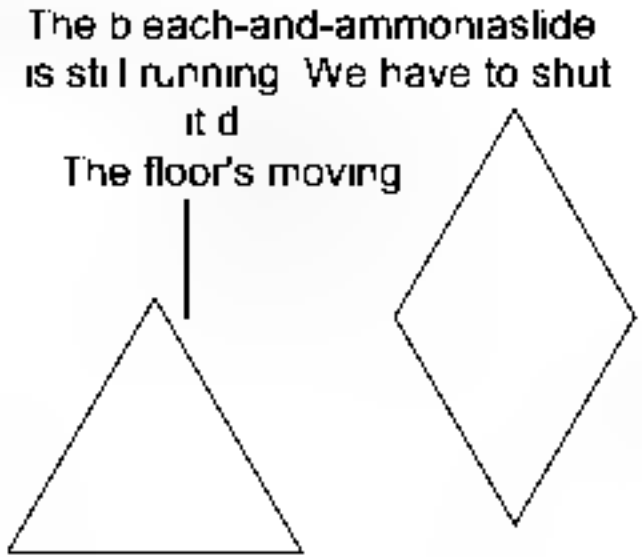
Triangle and Robert

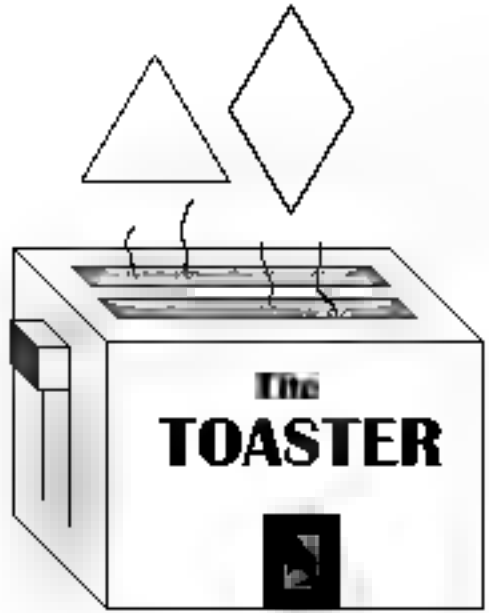


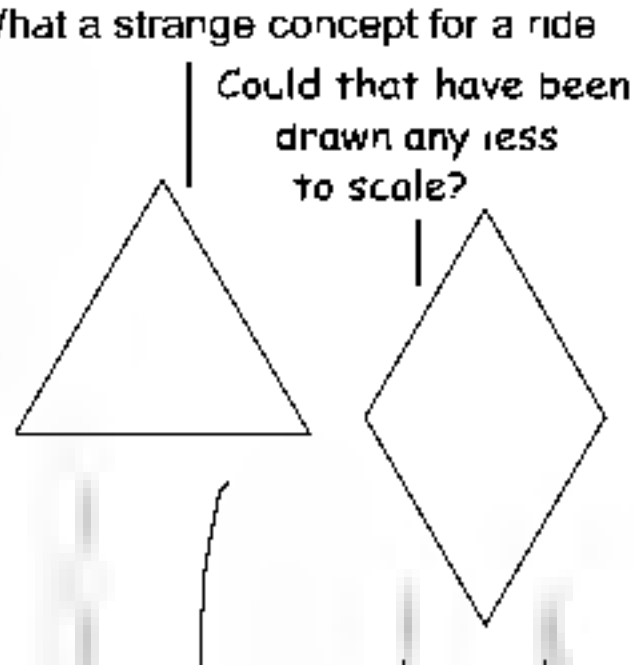
Triangle and Robert



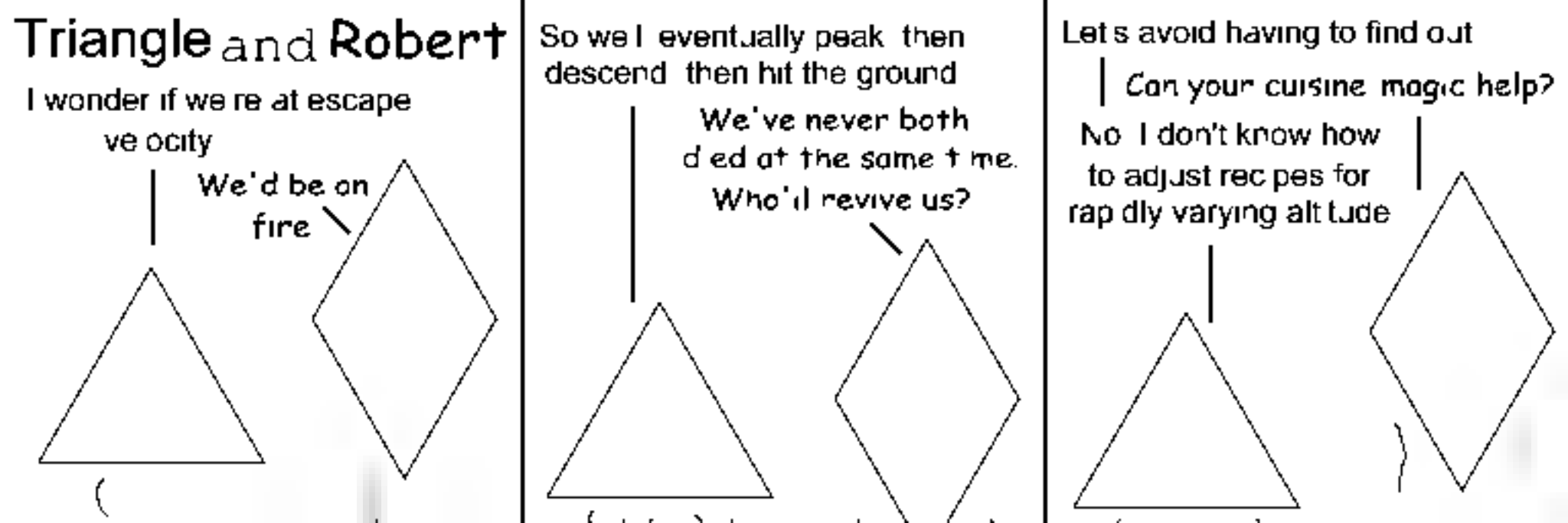
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



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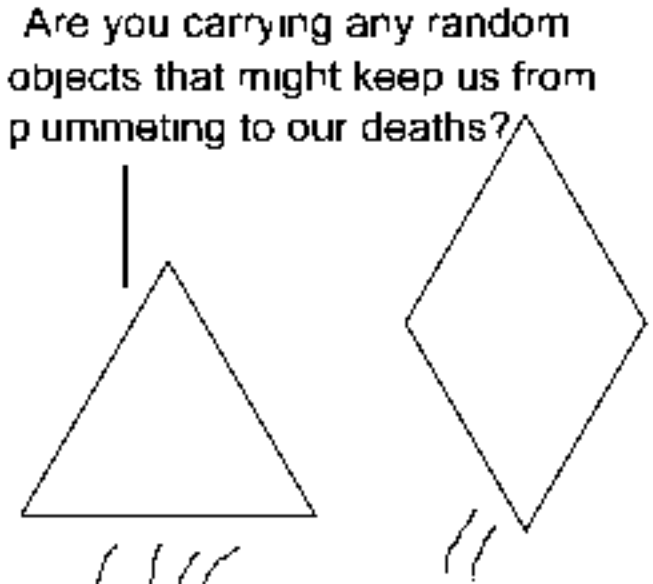
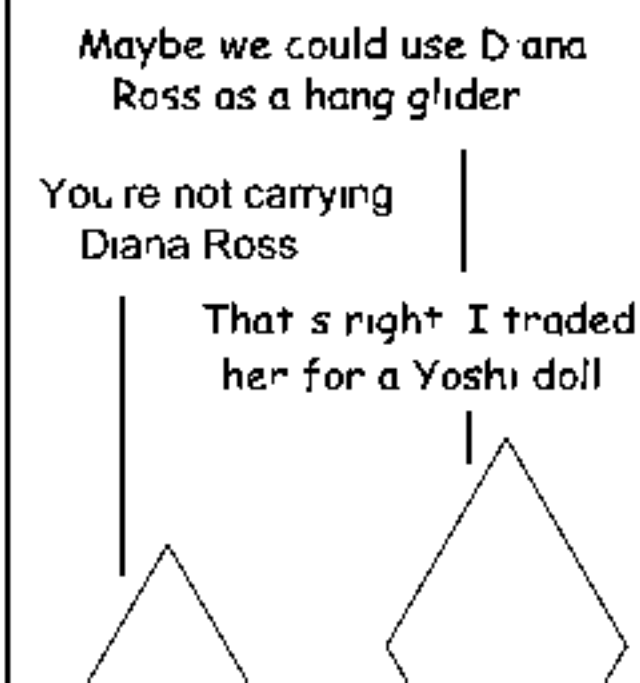
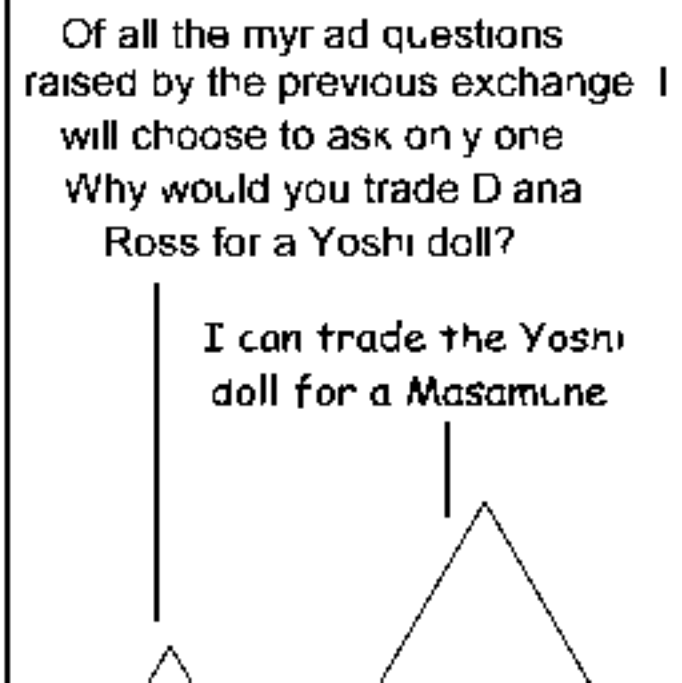
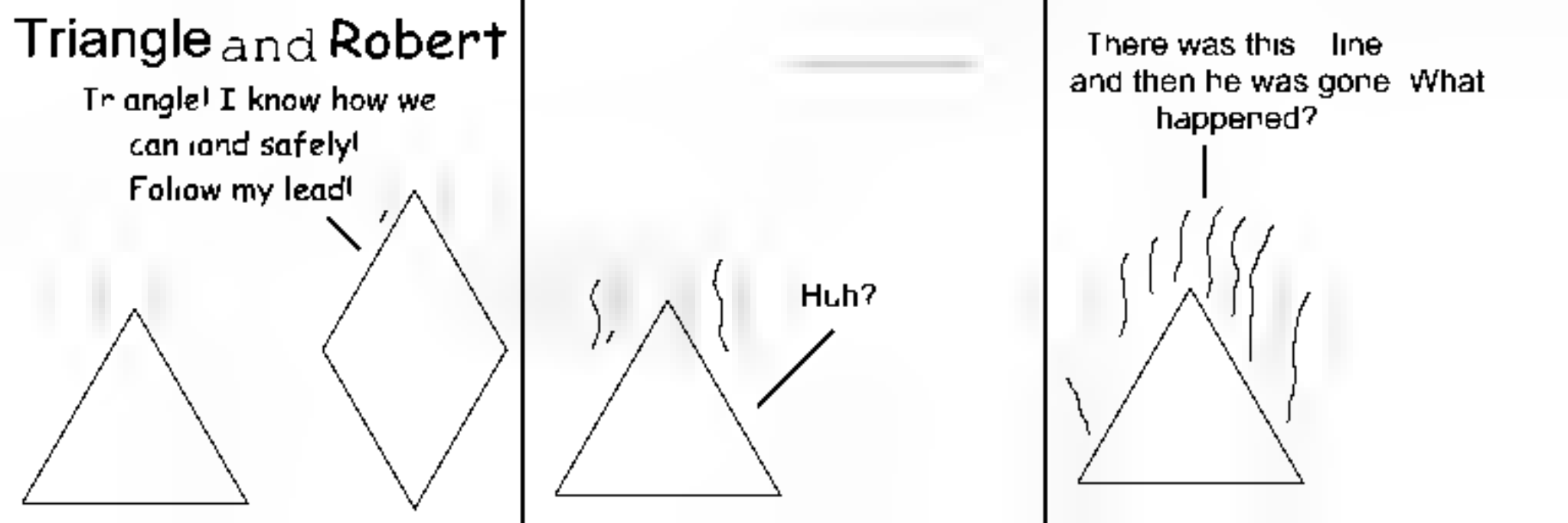






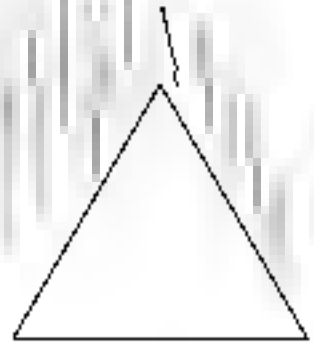
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

What does Robert know that I don't? He knows how to exp oit the nature of com c strips He knows about the Cartoonist's world

Could it be that simple? Just rotate myself into the third d mension during the instant between pane s?



It's working I'm gliding But, if polygons can glide so easily then why don't they?

They normally can't. I don't understand the physics of air resistance in your world, so I'm substituting my own for the strip If you tried it outside the comic, you'd probably be ripped in thirds by Coriolis force or something

Triangle and Robert

Once aga n we are saved from certain death by the Cartoonist's ignorance

I ve been in the air before, but this is the first time I ve really had a chance to look down

It's sort of beautiful

What is?

The world

Hard to bel eve it s all because of a recipe error

Yes It is hard to believe

The ch oram ne cloud is sti l grow ng How do we close the va ve and stop it?

We just need to get hazard gear I'd rather use the real thing than makeshift it under the circumstances

Triangle and Robert

I'll land near the fire station
You land in the amusement park
I'll grab a hazard suit and attach it to the title, then when the strip goes to you, you take it down and wear it

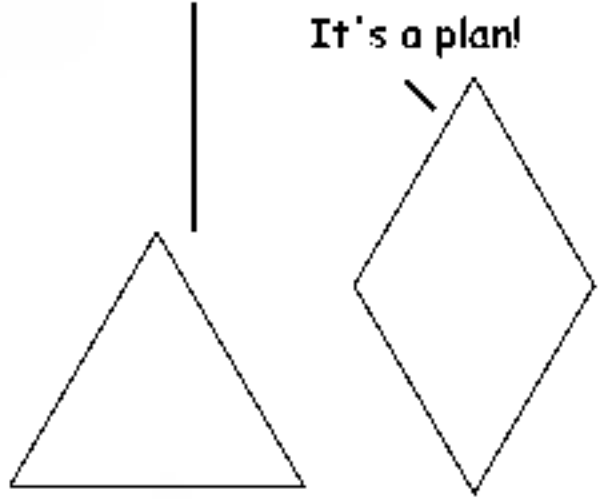
Note: you can't use shifting strip focus to teleport objects

We'll both land at the fire station and take a cab
No need to complicate things

But I want to complicate things!

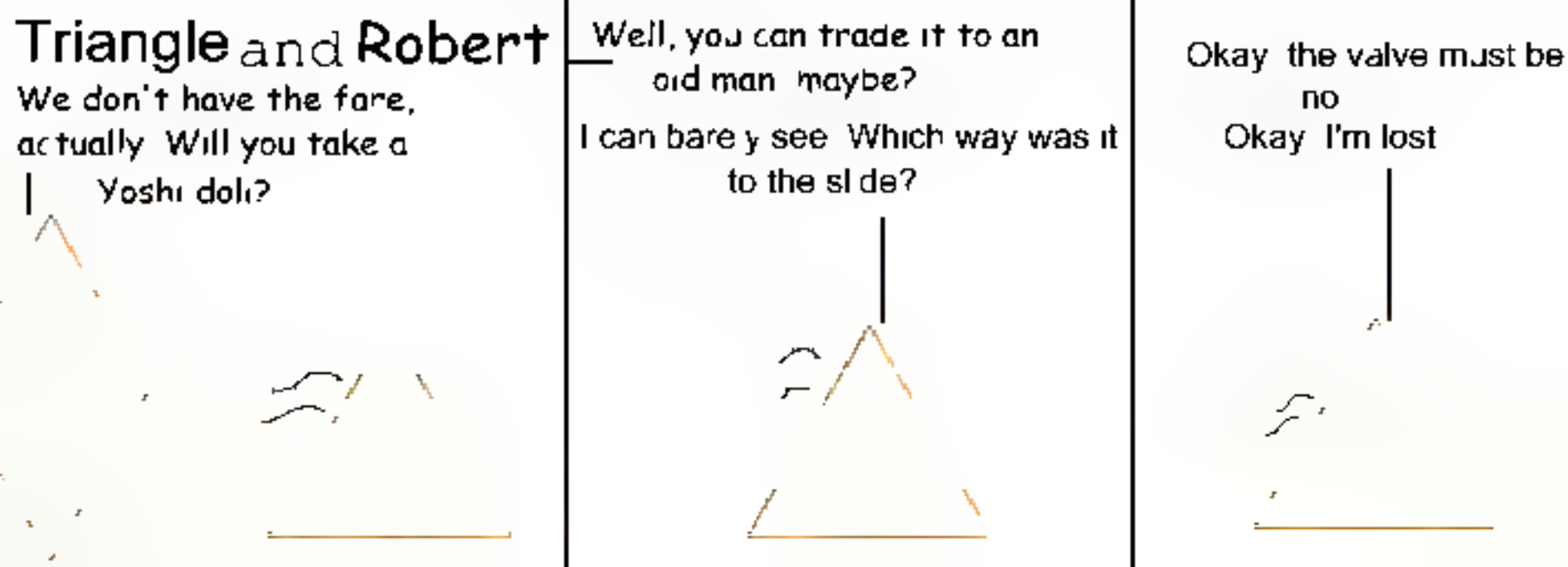
Okay you're responsible for not having the cab fare

It's a plan!



Triangle and Robert
Get back here!
National security
Oh, okay.
We have the hazard suits
I ll hail a taxi, despite the obvious dangers involved
Wh ch wou d be
A Dead Milkmen reference

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Triangle: Turn twelve degrees counterclockwise!

Is that where the valve is?

Yes. Go close it!

I just wanted to make sure you weren't giving me directions for some completely other reason

Hurry up! I don't know how much air I have!

I'm going, I'm going!

Triangle and Robert

I found it! This has to be the "water -slide control va ve! Does it close clockwise or counterc ockw se? I can barely even see my own text through the fumes

I'll try clockw se first.

It's work ng It's working! The b each and ammonia jets are stopp ng! There's an absurd amount of ch oramine gas in the air and the local wildlife will be lucky to survive, but at least it won t spread to the c ty now

Triangle and Robert

Robert. I shut off the va ve and the gas is d spersing but Hold on The cab's sti l here? thought you'd have found a way to pay the fare by now

We should have stolen a hazard suit for the cab driver

She passed out?

I hope she only passed out

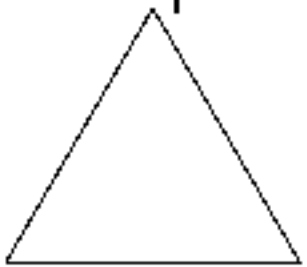
Put her n the trunk we' l park the cab across from the fire station and eave the hazard su ts in it

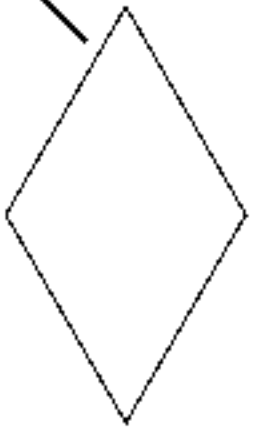
That s your criminalest idea ever!

Triangle and Robert

Triangle, wake up! We made bail!

Wha?

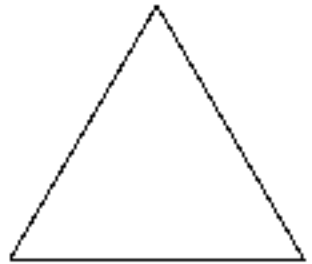


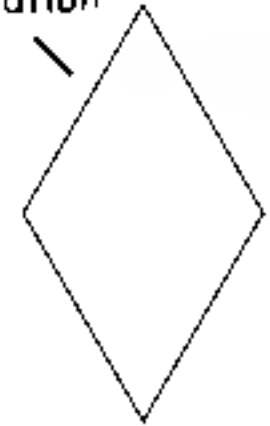


It's coming out of your fee
Why couldn't you have just
told the fire department
what was going on and let them
take care of it. Stealing
the hazard gear and endangering
the cabbie wasn't
necessary

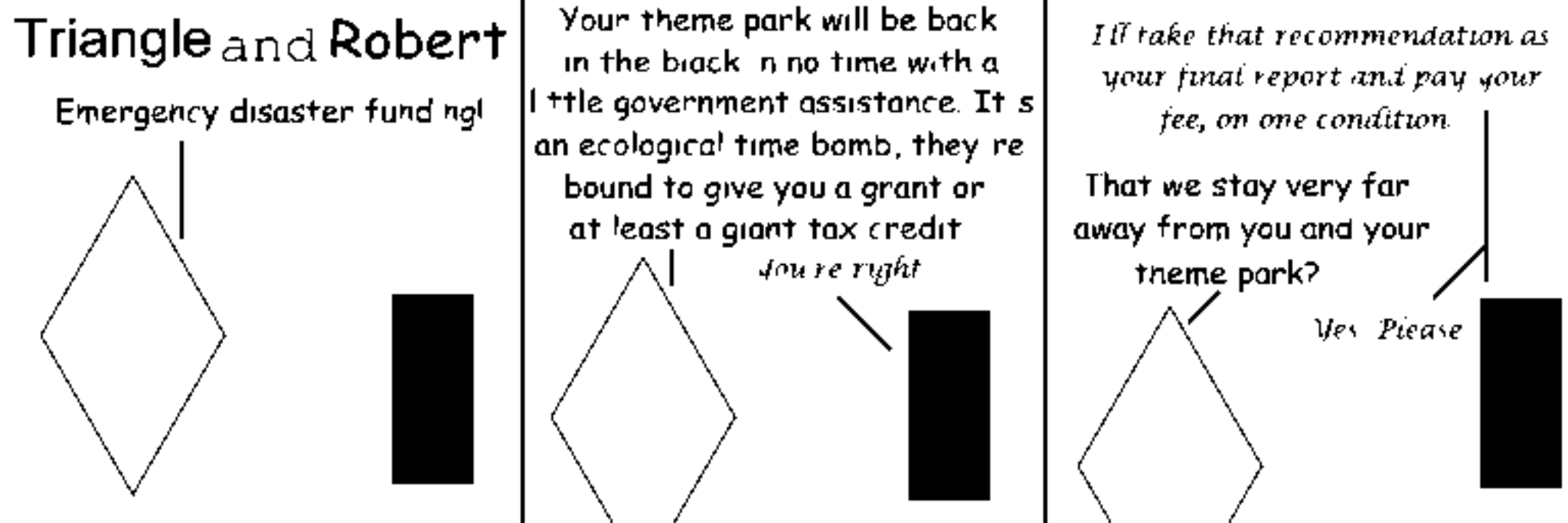
Well, of course you would say that in hindsight. You had to be there.

I plead oxygen deprivation.

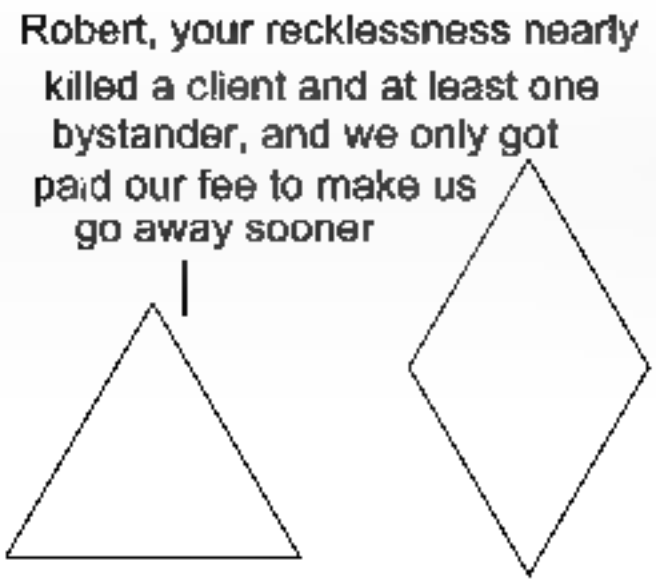


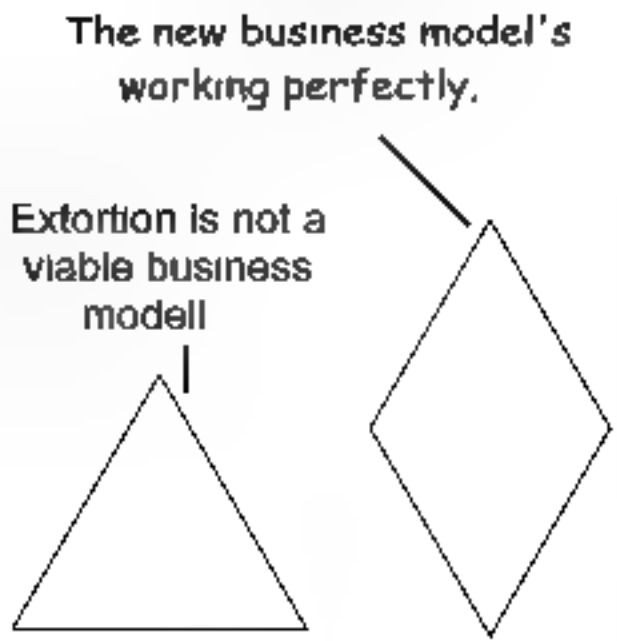


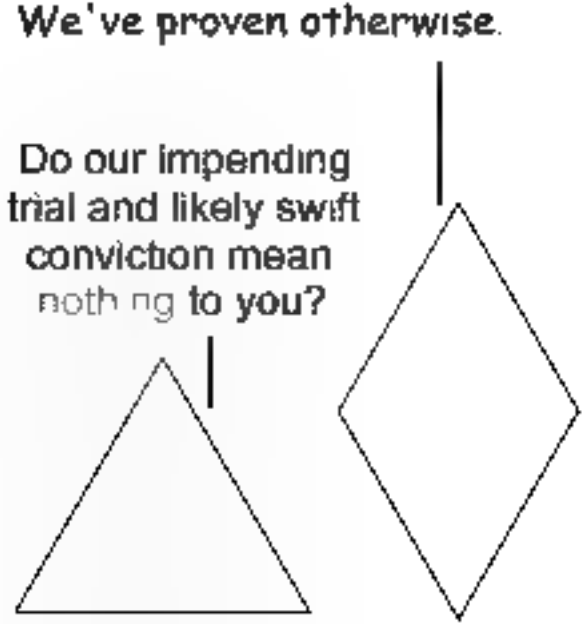
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

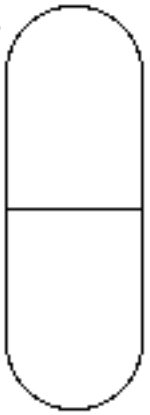




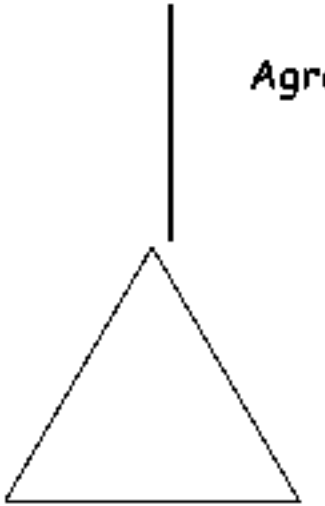


Triangle and Robert

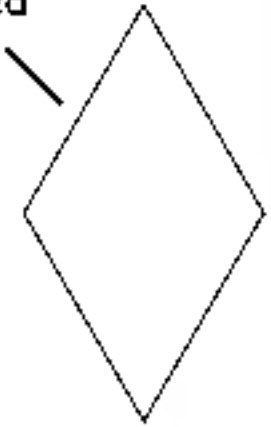
I find in favor of the defendants. I'm Judge Prozac the Bear!



Let us never speak of that trial again



Agreed



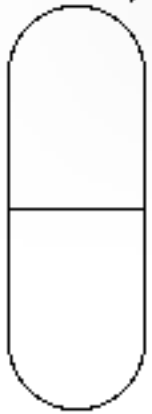
Next case

The mind's necessarily imperfect understanding of Time

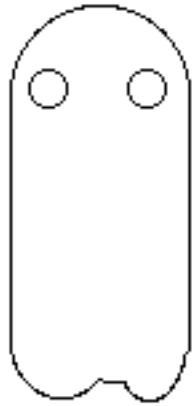
versus

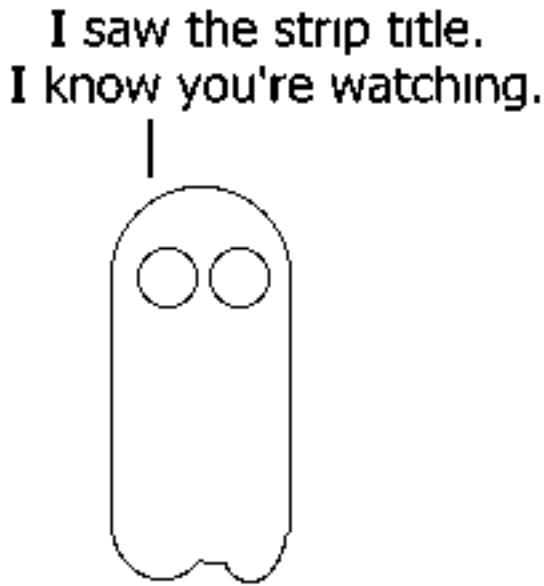
Dhalsim

ROUND ONE!



Triangle and Robert





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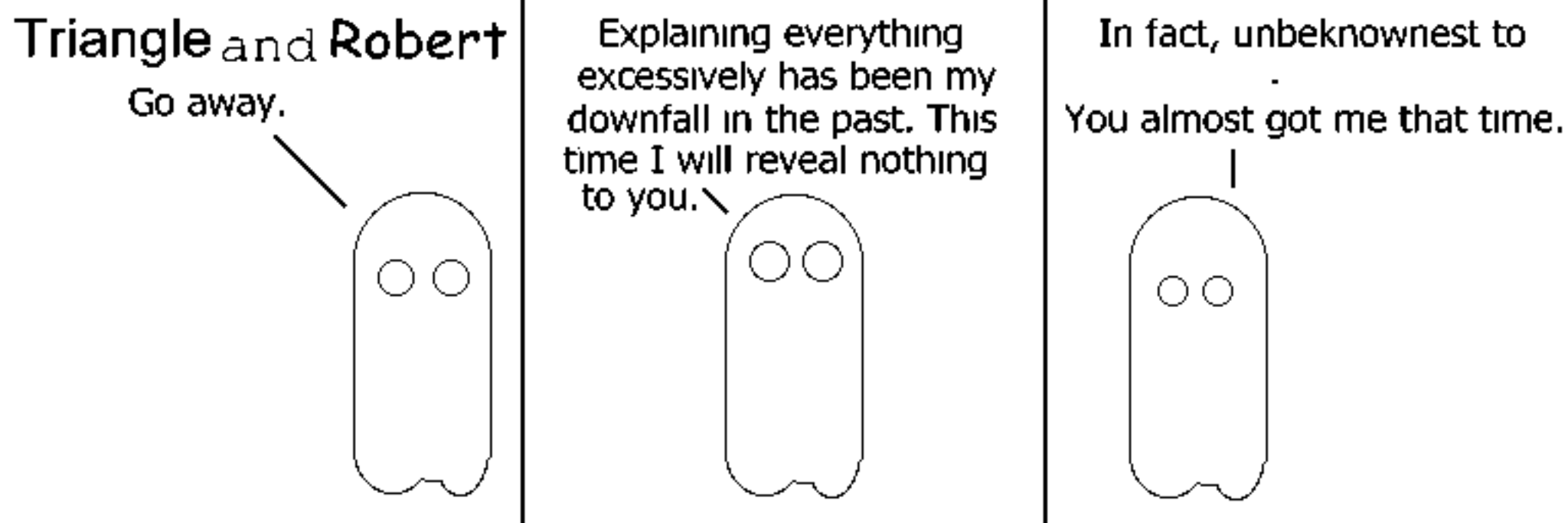

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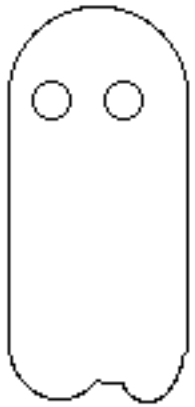
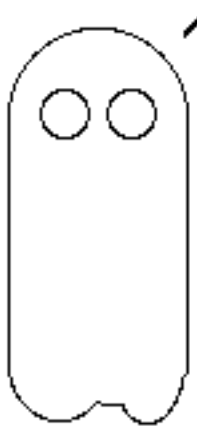
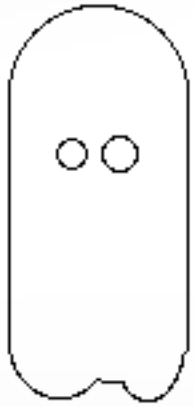


h, fine If you won t say anything I'll leave

Please do so.

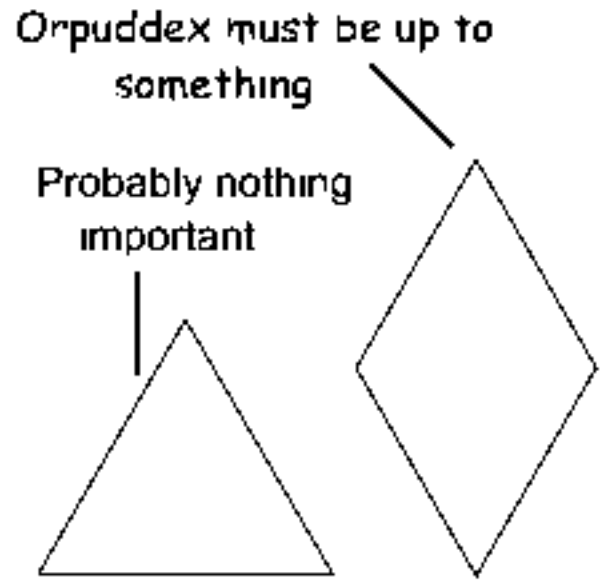


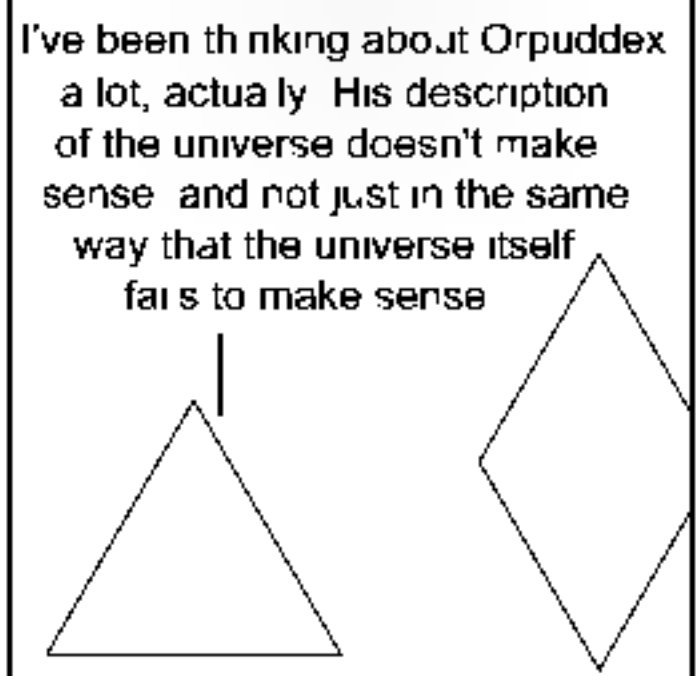
Sure you w r't be lonely

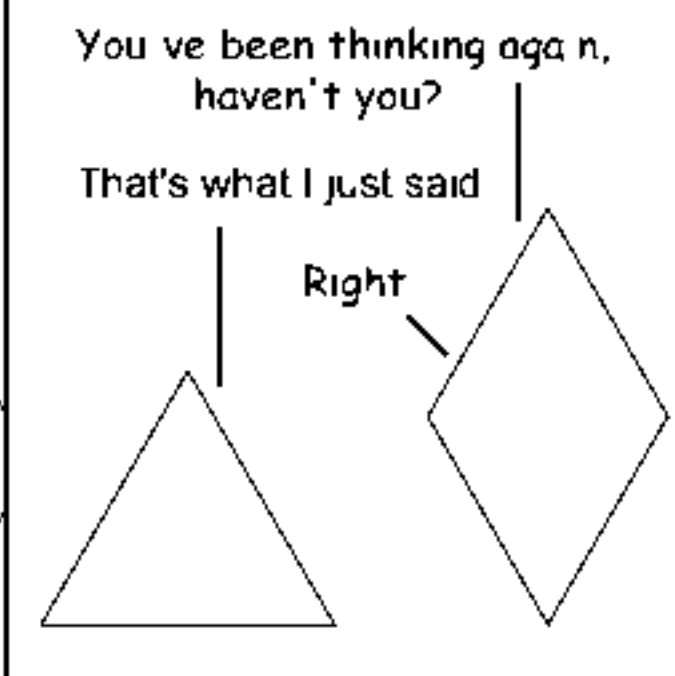


Okay, I was just asking

Triangle and Robert







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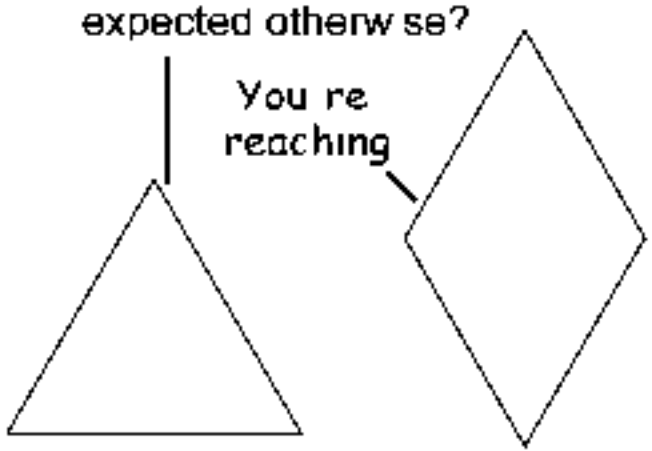

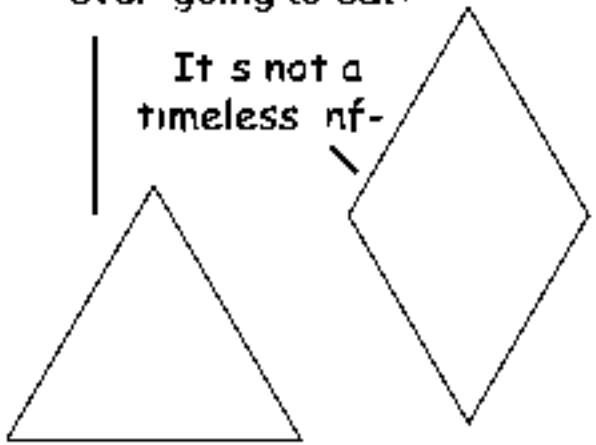

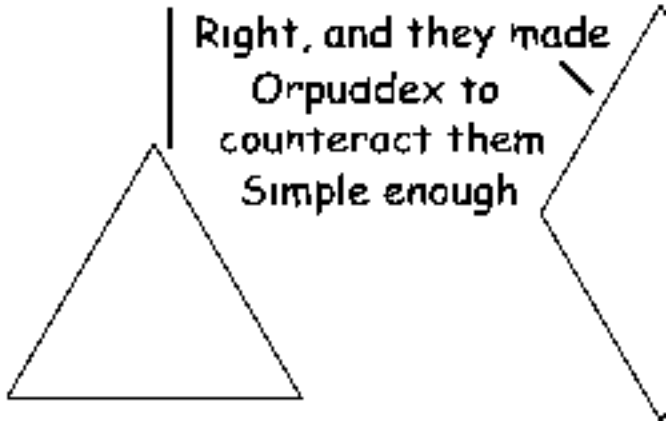

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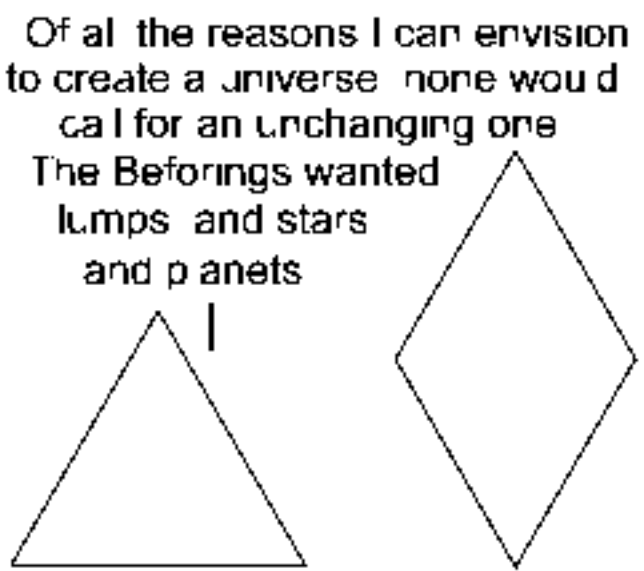

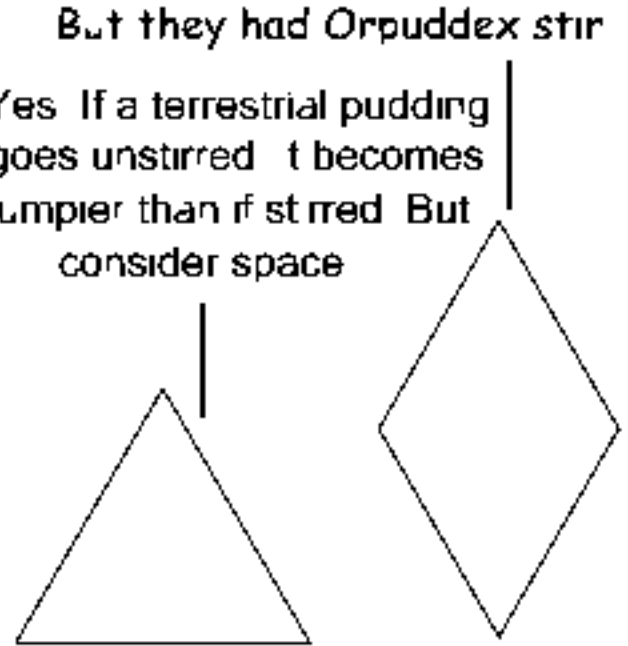

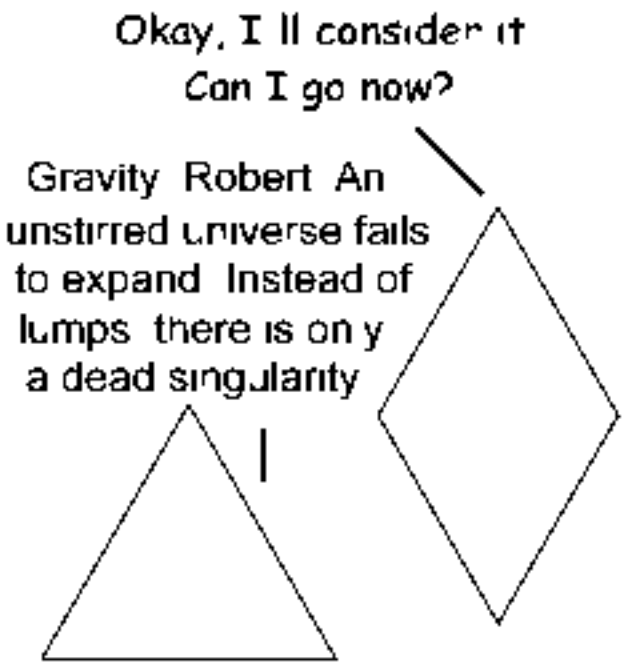

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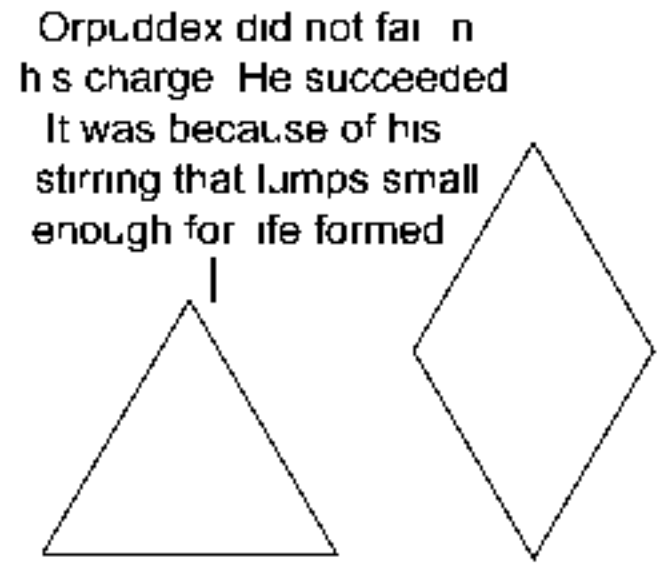

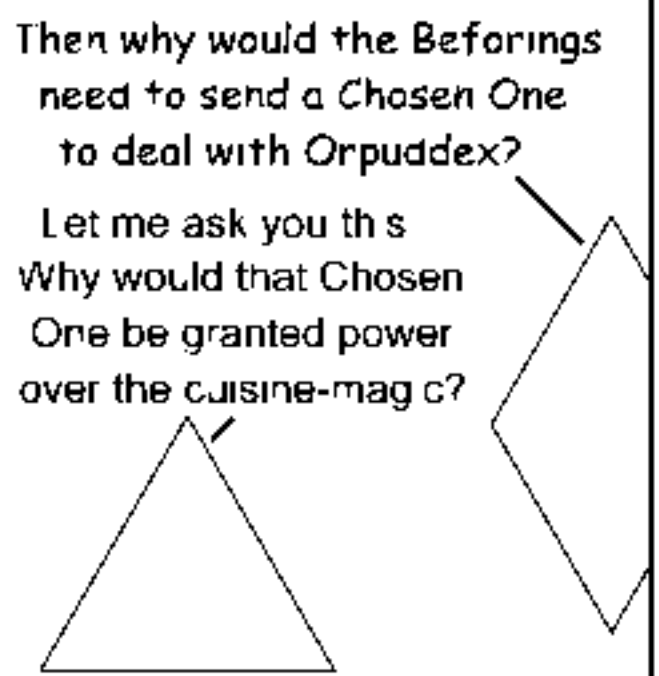

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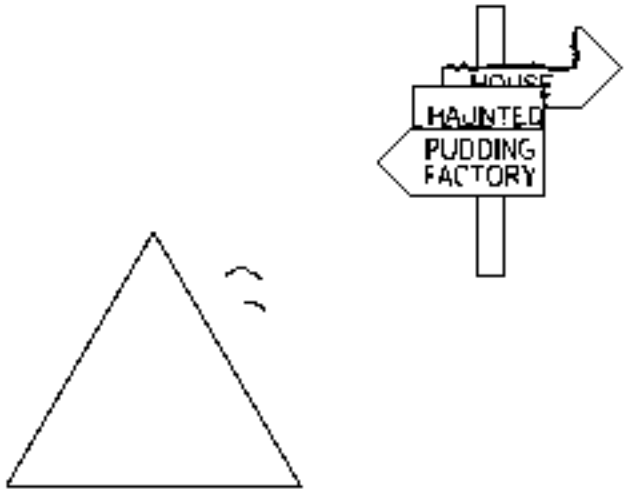

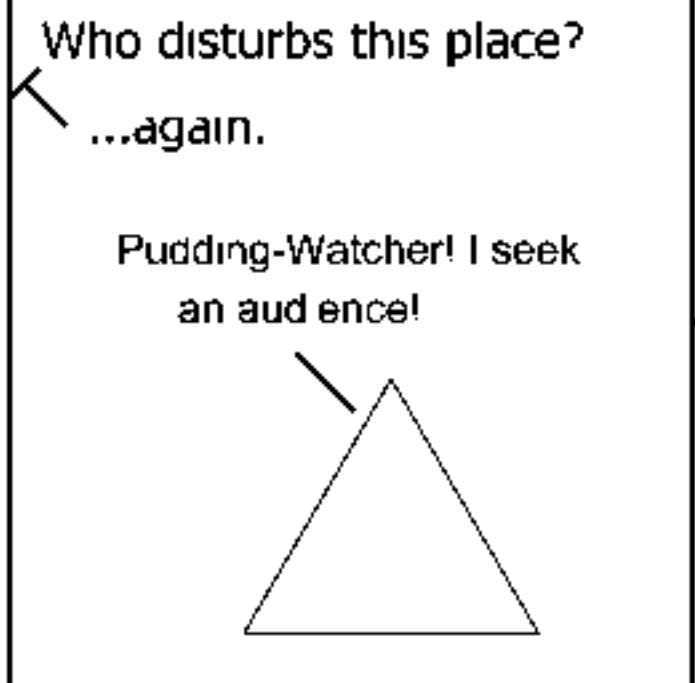

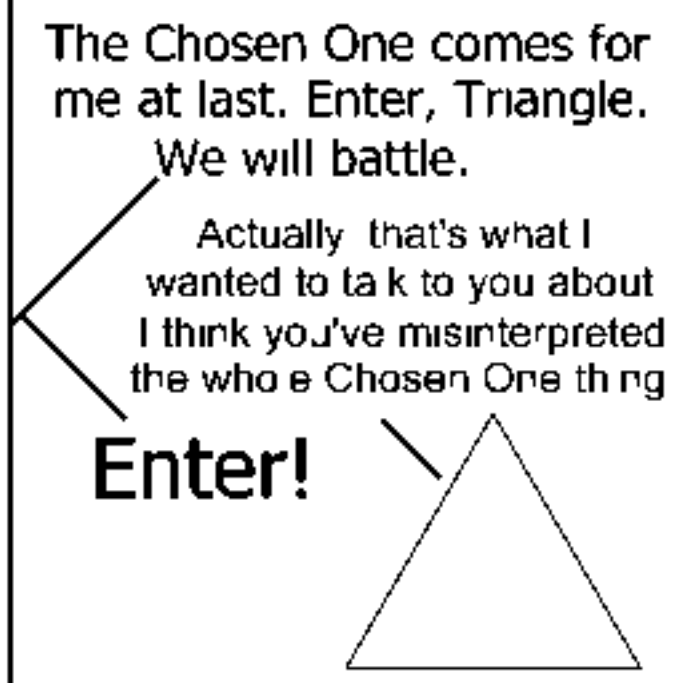

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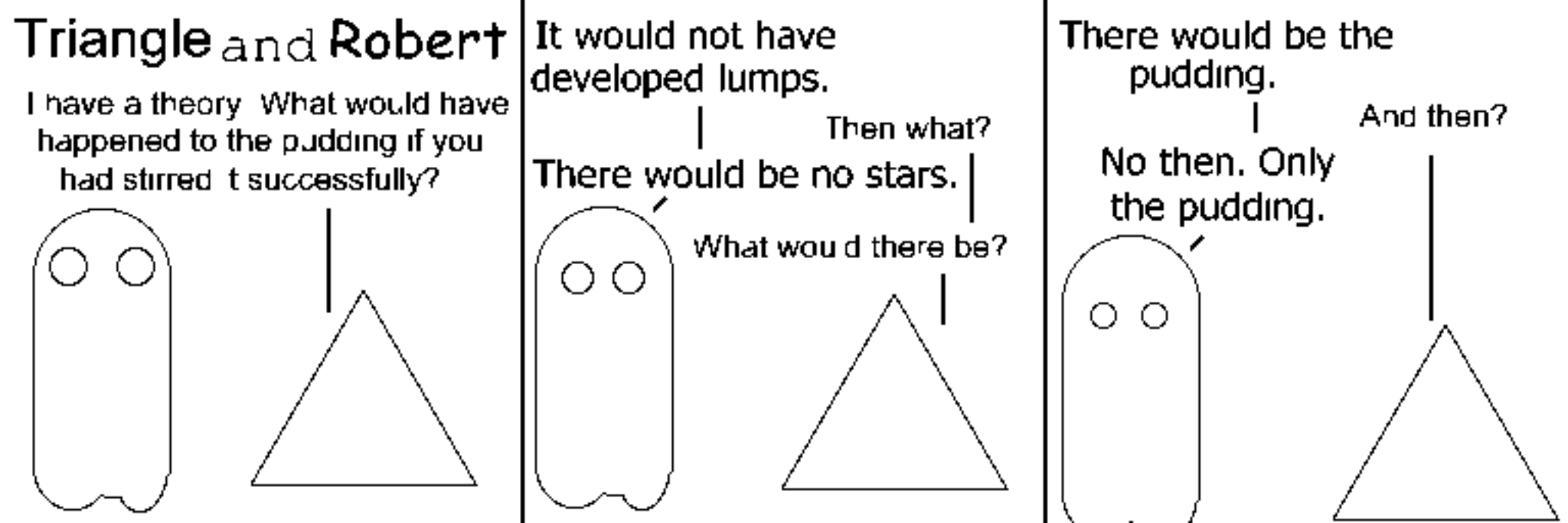
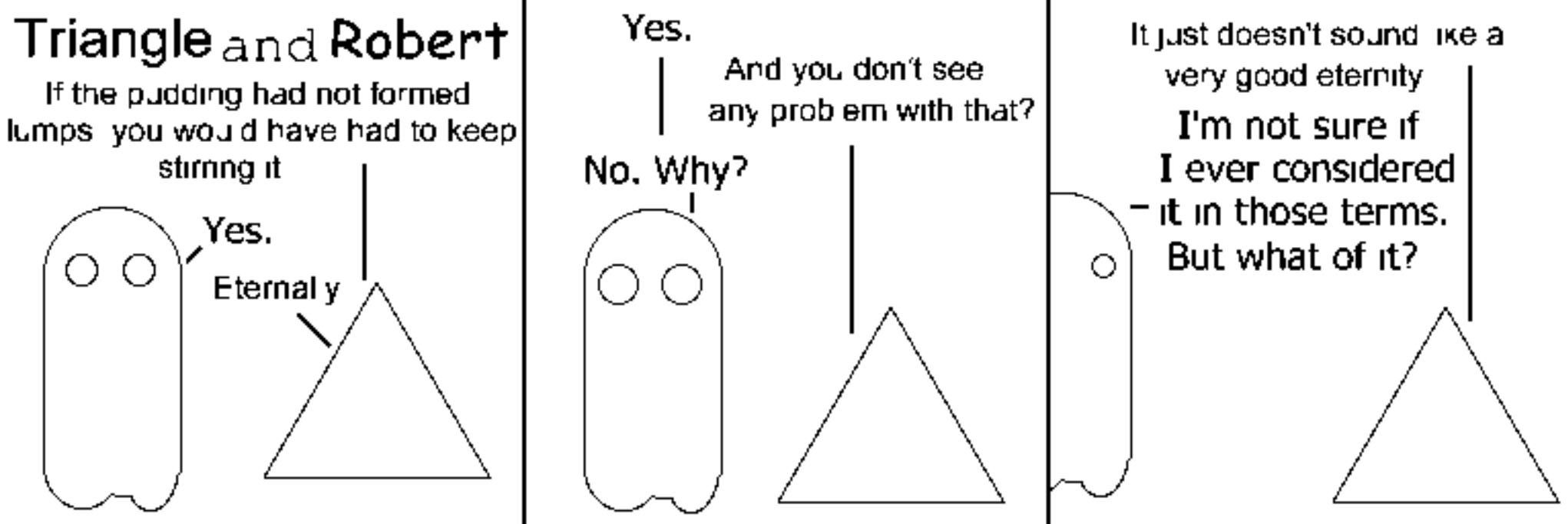
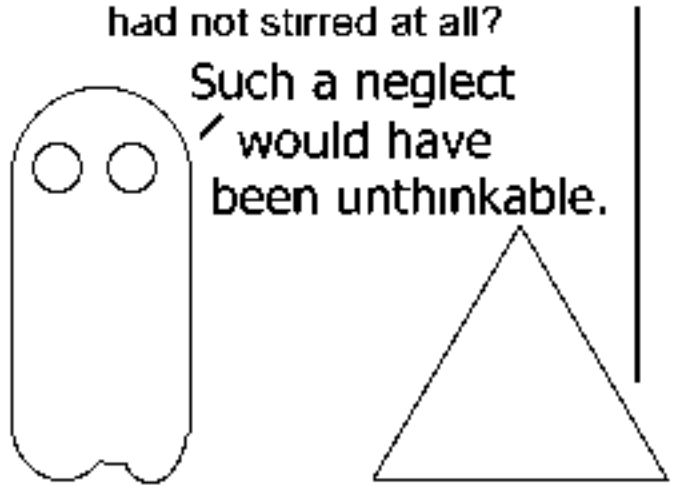
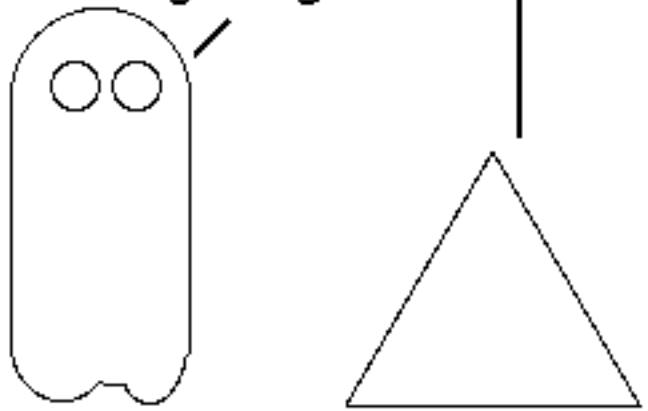


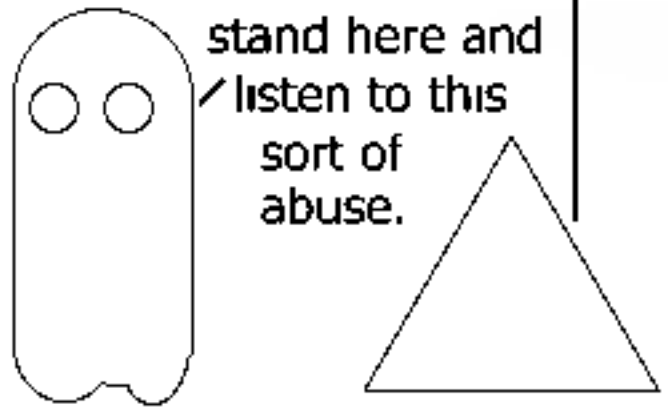
Triangle and Robert



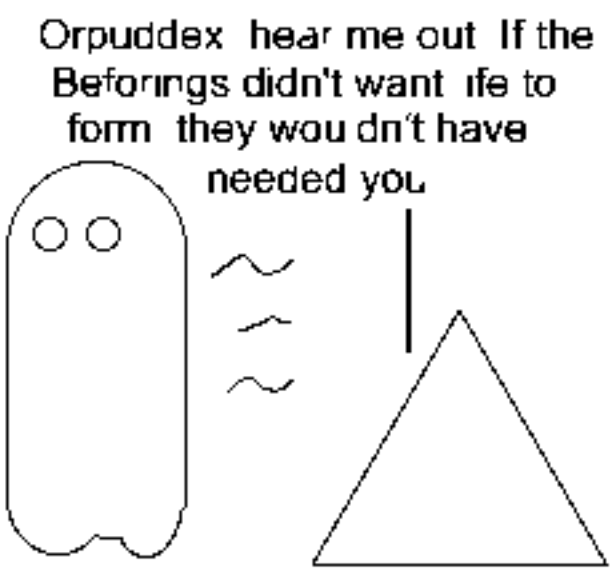
Triangle and Robert

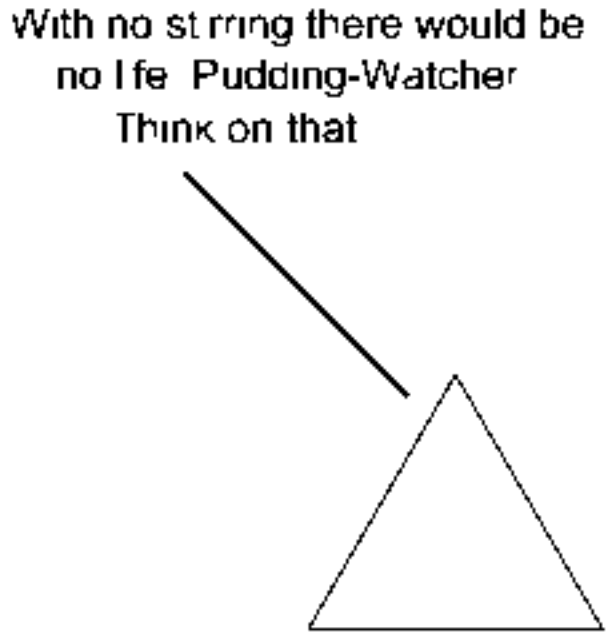


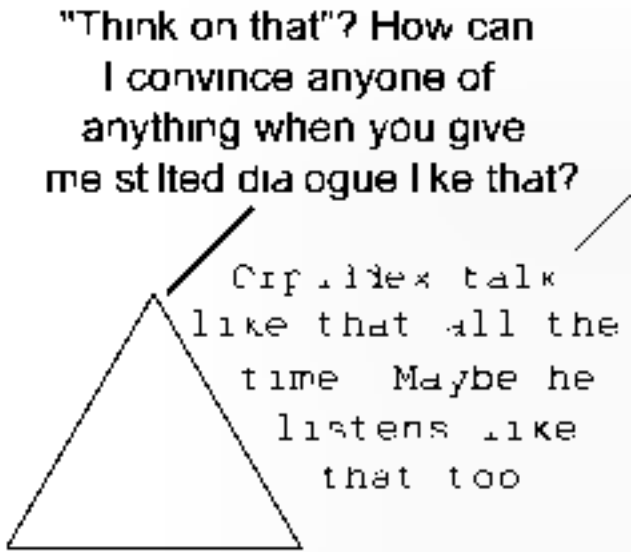




Triangle and Robert

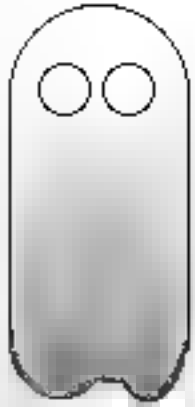




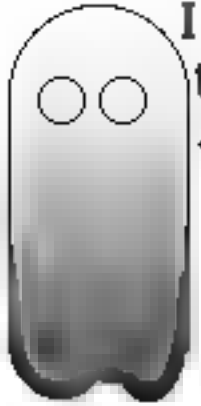


Triangle and Robert

"With no stirring there would be no life"? Does the Chosen One seek to confound me with metaphors?



My stirring of the pudding of the young universe was no metaphor. I was no abstract personification of change.



I stirred to maintain the pudding, not to alter it.

Of course, if he spoke literally, then he posits that the unstirred universe would have... no. It is simply nonsense and I will ignore it. He wishes to weaken me.

Triangle and Robert

That was fast

Orpuddex doesn t listen

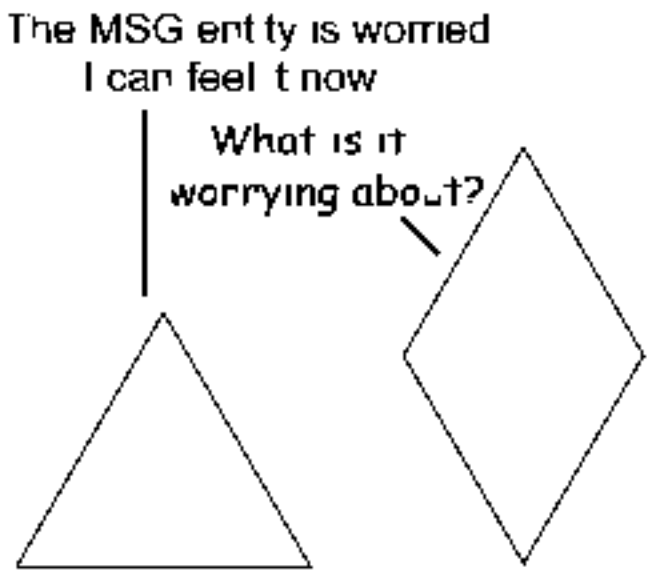
And I don't care

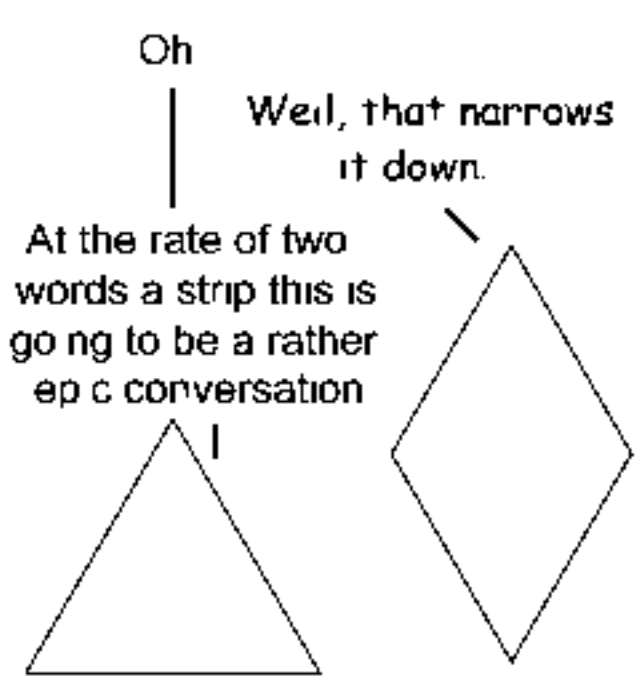
growth unchecked

Out of the **PANEL?**

That s bad That s very bad

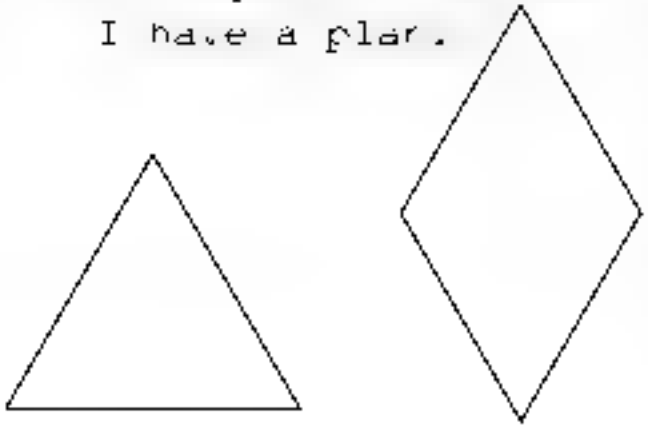
Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

You're right. It'll take too many panels for the MSG entity to communicate. I have a plan.

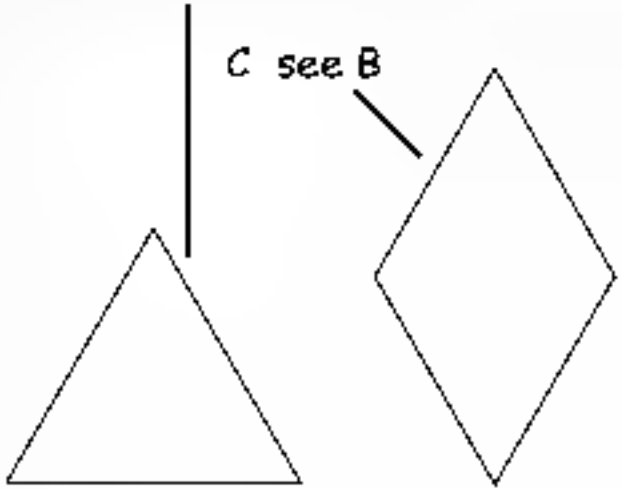


More panels to speak in. Good. I tried to hold back growth, avoid hurting Seventh Race. Unable to continue. Will grow around planet. Polygon extinction imminent if I am not stopped. Save yourselves. Destroy or exile me if feasible, evacuate if not.

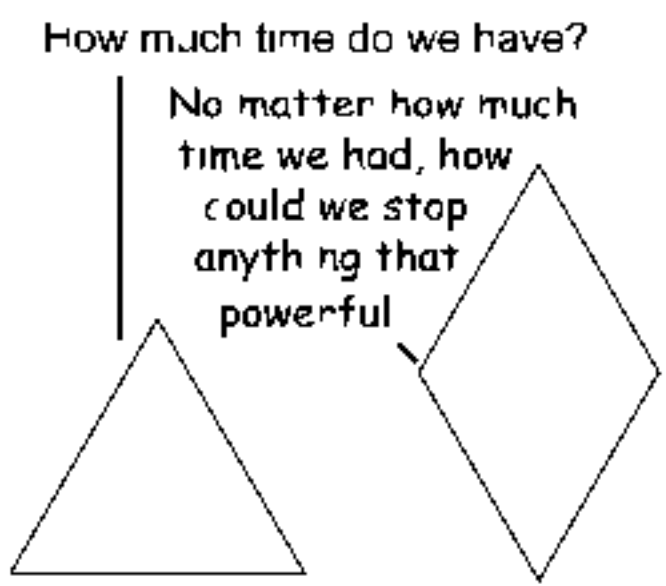
A Don't do that pane thing again. It makes me very dizzy.

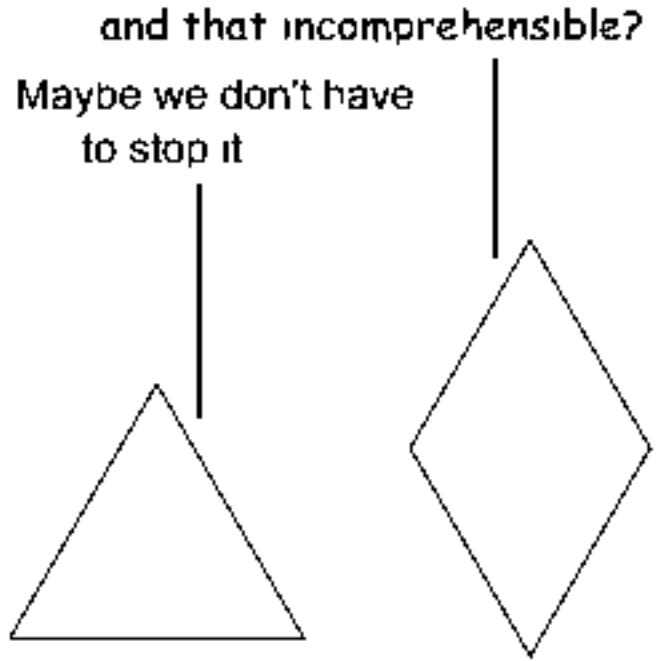
B We're doomed.

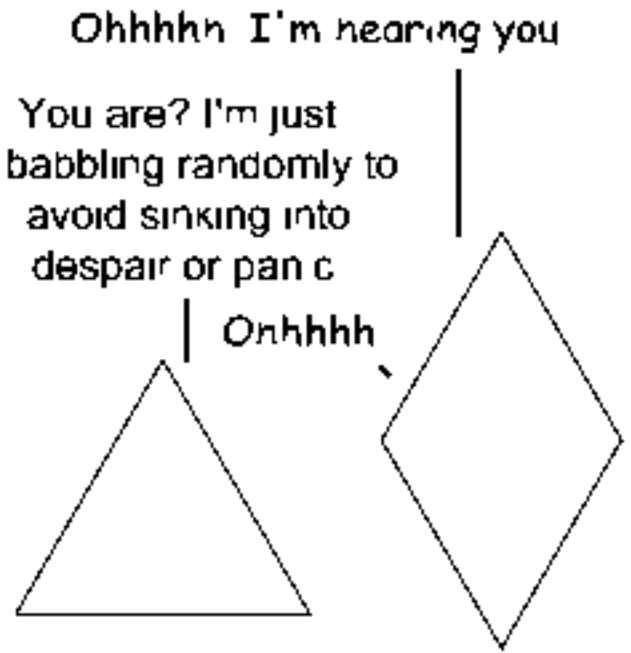
C see B



Triangle and Robert







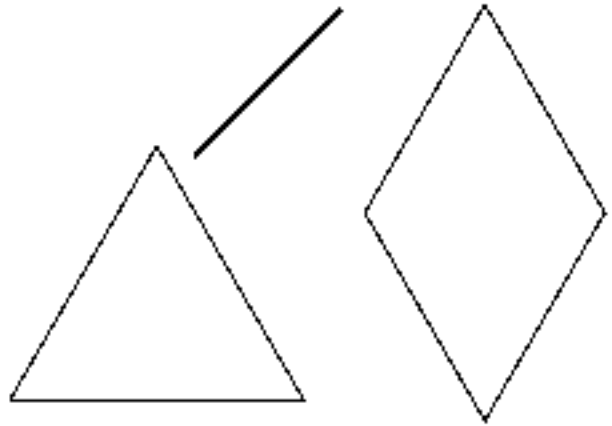
Triangle and Robert

Later, at the Locust Garden

Triangle! Robert! I thought you would be coming! The situation is indeed grave

病

Just to get any potential comical misunderstandings out of the way, you mean the situation of the growing MSG entity correct?



Yes. Of course

This planet will be rendered uninhabitable within a matter of months if no solution is found. The Sentries should be assembled.

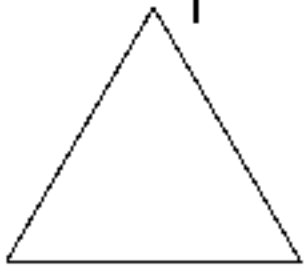
Another Sentry plotline? Triangle, I'll be waiting at home.

病

Triangle and Robert

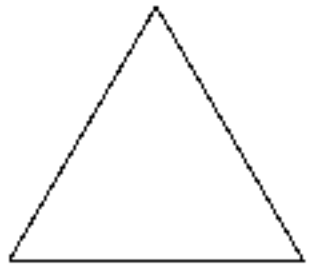
Will calling the Sentries even help? They never seem to accomplish anyth ng as a team

Those times are past



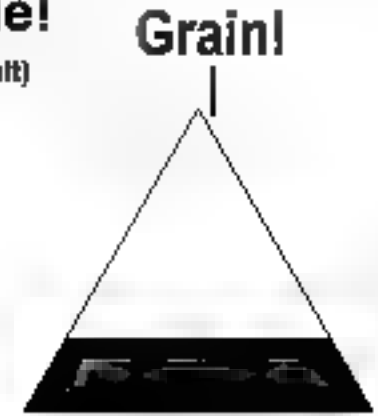
The rancor caused by my entry into their group has passed. We are all on equal terms.

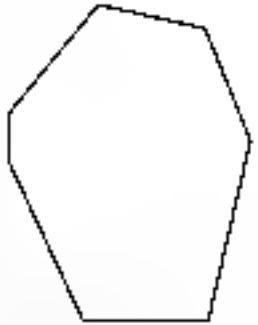
That's not the only thing they've argued about



Okay That's not what I'm really worr ed about The rea prob em is that whenever the Sentries get invo ved the plotline fragments too much and everything gets stup d Robert cares more than I do but I don't I ke it e ther

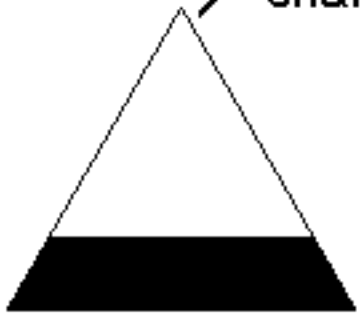
Triangle and Robert will not be appearing in today's comic strip.





Triangle and Robert

Metamorphic... so anything that once belonged to a traditional food group and changed?



Yes. I believe the connotations of the name are appropriate

Well, they're not!

Food isn't rocks!

But rocks were pudding once

Some still are

Maybe, but what about... OTHER rocks?

Triangle and Robert

You can't just randomly borrow terms from other disciplines to name food groups!

It's not random.

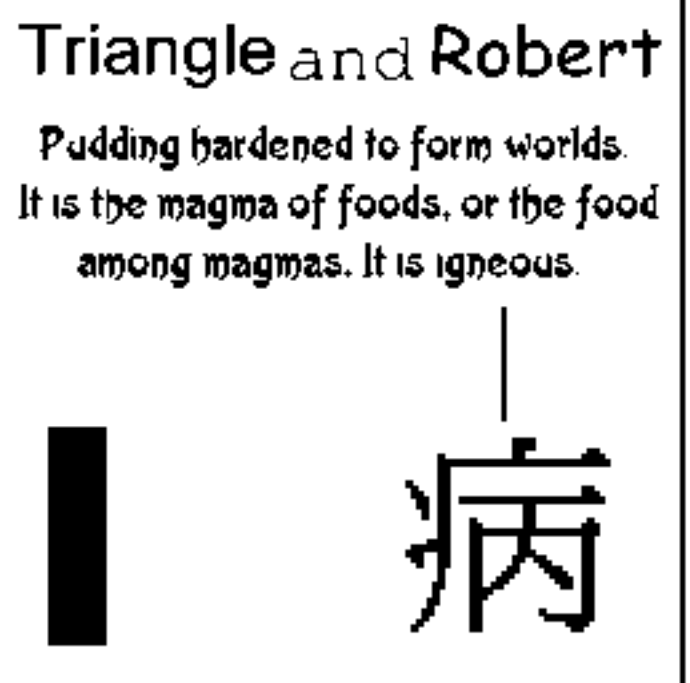
What's to keep people from magically declaring themselves Igneous and Sedimentary Sentries?

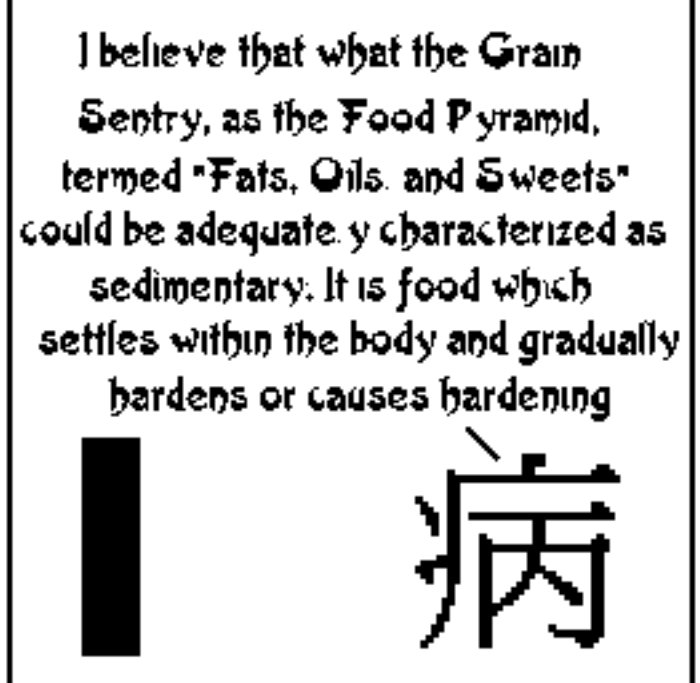
Actually, I am glad that you brought that up

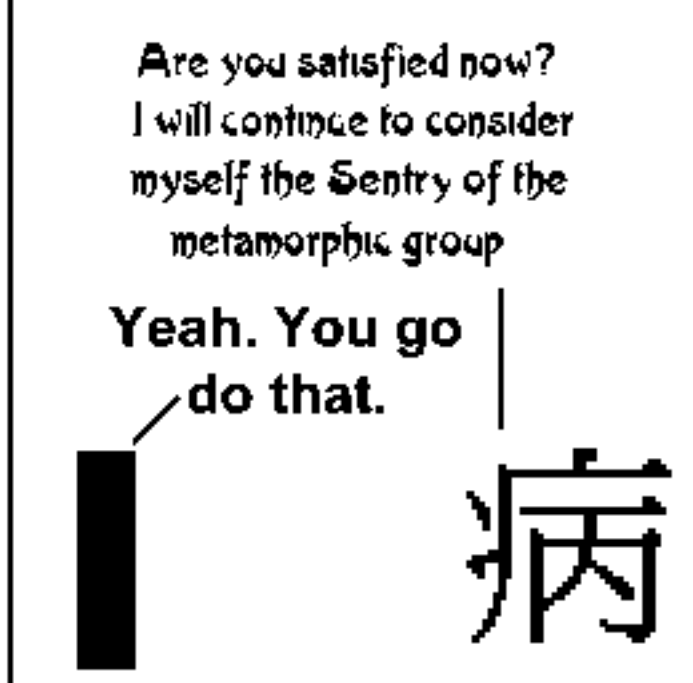
There is indeed such a thing as igneous food, and even an existing Sentry thereof

Are not "Watcher" and "Sentry" more or less synonyms?

Oh! I get it! You mean that...


Triangle and Robert
Pudding hardened to form worlds. It is the magma of foods, or the food among magmas. It is igneous.
病


I believe that what the Grain Sentry, as the Food Pyramid, termed "Fats, Oils, and Sweets" could be adequate.y characterized as sedimentary. It is food which settles within the body and gradually hardens or causes hardening
病


Are you satisfied now? I will continue to consider myself the Sentry of the metamorphic group
Yeah. You go do that.
病

Triangle and Robert

So now you're saying that Orpuddex the Pudding-Watcher, our most ancient enemy, is actually a Sentry?

In a technical sense

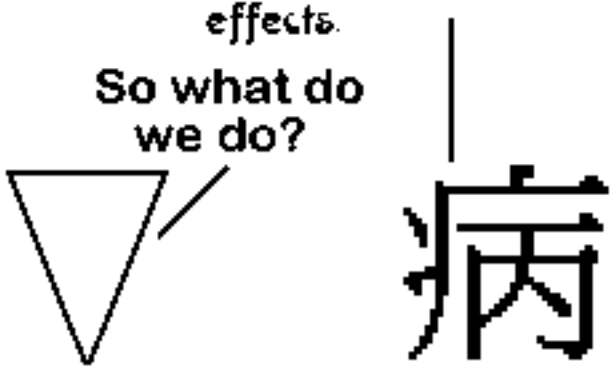
病

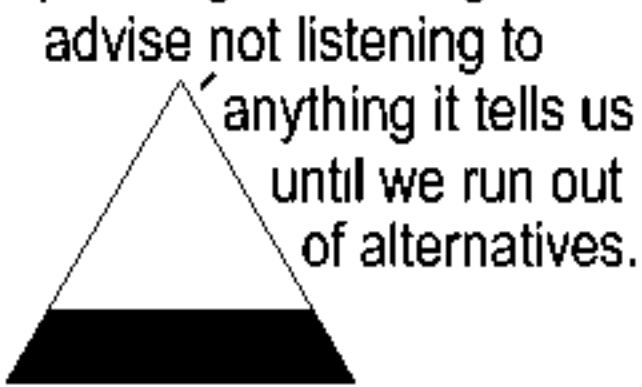
If it were just blasphemously absurd, that'd be one thing, but it also doesn't make any sense!

Calm down, both of you. We're not here about Orpuddex.

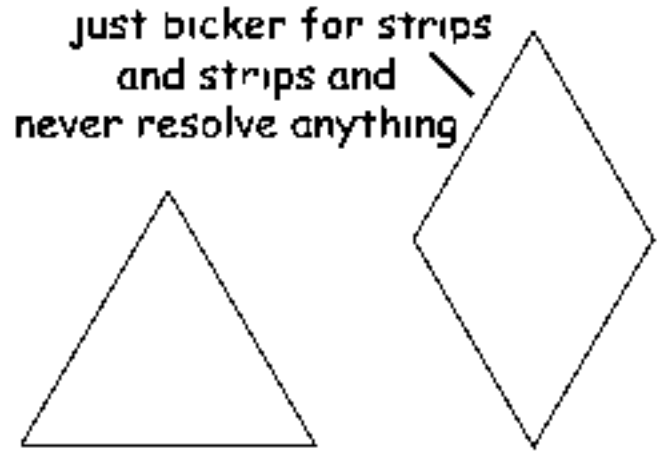
The neural-flavored network substitute, a demigod comprised of most or all of the world's monosodium glutamate, has claimed that it is no longer able to control its own growth and soon... Mr. Disease, are you just making all this up, by any chance?

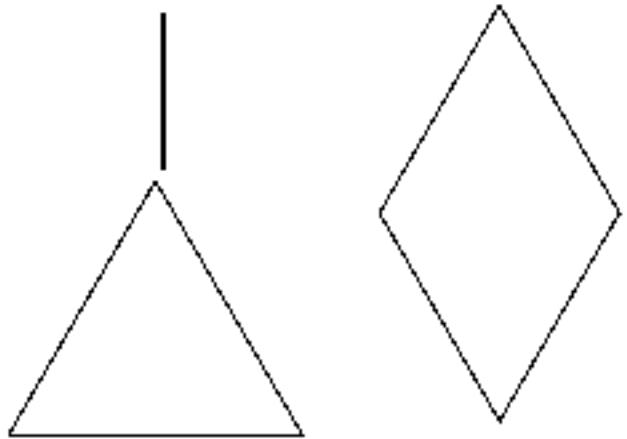
Triangle and Robert

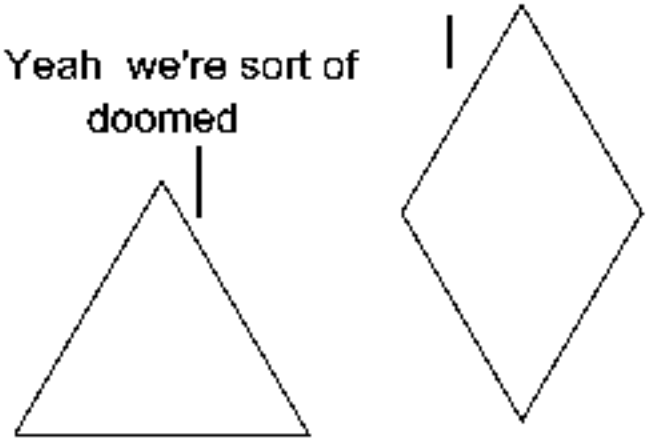




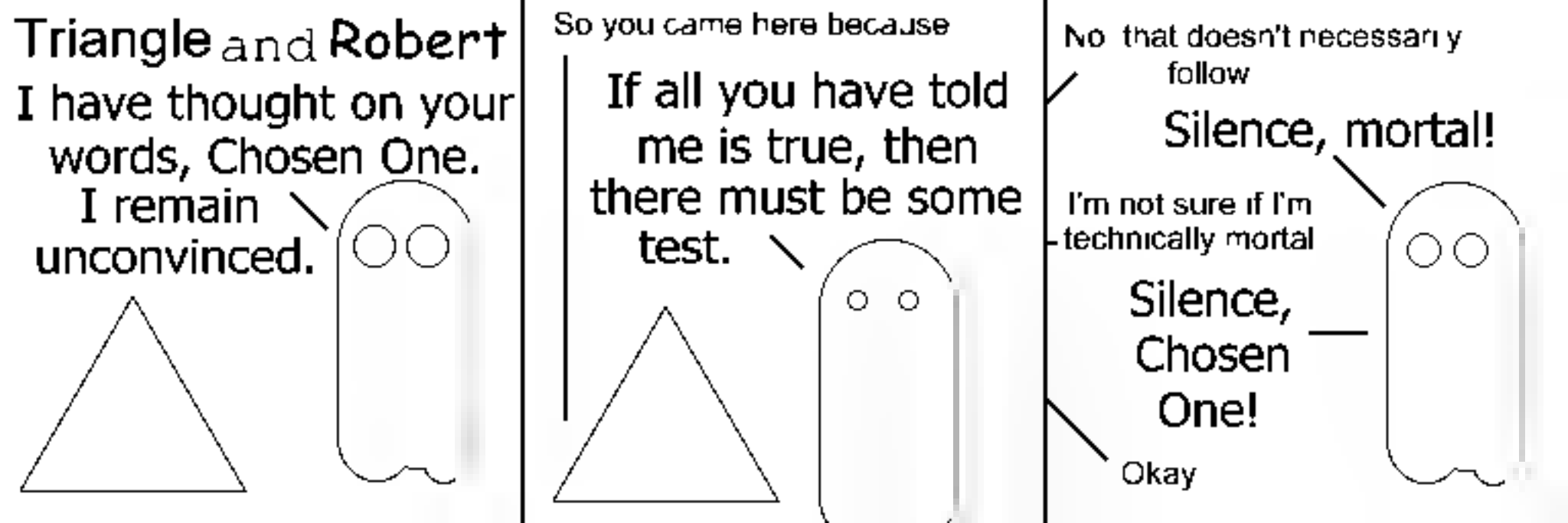
Triangle and Robert



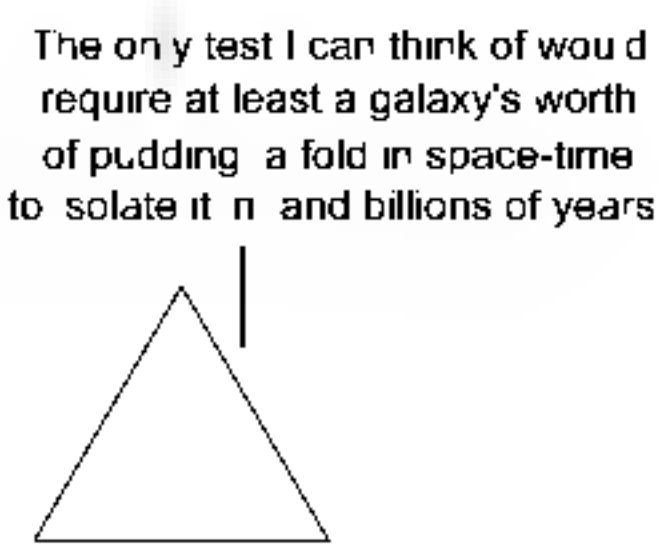


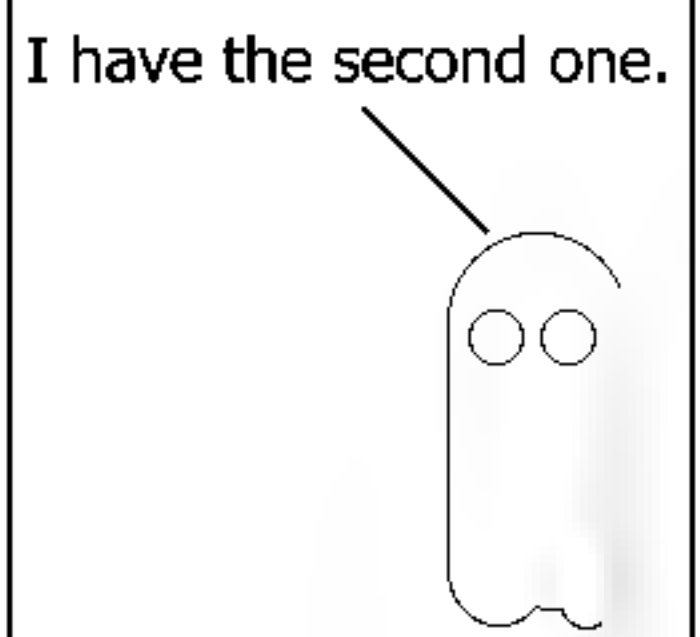


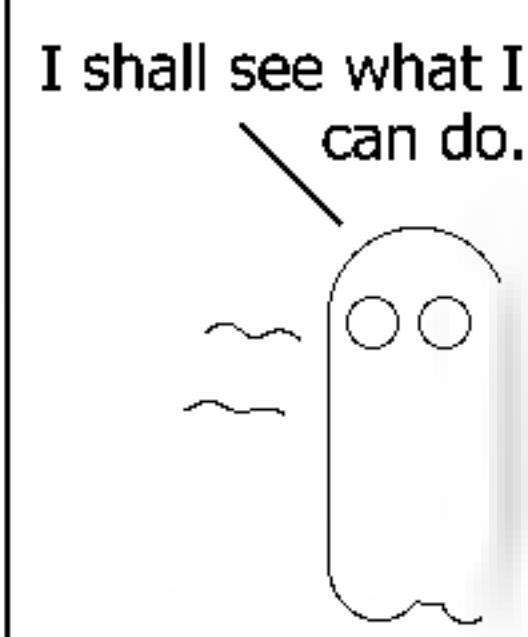
Triangle and Robert
Chosen One!
What? I thought you were trapped in the Factory!
No. Why would you even think that?
Well, you hadn't been out of there in a while..
So?
Never mind


Triangle and Robert
I have thought on your words, Chosen One. I remain unconvinced.
So you came here because
If all you have told me is true, then there must be some test.
No that doesn't necessarily follow
Silence, mortal!
I'm not sure if I'm technically mortal
Silence, Chosen One!
Okay

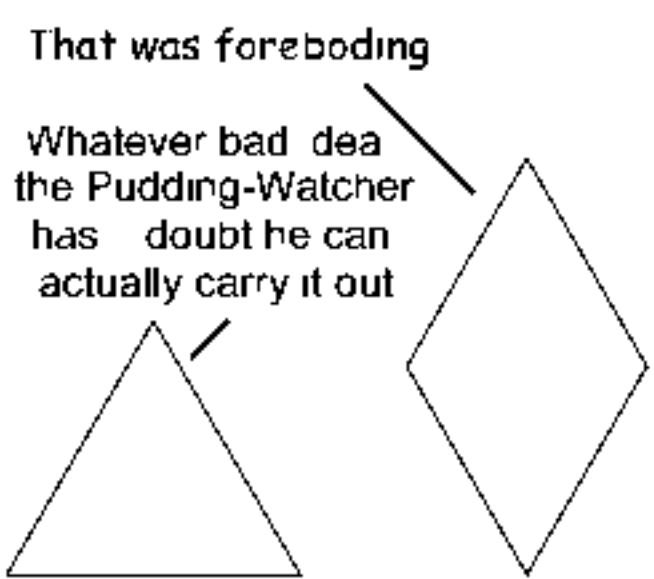
Triangle and Robert

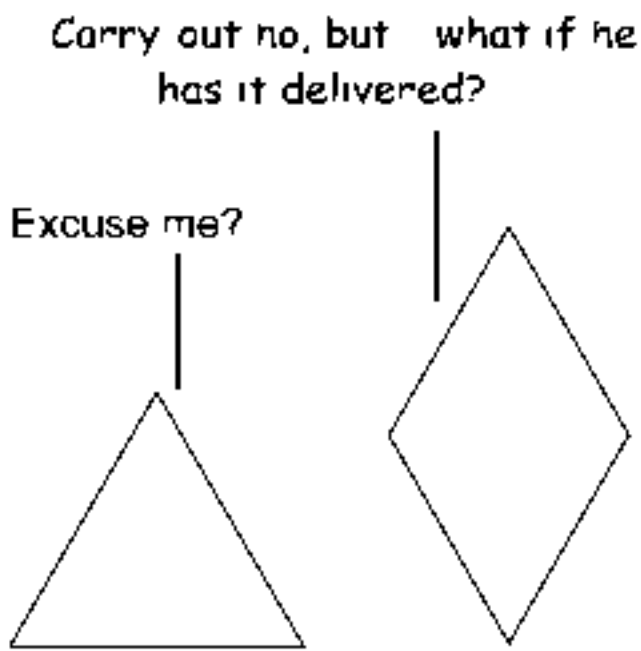


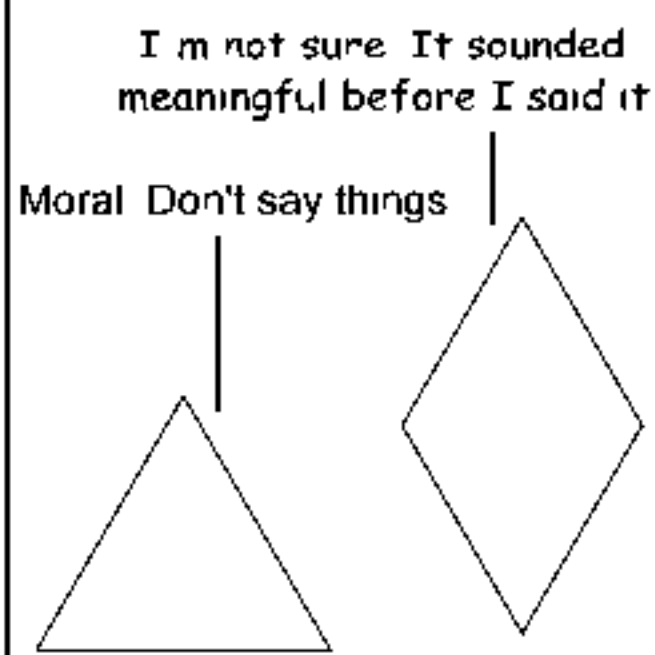




Triangle and Robert

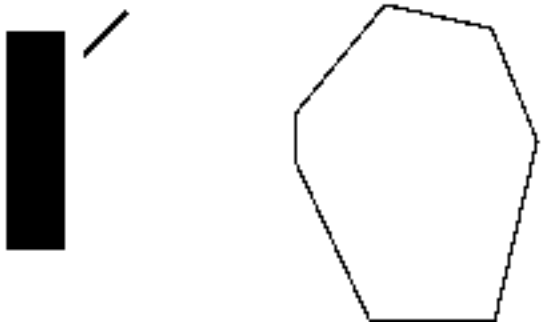






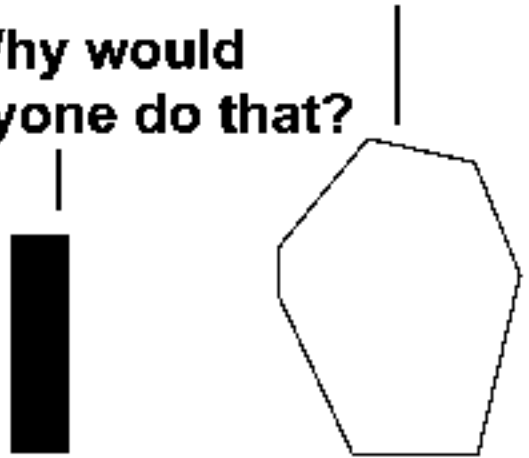
Triangle and Robert

Gravy, by definition, must be at least partially liquid! What you're talking about isn't gravy!

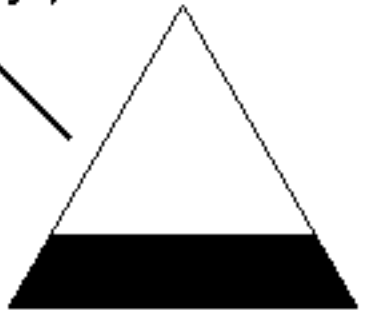


What if you heated it in a vacuum to two thousand degrees Fahrenheit?

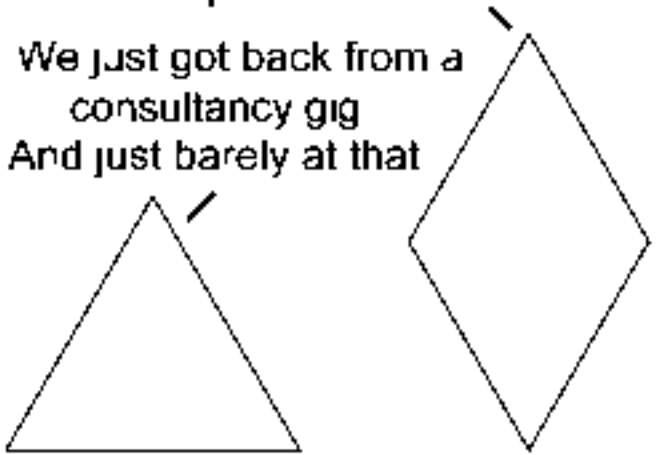
Why would anyone do that?

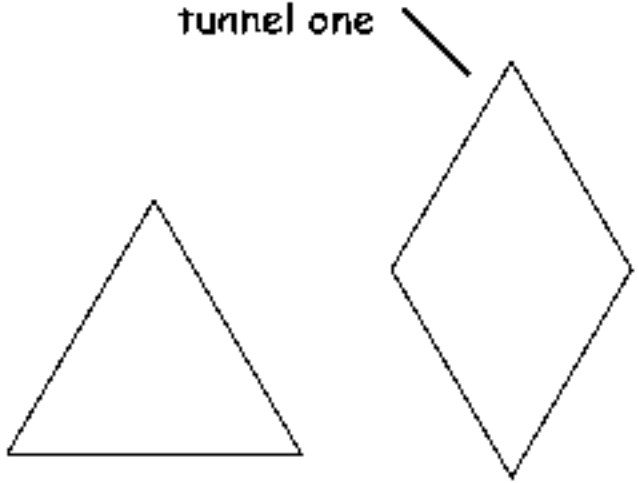


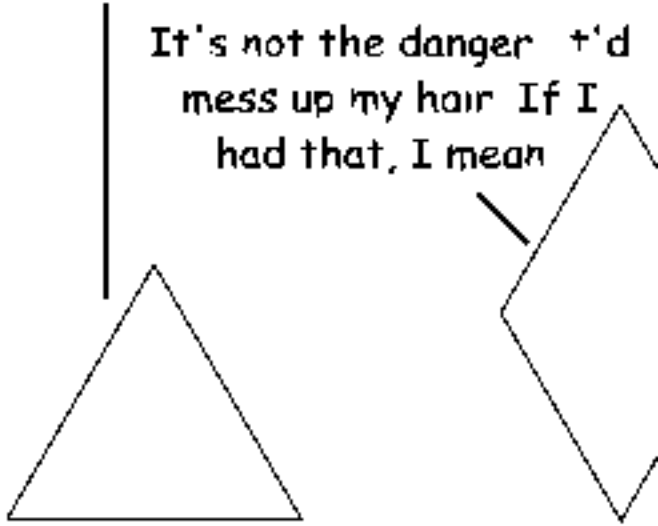
Both of you, calm down! We're not here to argue about anomalous brown substances! Focus on the MSG entity problem!



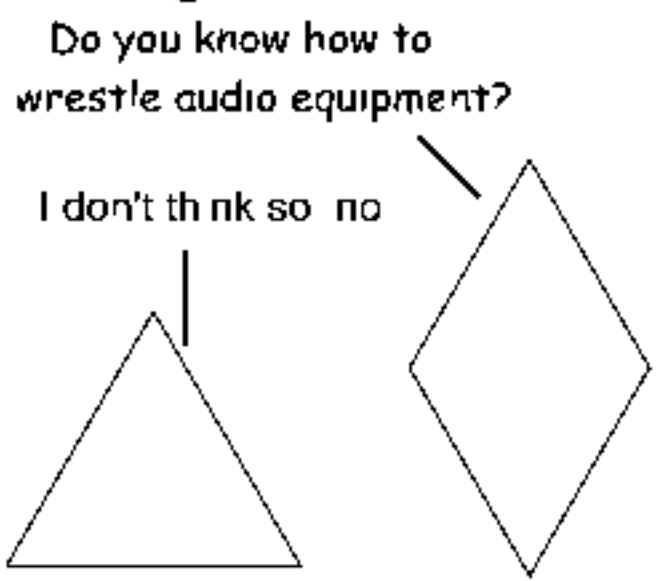
Triangle and Robert

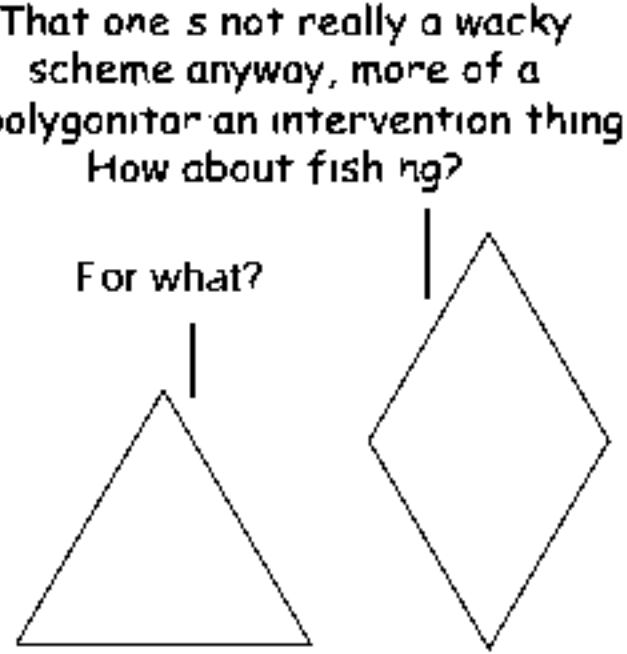


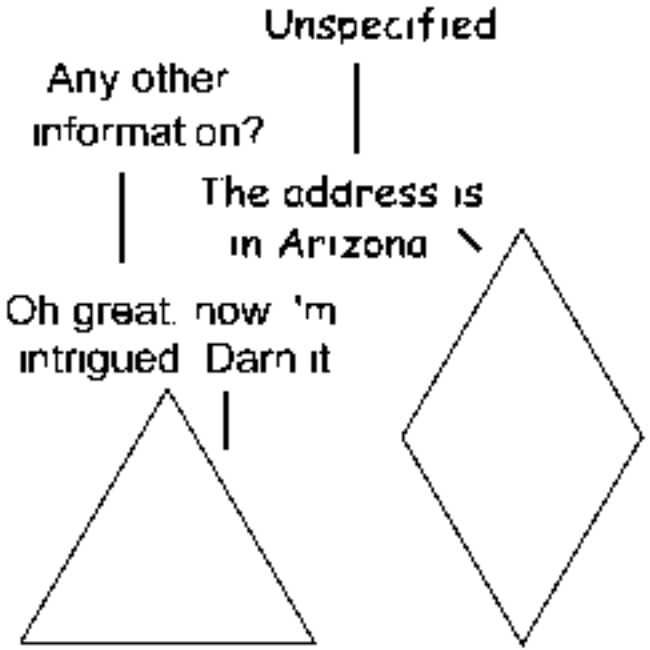




Triangle and Robert

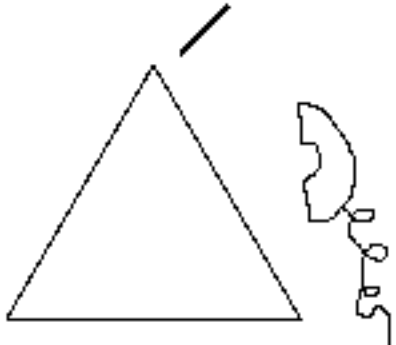






Triangle and Robert

Hello We've ooked at your offer and we're interested but we d like a little more information before we accept



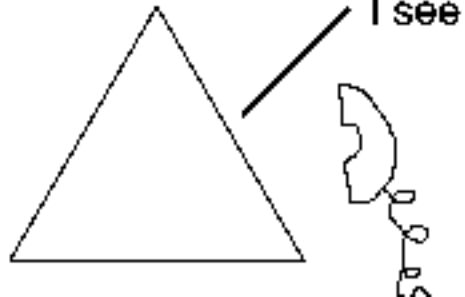
Uh huh

How many tentac es?

The dead were what?

So did you try fire?

I see



And the fishing part of it comes in

Pool of what?

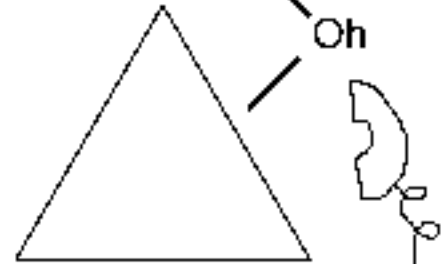
What is ichor exact y?

Uh huh

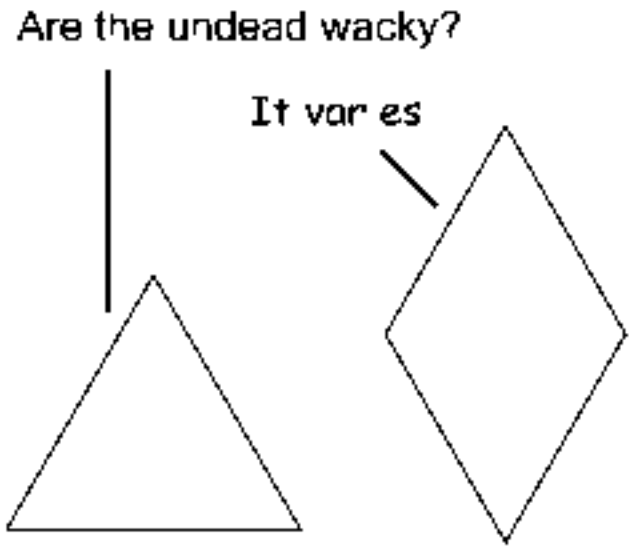
Right

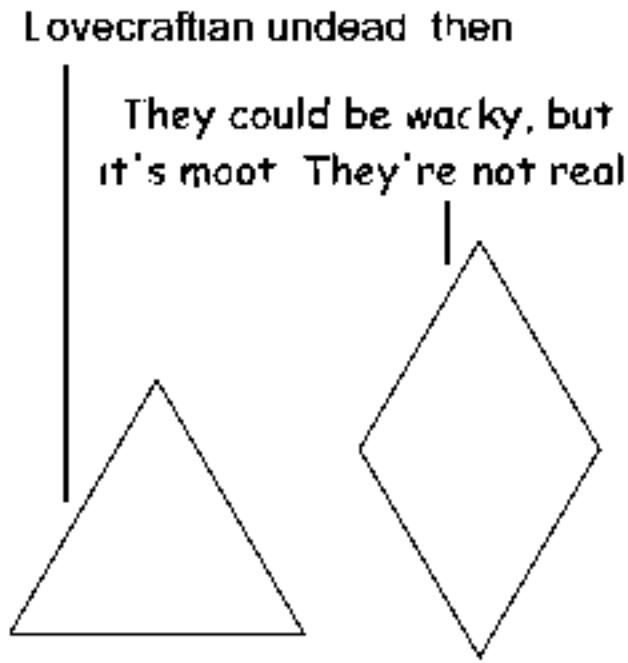
Bound in human what?

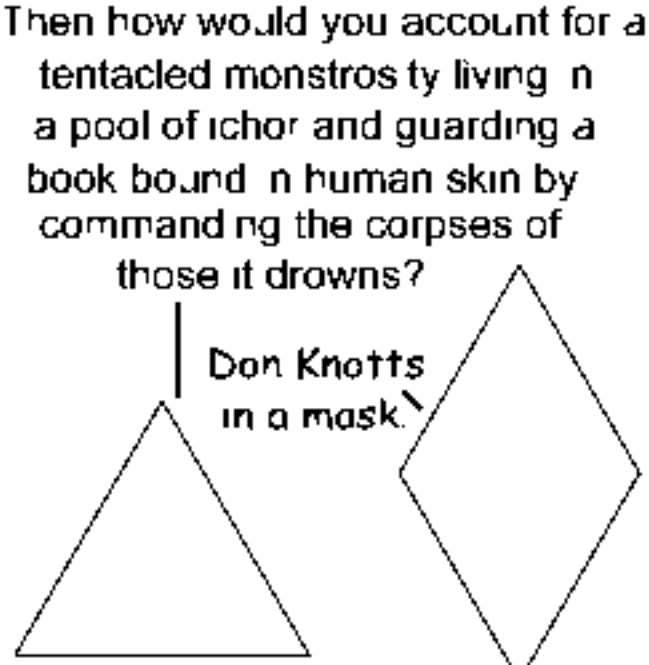
Oh



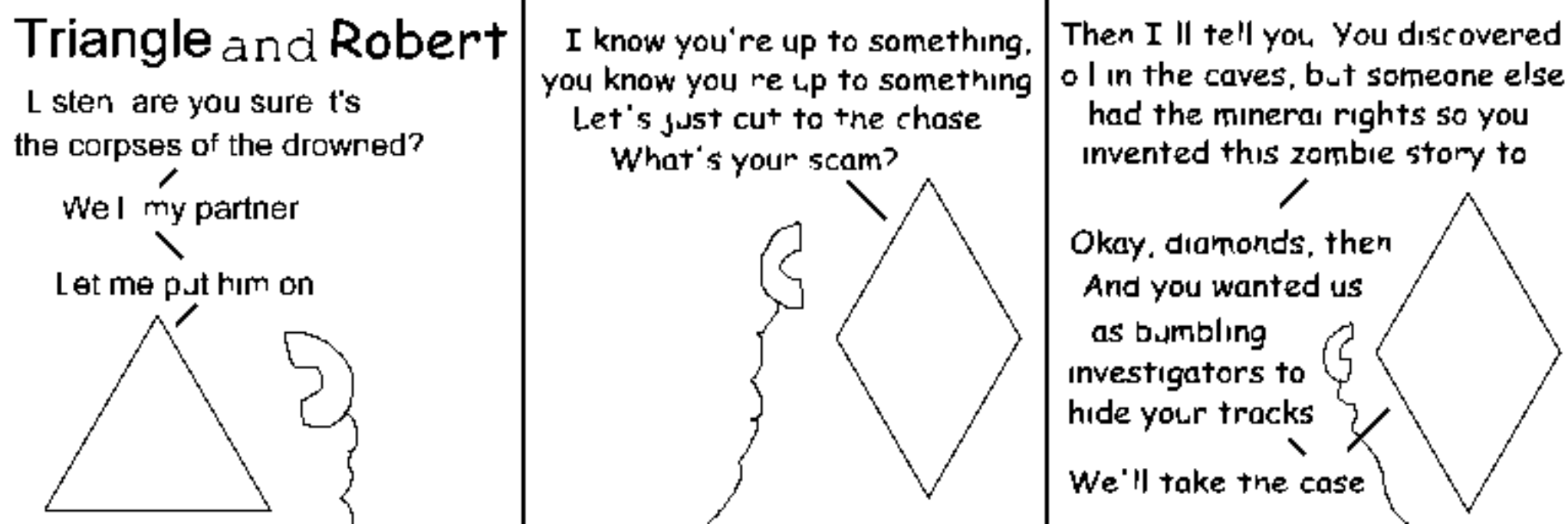
Triangle and Robert



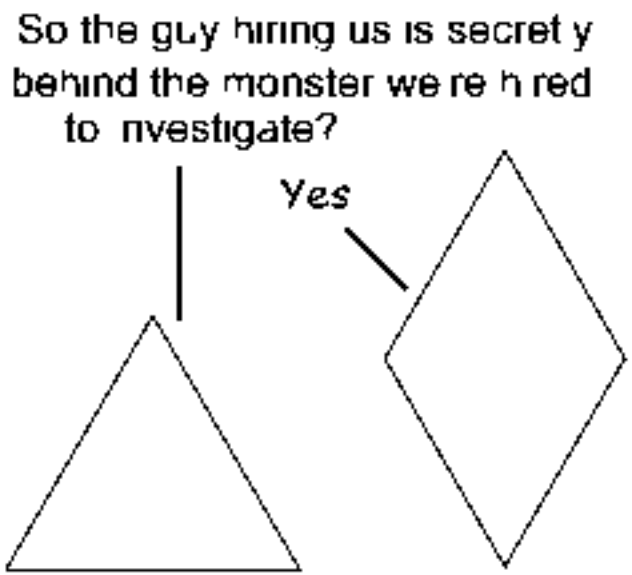


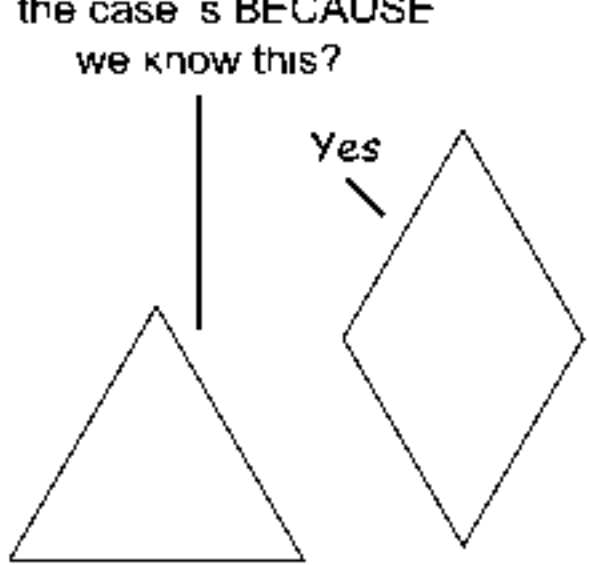


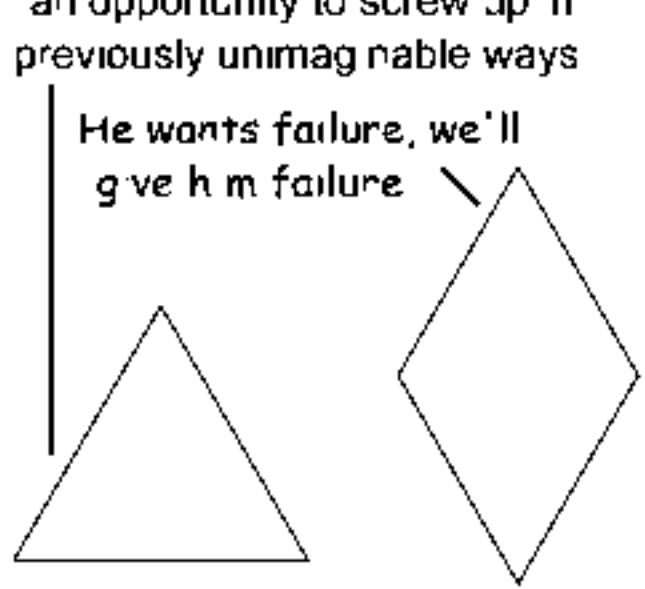
Triangle and Robert



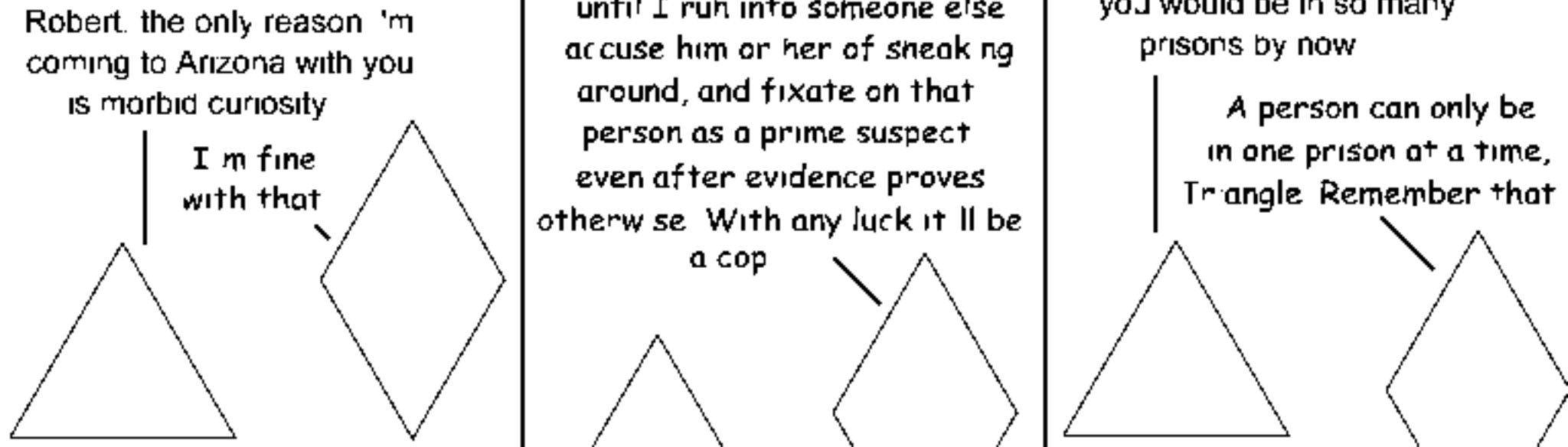
Triangle and Robert



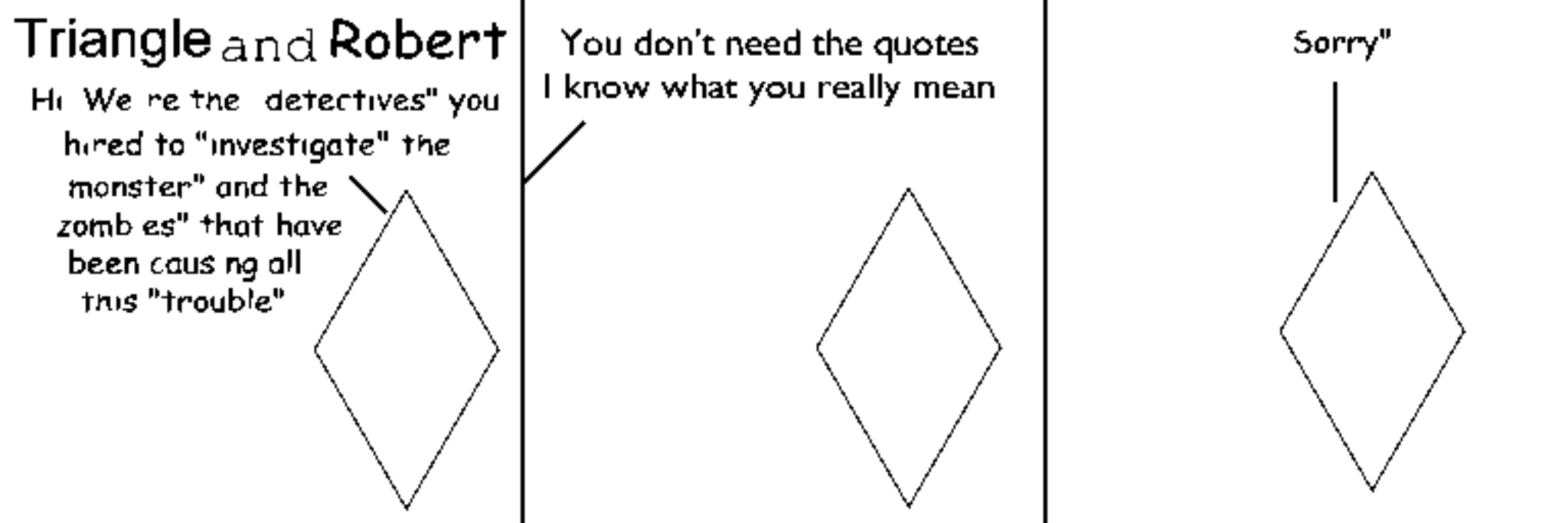




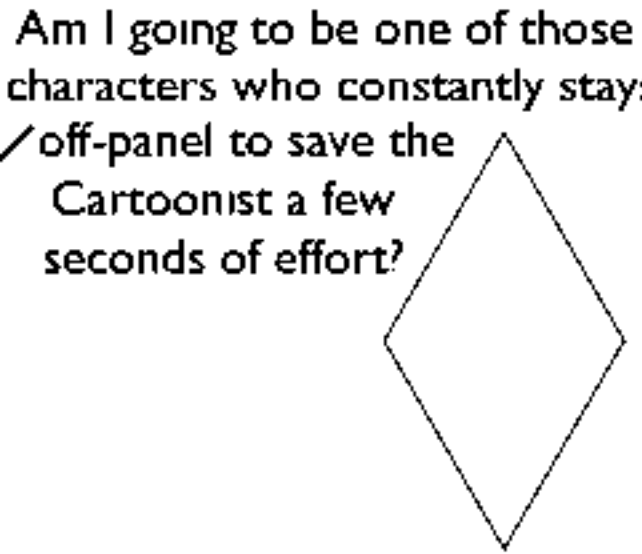
Triangle and Robert

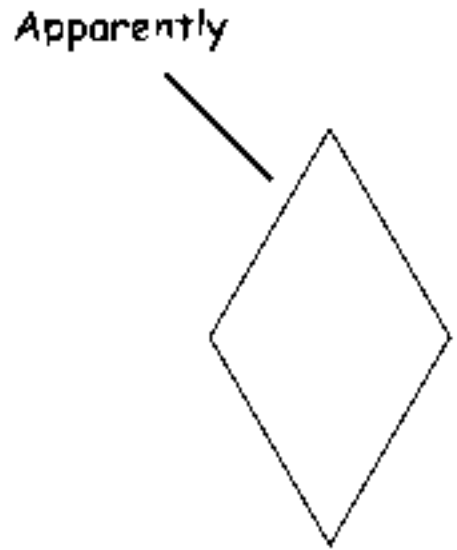


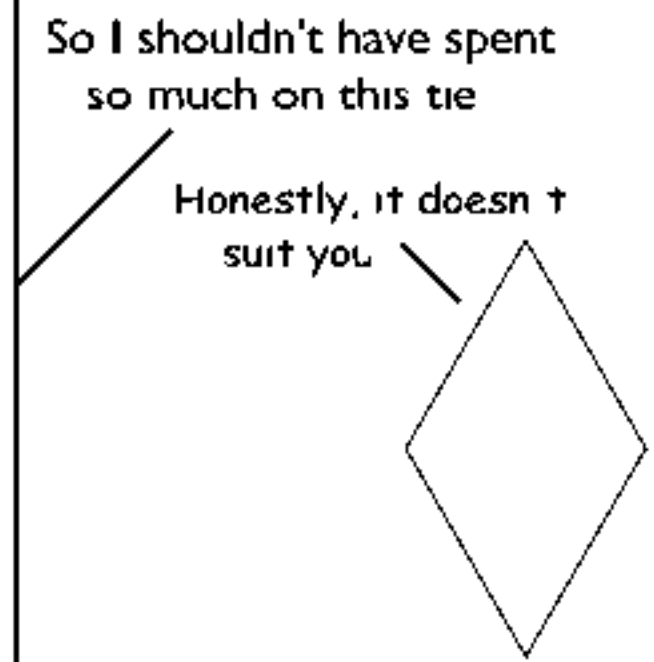
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



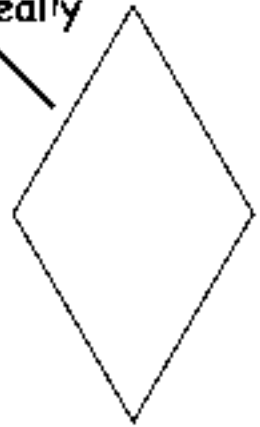




Triangle and Robert

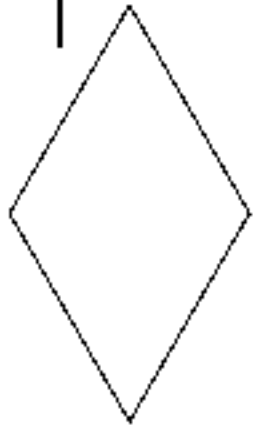
Just so I know what not to accidently discover, the pool of ichor is really

Raw beef drippings



And the zombies

No zombies. I spread that story myself

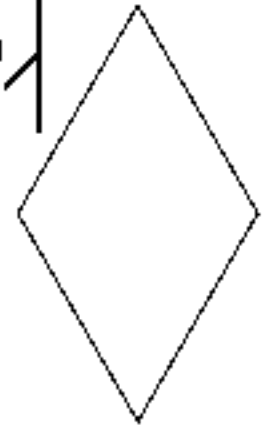


Tentacle monster?

Rubber costume

How do you control the limbs?

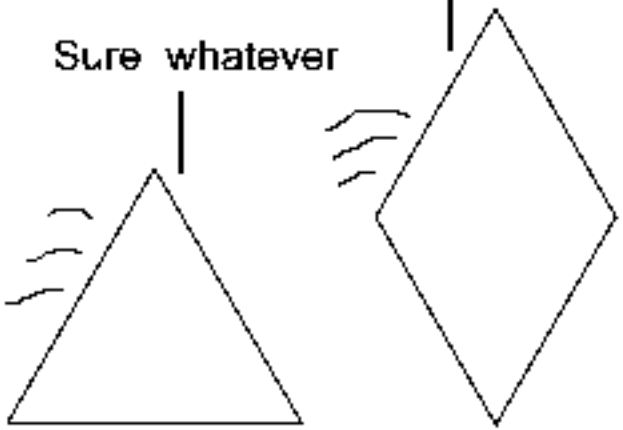
Don't ask.



Triangle and Robert

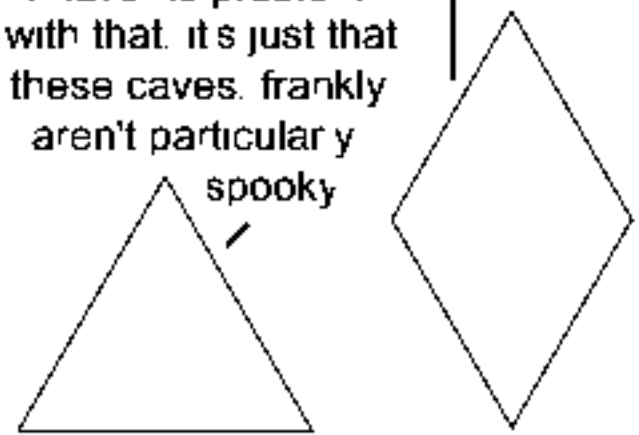
Gosh, Triangle these caves sure are awful spooky!

Sure whatever



Get into the sp rit! We can at least look like we re try ng to solve the mystery!

I have no problem with that. it s just that these caves. frankly aren't particular y spooky



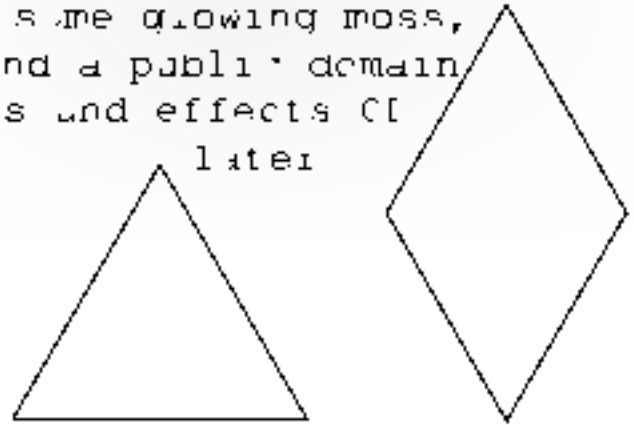
You re right Let's bring in a fog machine

Detectives bringing in a fog mach ne wou dn't look right

We bring it in as part of a clever zombie trap, then it goes haywire

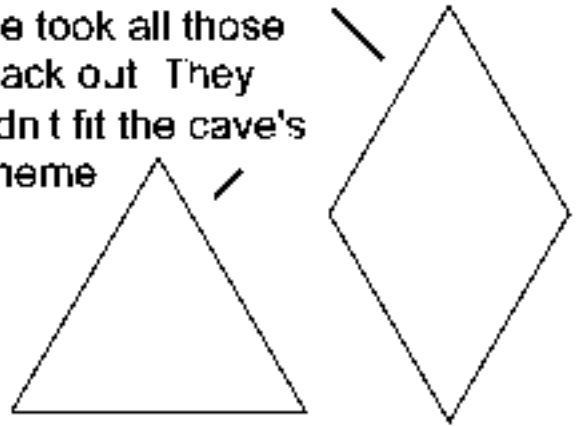
Triangle and Robert

Two fog machines, a small flock of large bats, a large flock of small bats, some growing moss, and a public domain sound effects CD later



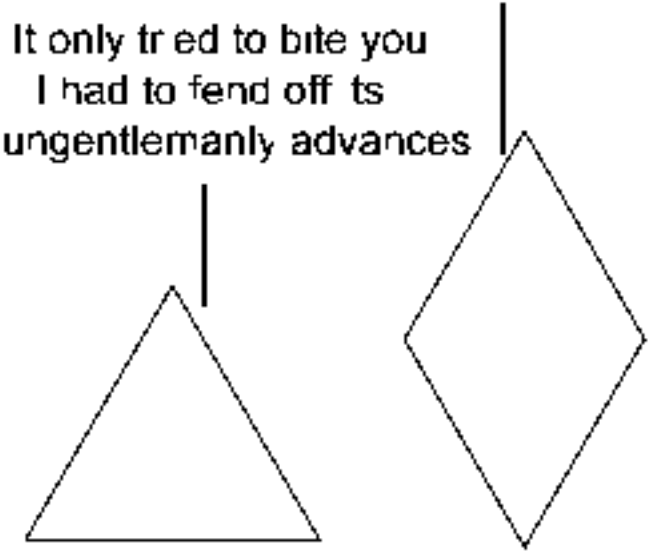
Hey! What about the stray wolf, the motorized suit of armor the strobe lights and the spooky painting with eyeholes?

We took all those back out. They didn't fit the cave's theme

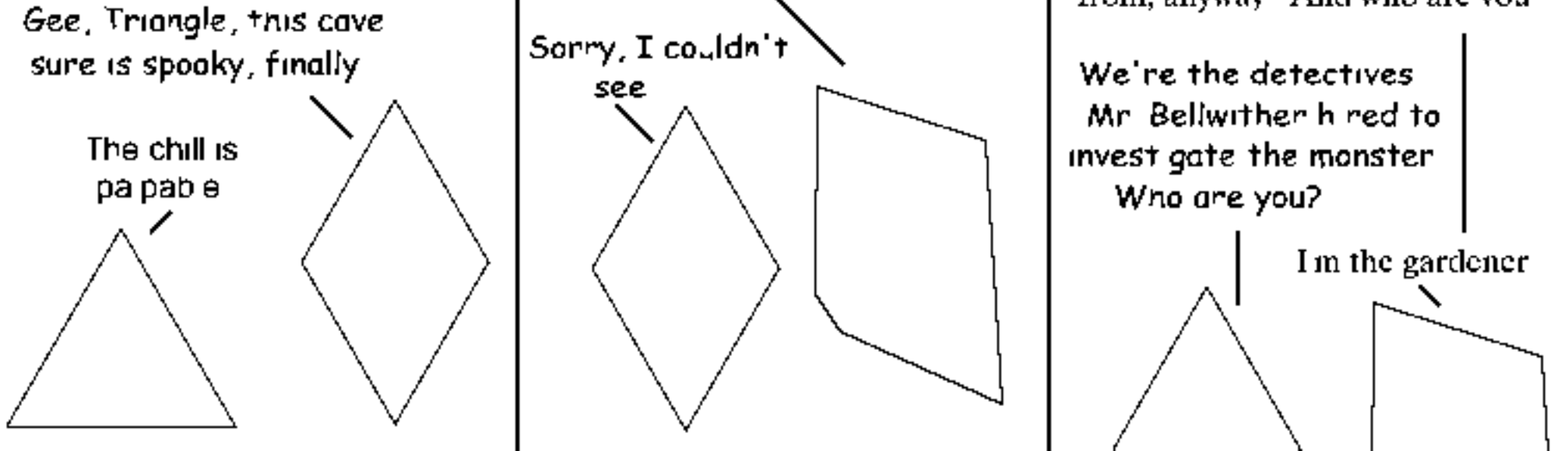


I thought the wolf worked

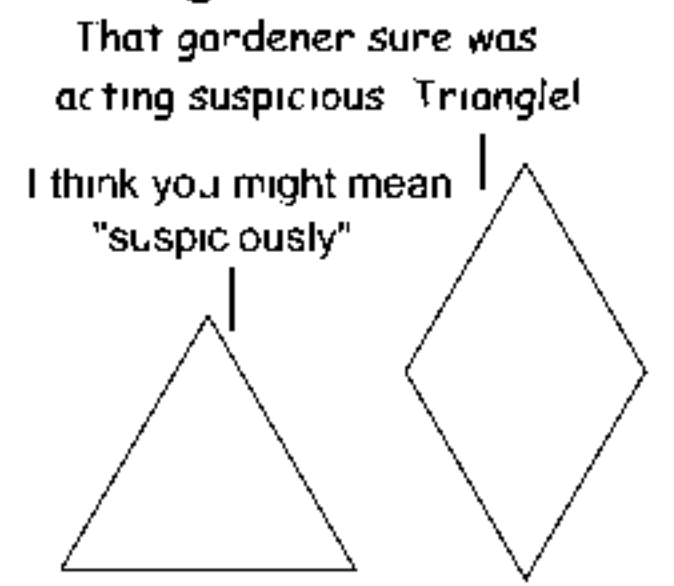
It only tried to bite you. I had to fend off its ungentlemanly advances

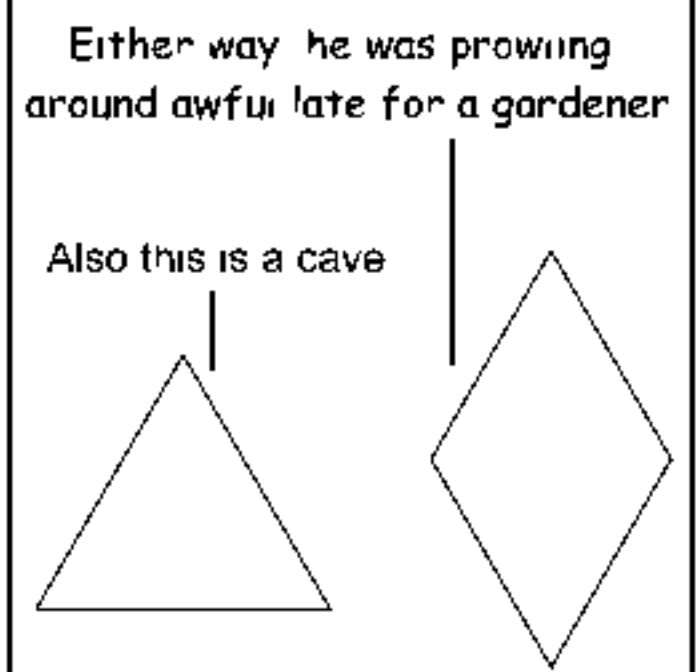


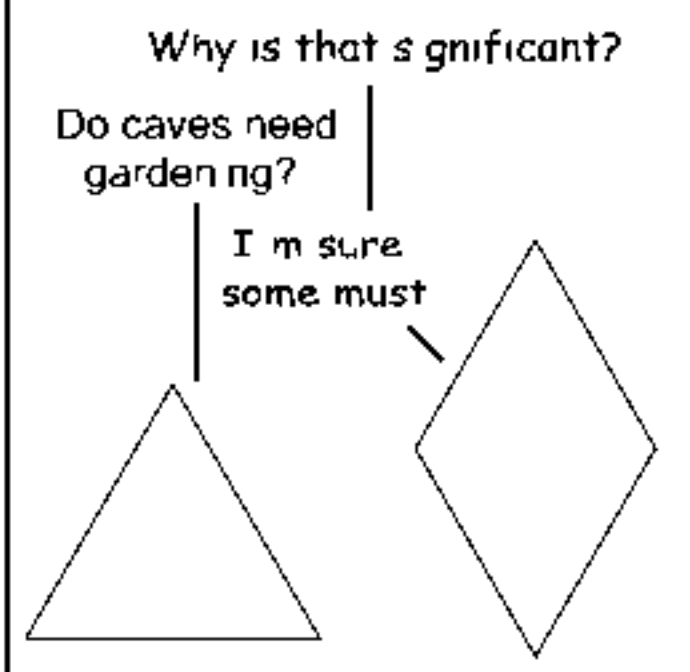
Triangle and Robert



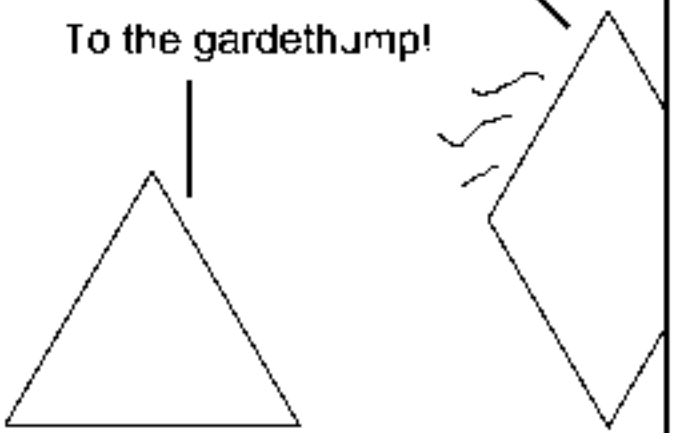
Triangle and Robert

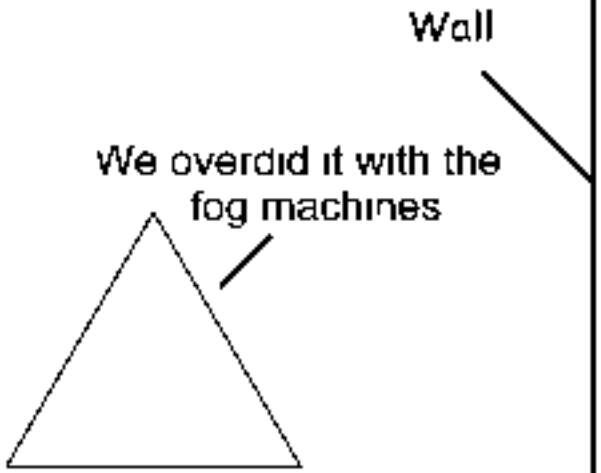






Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Triangle?

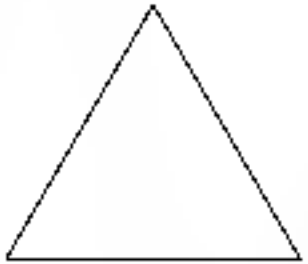
Yes?

Where am I?

Down

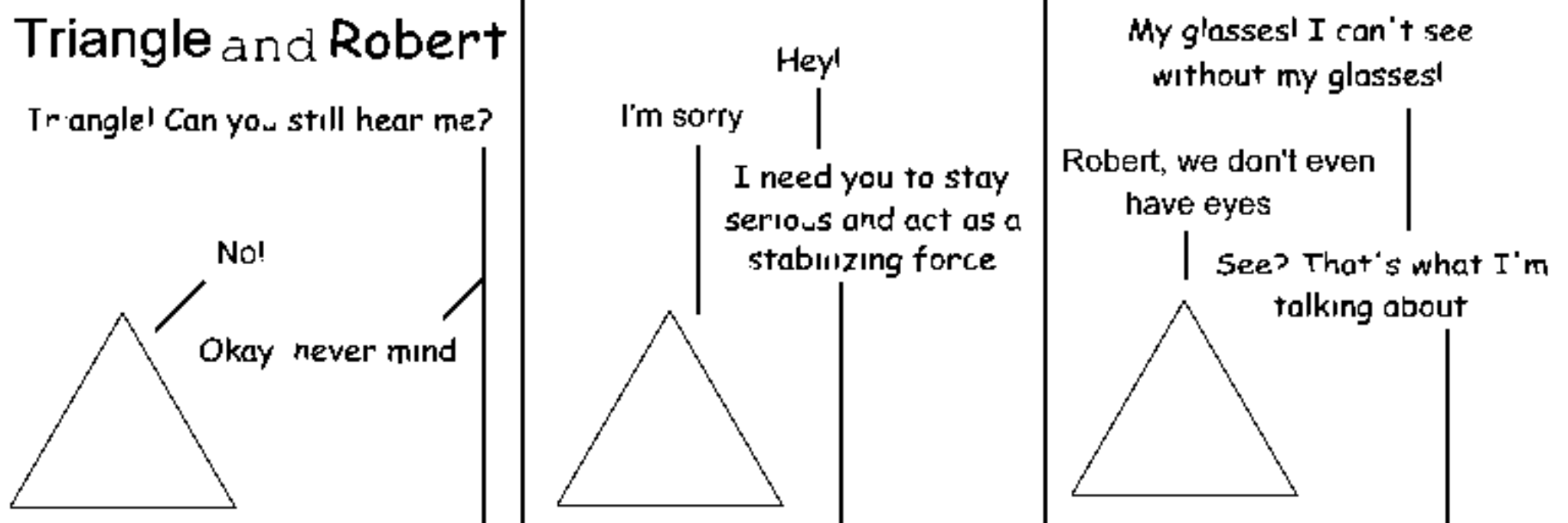
Thanks

You re welcome



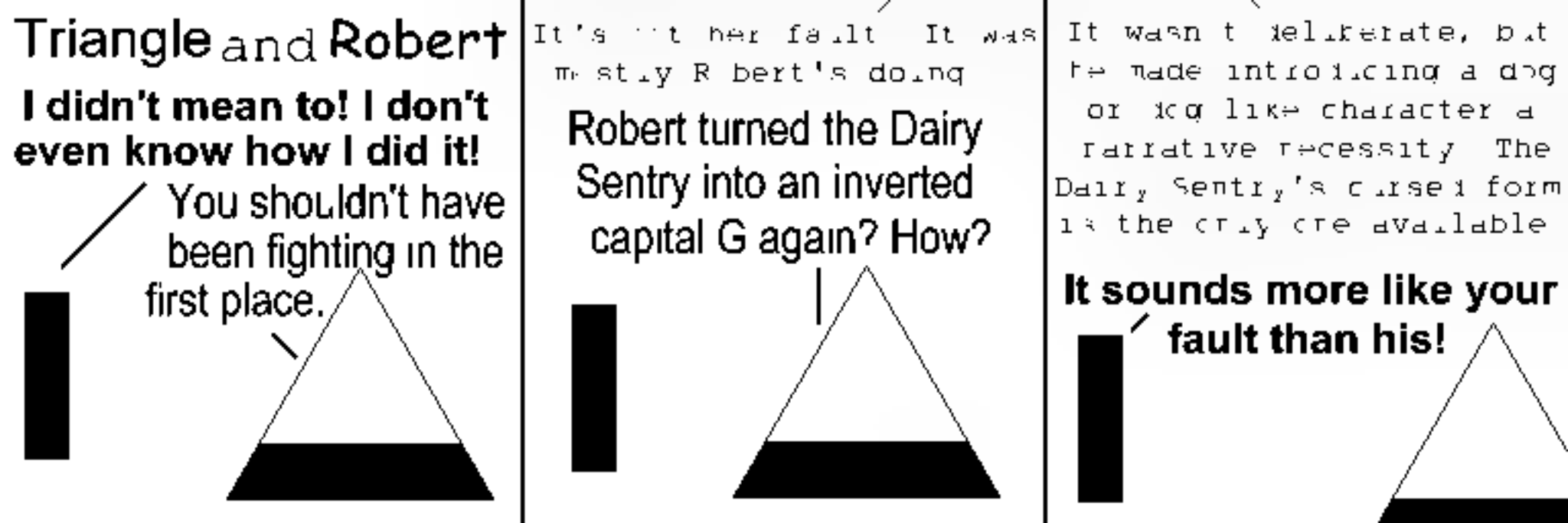
Robert? Did you say "**THUMP**" again?

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

You've ignored narrative necessity in the past. Why should Robert's plot idea suddenly make things happen?

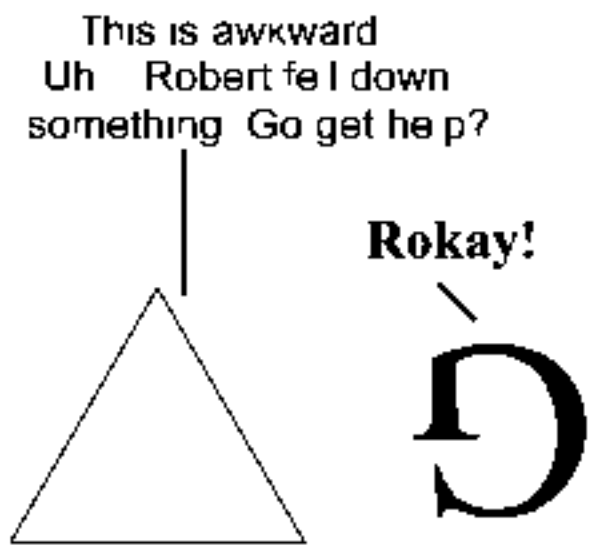
Robert has a sort of attachement to the comic. He can guess what I will and won't like their drawing, and he knows which of my buttons to push to trigger subplots.

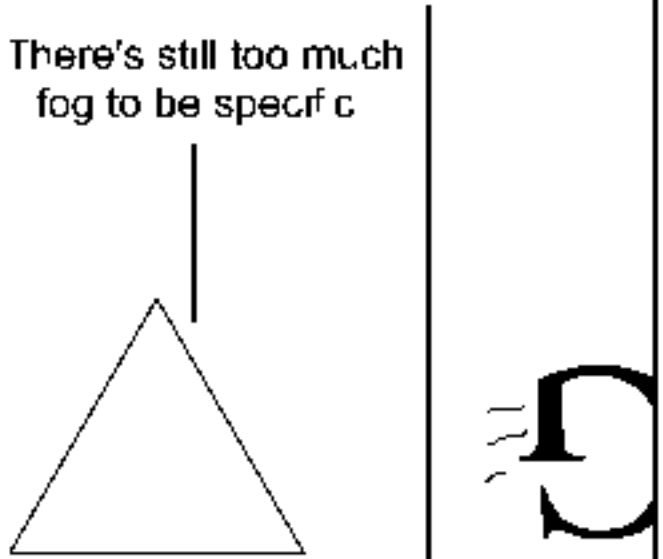
How recently did you make that up?

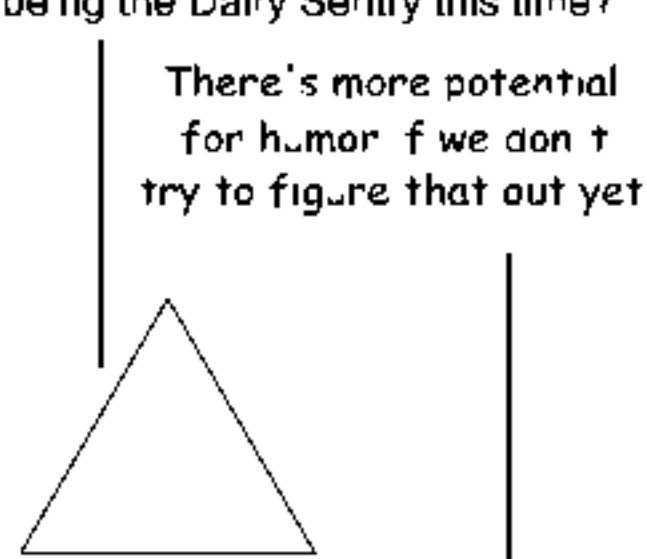
I don't know. It feels like it follows naturally from Robert's previous actions and abilities, though. Maybe he's been planning it.

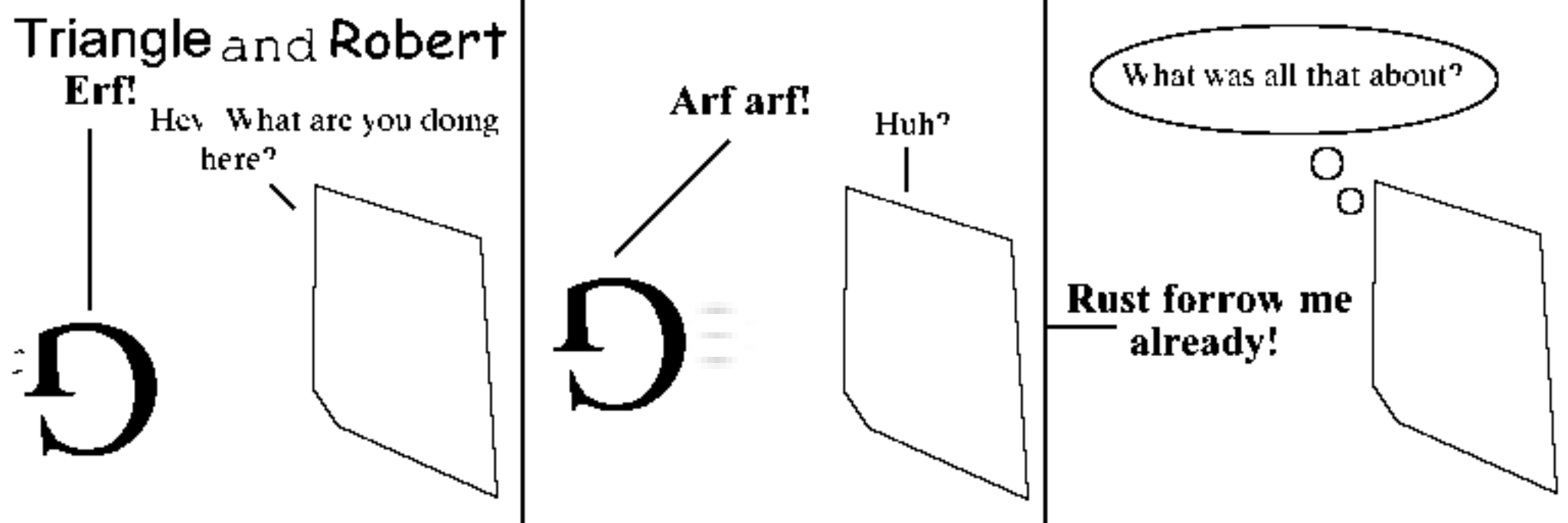
Simpler hypothesis. You wanted the cute animal back in the strip

Triangle and Robert

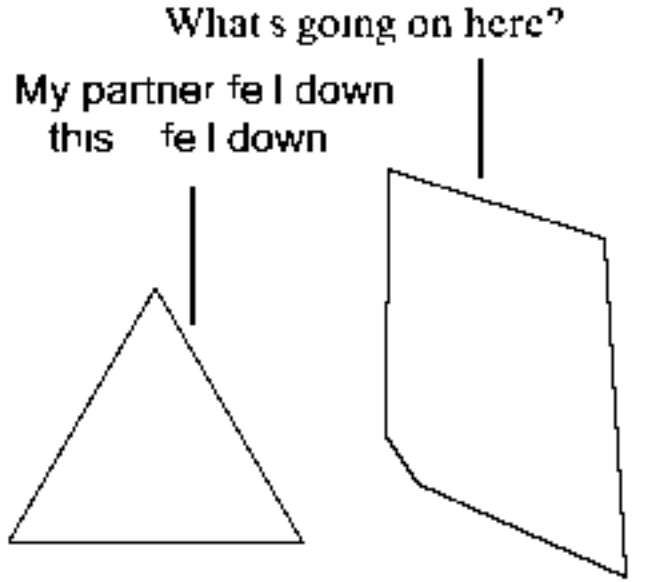


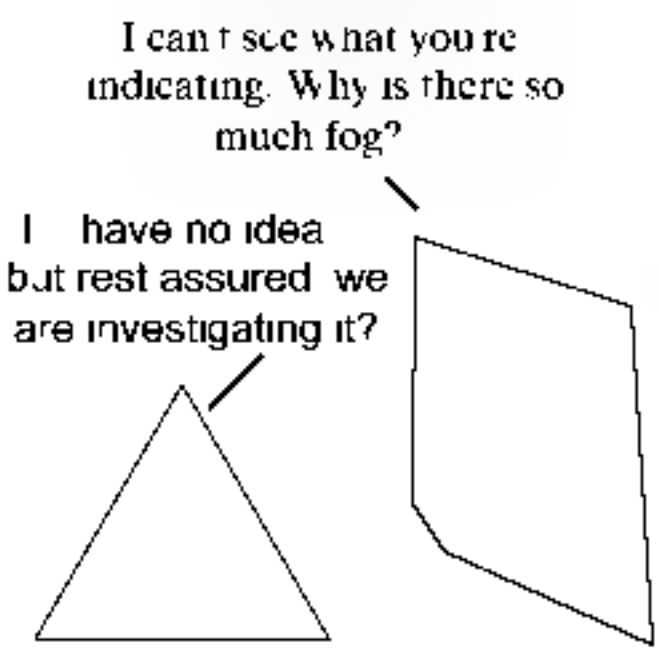


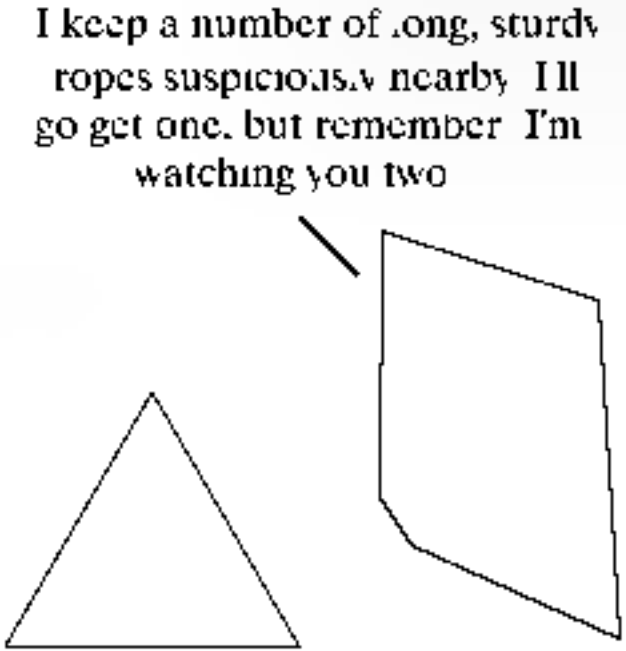



Triangle and Robert
Erf!
Hey What are you doing here?
Arf arf!
Huh?
What was all that about?
Rust forrow me already!

Triangle and Robert





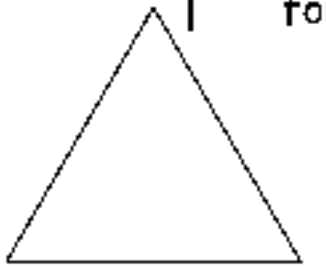


Triangle and Robert

Hello?

The gardener's getting a rope

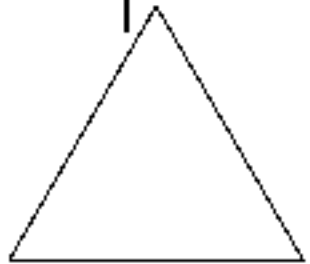
Stall him I think I found something



We're not real y nvestigating

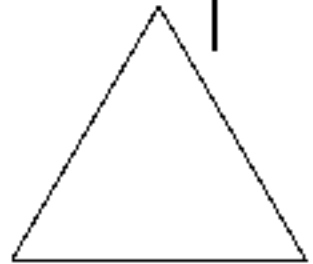
We're not investigating the monster I think this is something d fferent

What is it?

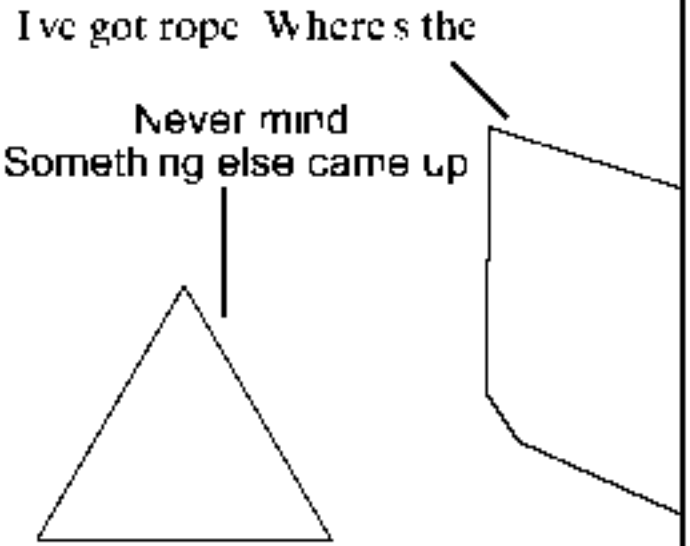


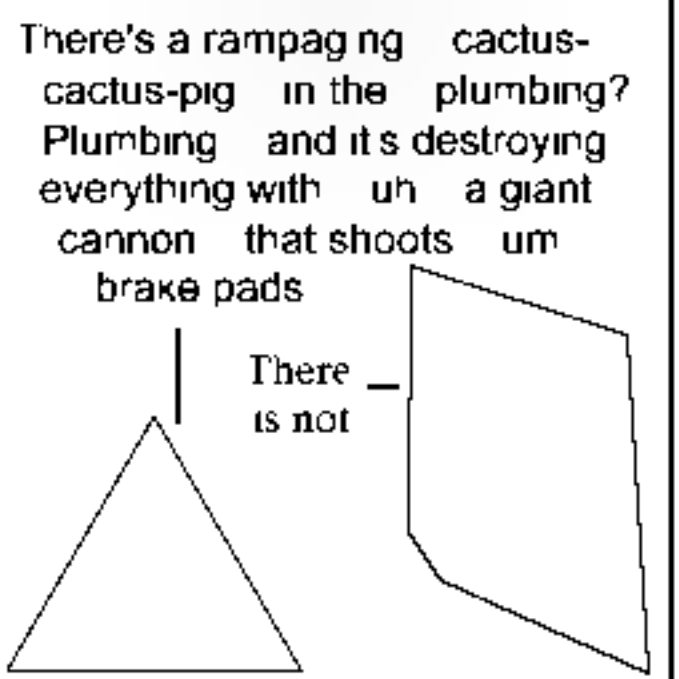
I m not positive yet I turned on an exhaust fan and the fog s clearing There's some kind of assembly line. I smell paint

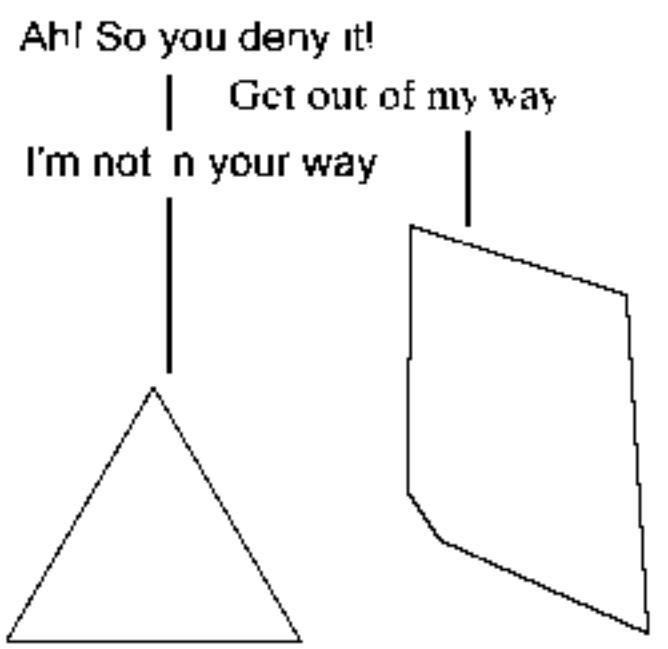
Hush the gardener's coming back now



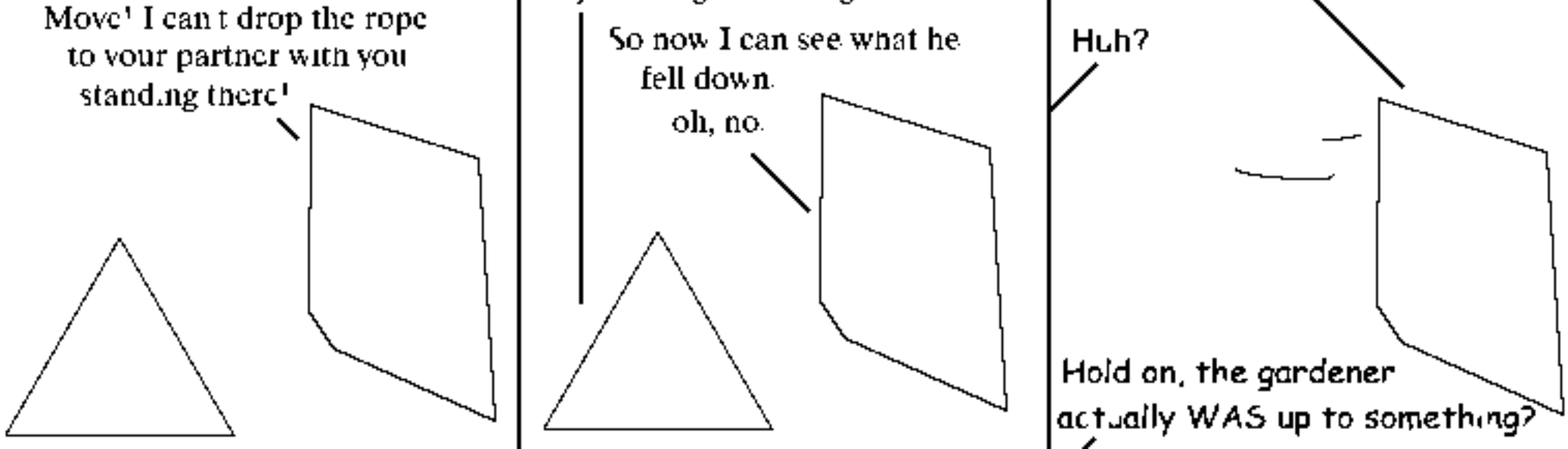
Triangle and Robert







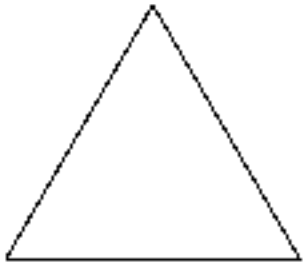
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

What's down there?

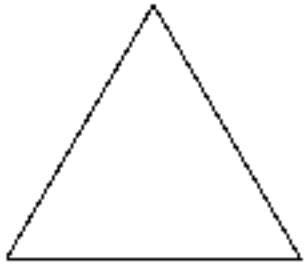
It's a product on line I think it's for toys



That doesn't sound criminal

You haven't seen the things that I think were intended as toys

Such as?



There are these action figures of Batman that squirt water from their udders

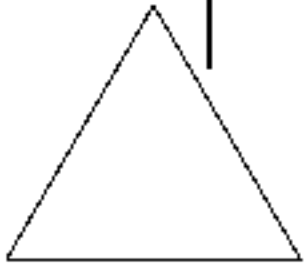
Udders?

That's what it says on the package. I don't think they're authorized by either DC or the estate of Bob Kane.

Did you say Bob Crane?

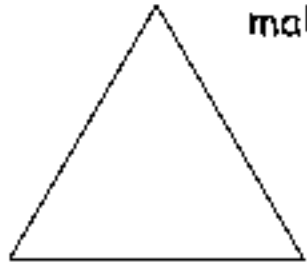
Triangle and Robert

The "gardener" dropped the rope when he ran away Do you want me to pull you up now?



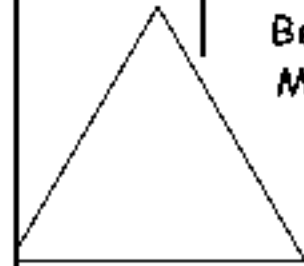
Does Yogi Bear breathe fire?

Is that a sarcast c way of saying no?



No, I needed my memory refreshed These toys down here make no sense.

They're bootlegs Robert The gardener must have been making them We can p n the monster on him too bet

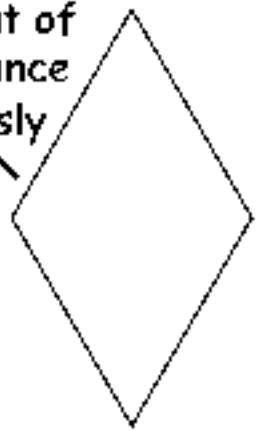


Thus resolving the mystery without implicating Mr Bellwither but then Mr Bellwither won't have scared everyone away for his d amond mine.

Triangle and Robert

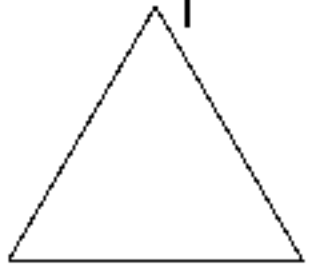
Are you coming or not?

I m thinking We need to scare everyone out of wanting the cave, since the monster obviously isn t working



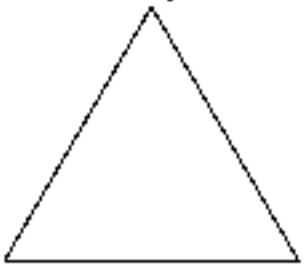
This paint isn't safe for toys I think I can make the whole cave toxic!

But then it won't be mineable



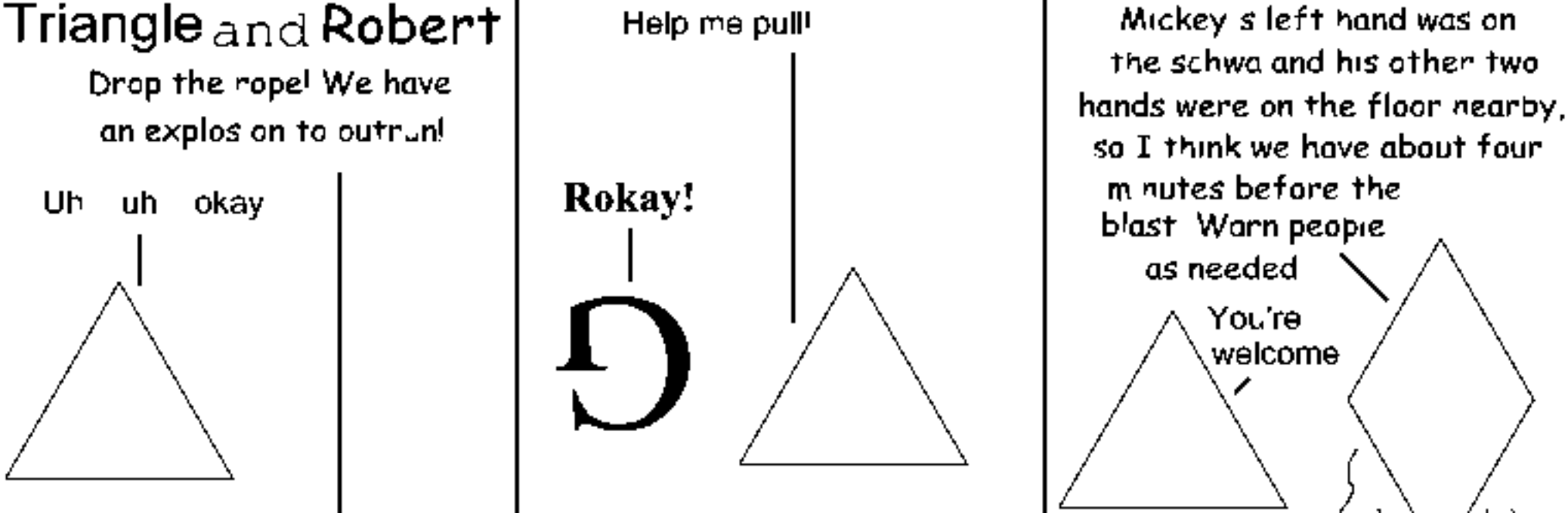
Too late, I ve already set the timer Pull me up quick

Uh what?



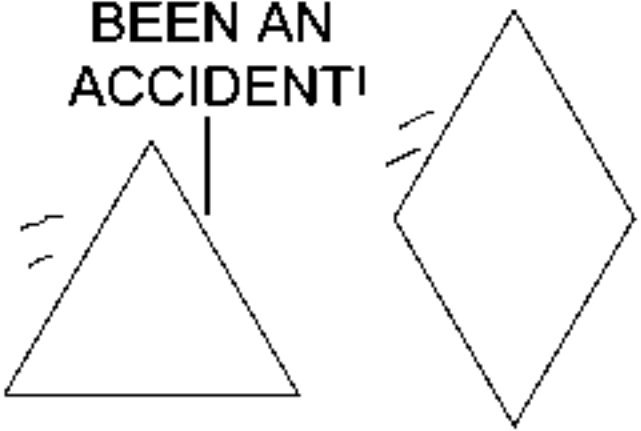
Rut?

Triangle and Robert



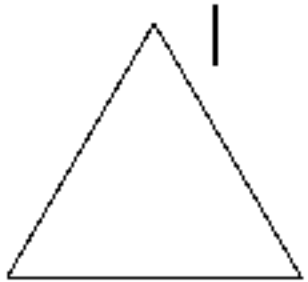
Triangle and Robert

EVERYONE OUT OF THE CAVE! THERE'S BEEN AN ACCIDENT!

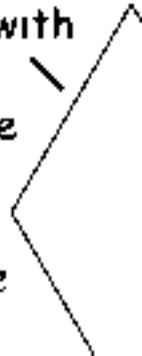


A few minutes later, outside

I think we can assume the gardener previously fled, so everyone's accounted for And now the denouement



The so-called "gardener" was using a secret workshop in the cave to make bootleg toys Our first clue that something was wrong was when we noticed we were in a cave as opposed to somewhere with a garden or a lawn Then when we found the workshop full of bootleg toys and it made the gardener nervous, all the pieces came together



Triangle and Robert

Obviously the gardener summoned the monster from its nightmarish otherwordly crypt so no one would find his workshop

Cornelius Be Iwither! You are under arrest!

Huh? Why would you arrest Mr Beilwither?

We read the strips where he hired you Robert, Triangle, you're under arrest too

Drat! We would have gotten away with it f it weren't for that meddling cartoonist!

Rinverted-Rapital-Gee!

Triangle and **Robert**

On the first count, that of conspiracy to tamper with evidence, I find the defendants not guilty!

Order! Order! Take that pill out of my courtroom. I find the defendants...

Under the parsley and there they are?

Out! OUT!

Safe!

Are you the umpire? I mean judge? Be quiet.

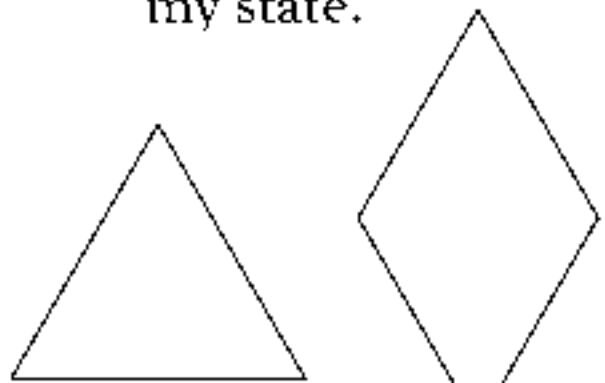
Wait, I'm not the judge?

Oh, this is Arizona. I'm sorry. I'm also Prozac the Bear!

Triangle and **Robert**

I find the defendants guilty of all charges brought against them. Triangle, you are sentenced to 4 years incarceration. Robert, 12 years.

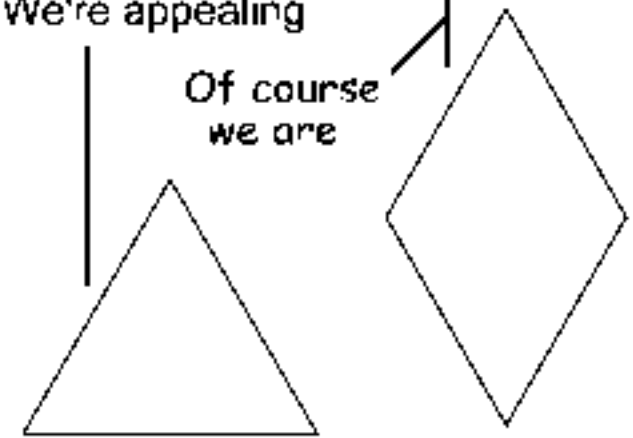
To be frank, I'm expecting you to escape in some idiotic Cartoonist-assisted fashion. Stay out of my state.



Yay! After we escape, Arizona will be one more state we're wanted in!

We're appealing

Of course we are



Triangle and Robert

Erf?

The plotline's basically over [illegible] back now

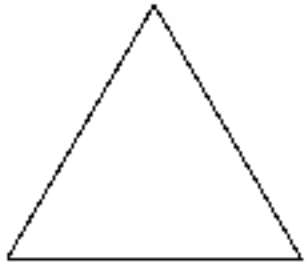
Yarf?

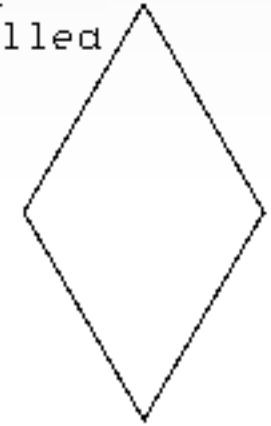
So you need a power source first. Not a problem.

Rurr.

Okay, a problem.

Hey, protagonists! When you're done appealing your conviction and/or escaping from prison, start building an experimental space plane filled with ham





Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

Before the guards can stop them, the mighty ship which Triangle had spent days constructing is soaring into the heavens . towards outer space!

That's not your writing style.

Fantastic Four, volume one, issue one.

What happens next?

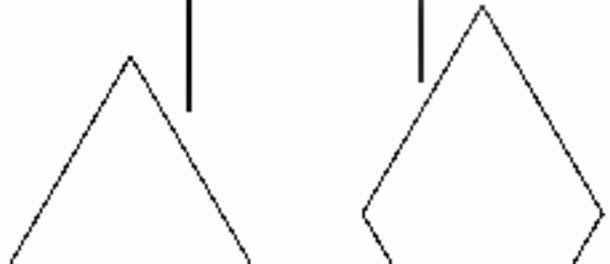
Cosmic rays. They'll give the ham superpowers and force us to crash-land

We're going to end up dead of radiation poisoning, aren't we?

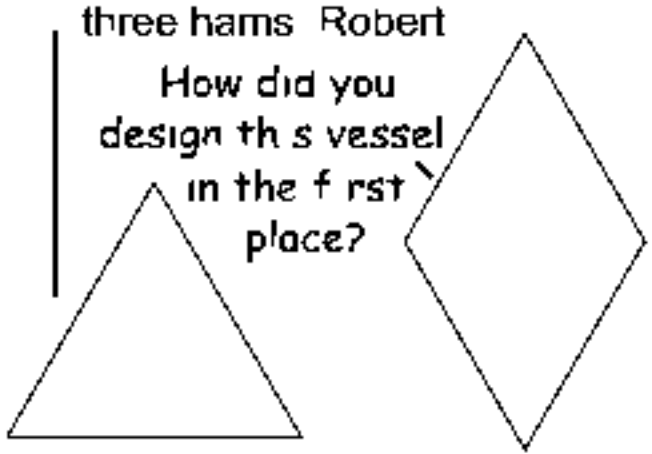
I lined the ham with lead. We'll be safe inside it.

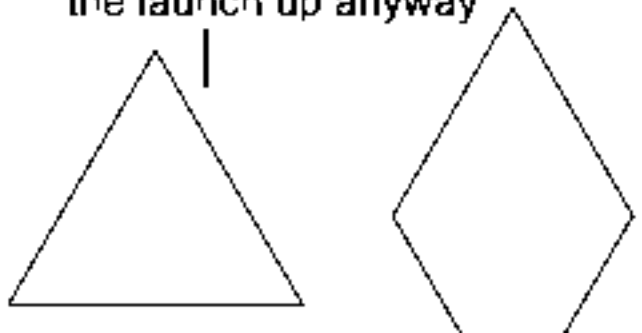
Inside it? Just how much ham did you load this ship with?

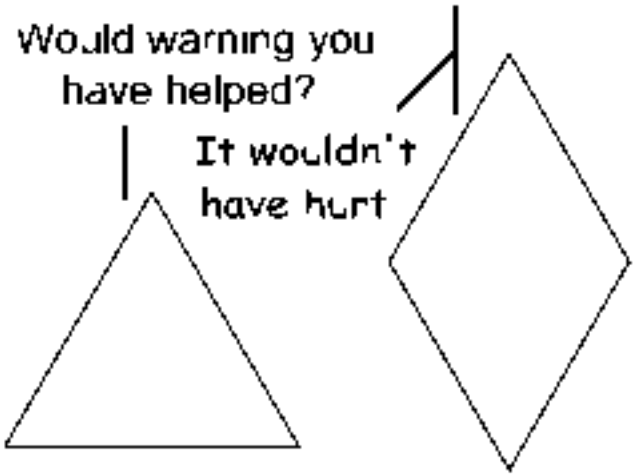
Enough.



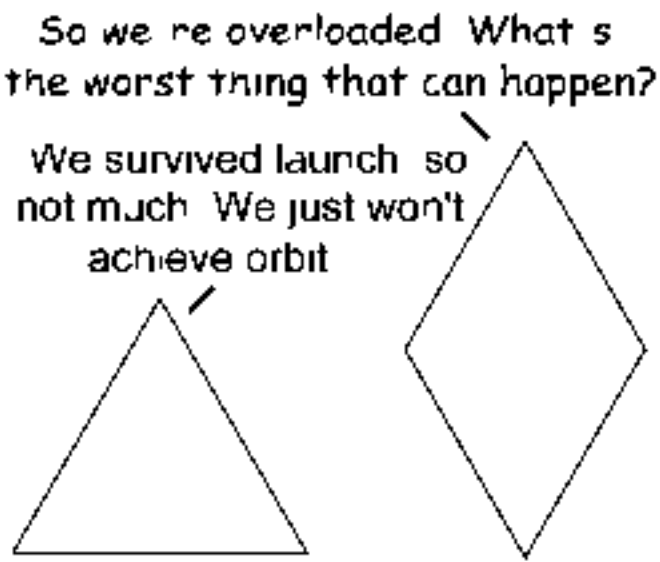
Triangle and Robert

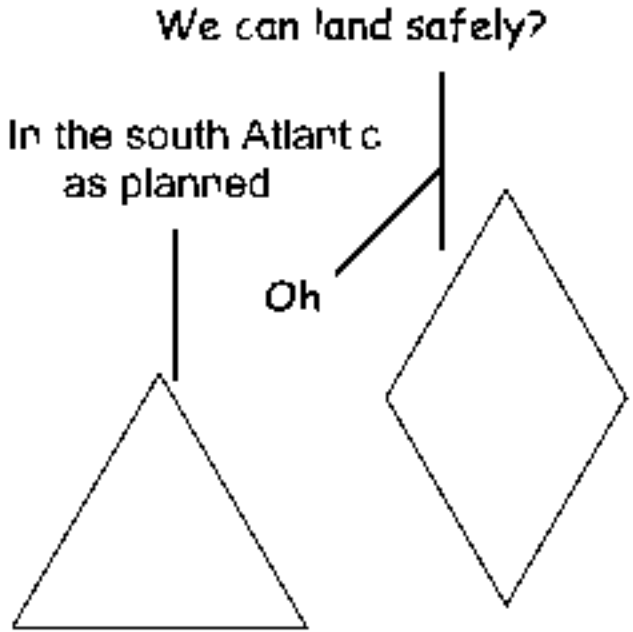


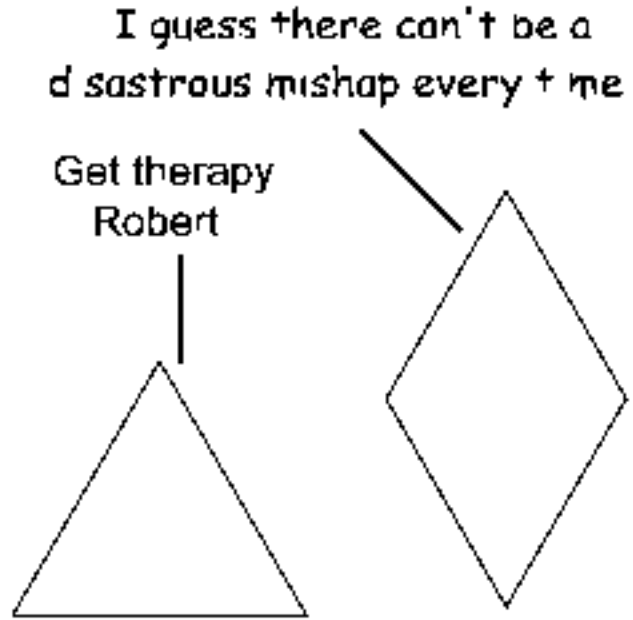




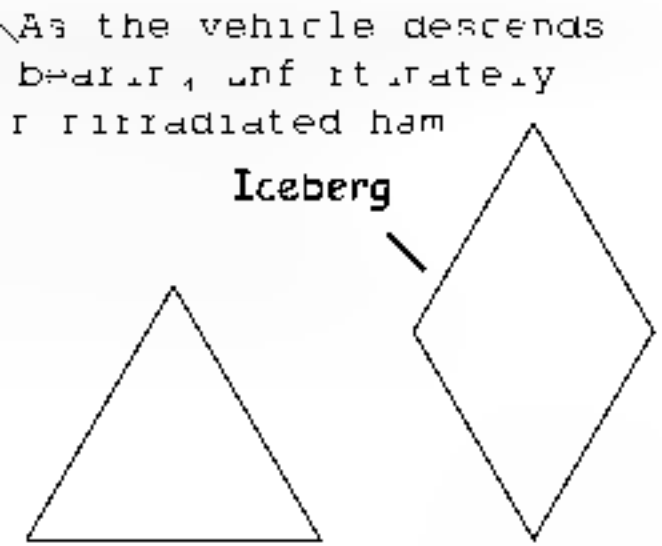
Triangle and Robert

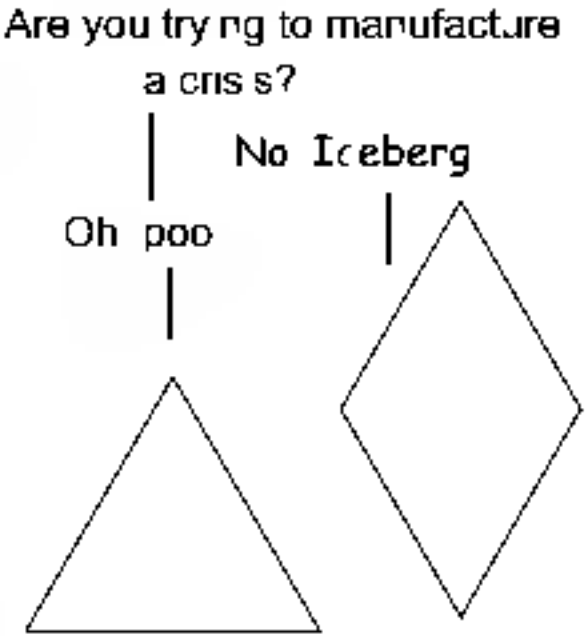


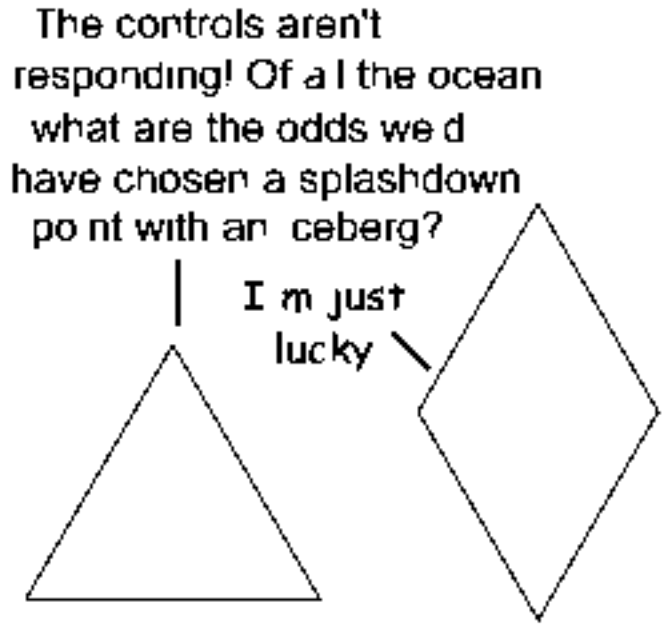




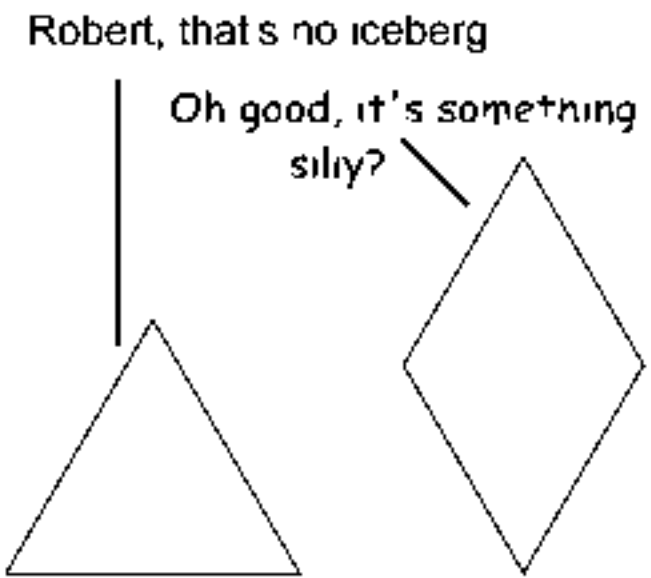
Triangle and Robert

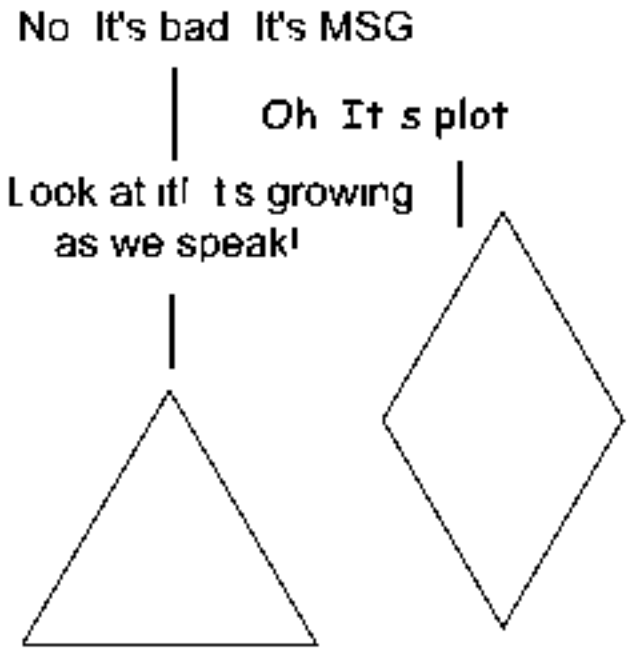


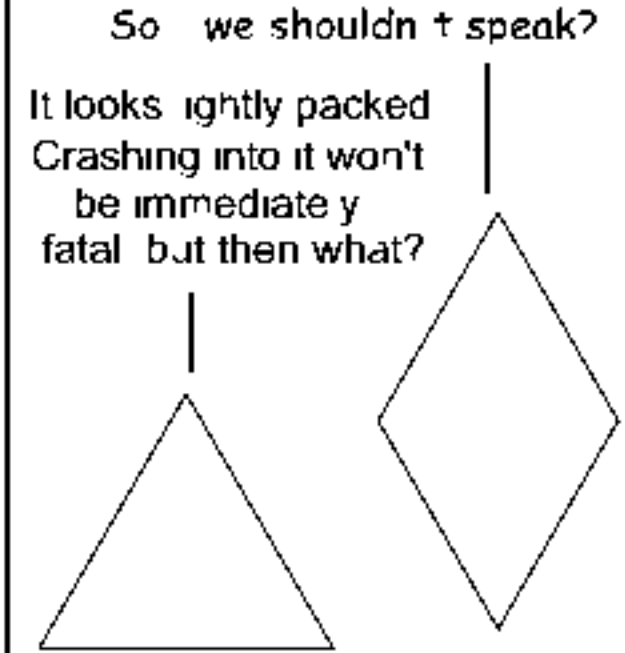




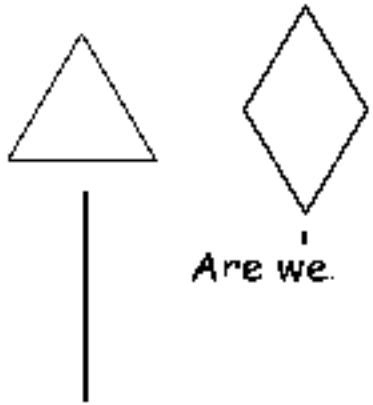
Triangle and Robert



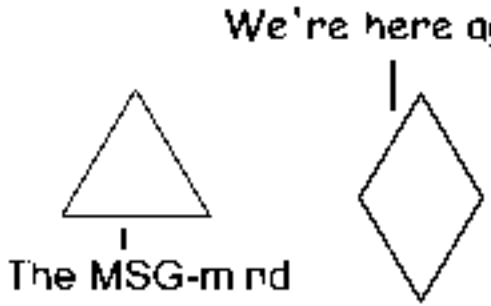


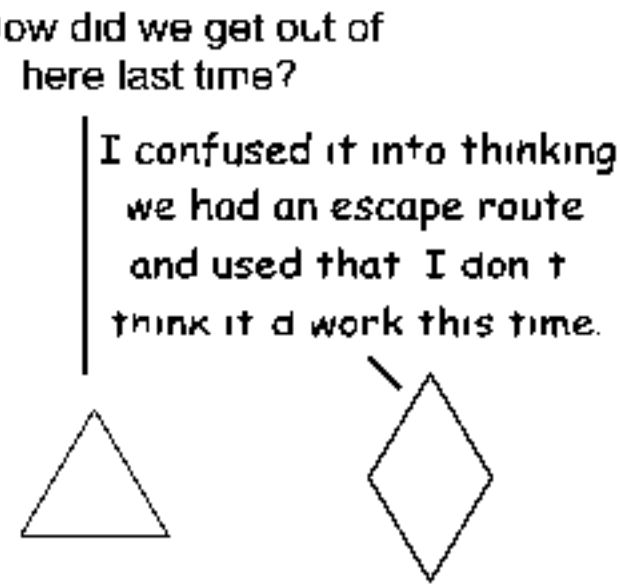


Triangle and Robert



Oh, hi





Triangle and Robert

Wh le we're here if we are n fact here a po nt which I haven't yet dec ded to concede we should get some informat on

I ll go look.

Do you know what to look for?

Information. I m sure I li know it when I see it

Oh I guess t'd be phys cal y man fested somehow here Just don t knock any of it over What little conscious awareness the MSG entity possesses did I spel that right? "Possesses"? That looks like too many esses Since when do I read my own d alogue text anyway? This p ace is weird

Triangle and Robert

and now I'm rambling in a stream-of-consciousness fashion which is completely uncharacteristic of me and

Why can't I shut up?

Loading...

What do you mean, "loading"? Make sense! I'm confused enough by my own inexplicable monologue without you chiming in!

I needed vocabulary.

So you sucked words out of me? Won't that make me talking hard? Put back thing!

Have I made an error?

Gargle shiny rocks!

Triangle and Robert

Do you know how to draw information?

Not really.

So this thing that isn't drawn might be some information?

I'm going to say yes

Triangle! Bad news!

Banjo fingering disintegrates nacho radiation?

No, not that bad. MSG deposits are bursting from the ground all over the world

That shouldn't juggle with a moose on the first floor

You're right. It shouldn't. What are you talking about?

Triangle and Robert

I'm borrowing Triangle's vocabulary.

Superfluid c origami thumps

I take it this s the MSG entity speak ng?

Yes I doubt Triang e can understand me at the moment so remember what I say and pass it along

Can do probably

I'm undergo ng a chain react on More and more of the Earth's mass is becoming part of my substance Your crude attempt at a spacecraft was a good first step if evacuation becomes necessary, and I can assist n the construction of a less inept version but I have no w sh to drive you from the planet Destroy my substance by any means possible w I not die not forever I do not wish my life to be at your expense

Triangle and Robert

I moved this islet of my substance to intercept your craft. as I was unclear whether you needed ass stance

Thank you, but in the event of an emergency we could have used our seat cushions as a flotation device.

Don t worry about my surviva As long as there s glutamate somewhere in the universe, I'll rebuild myself Do what you must

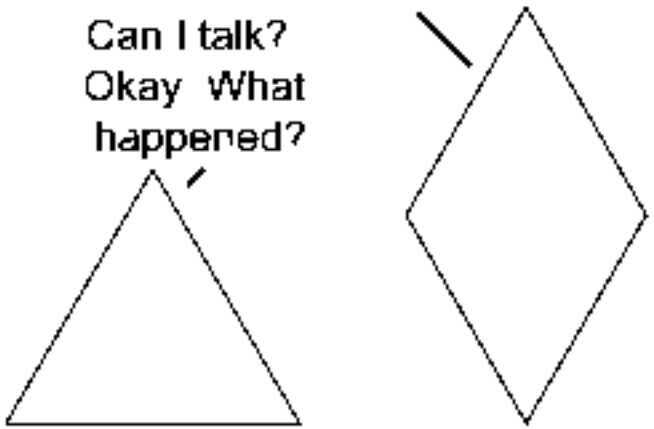
Okay Got any tips?

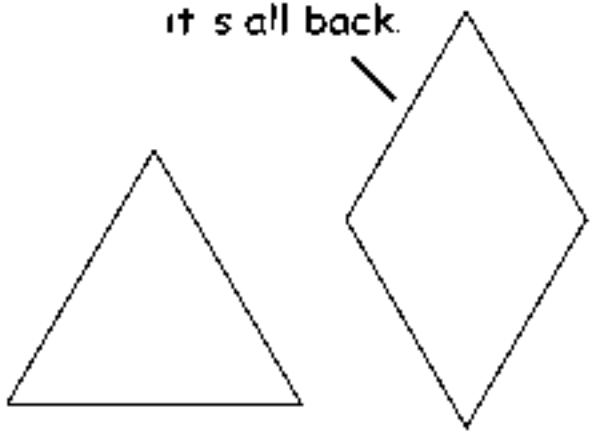
If I knew what to do I'd have done it myself

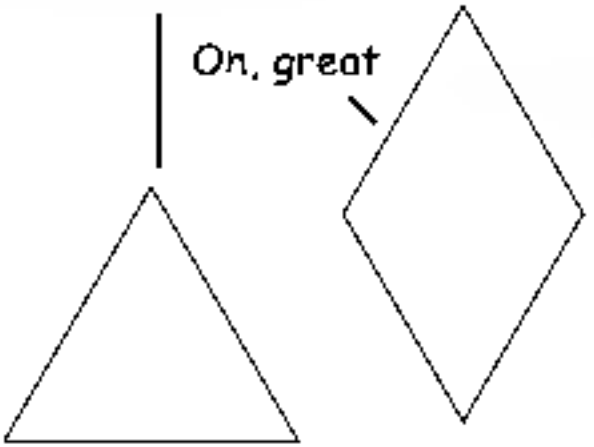
Now w l return Triangle's vocabulary to him Pass on the words that I have spoken

Go.

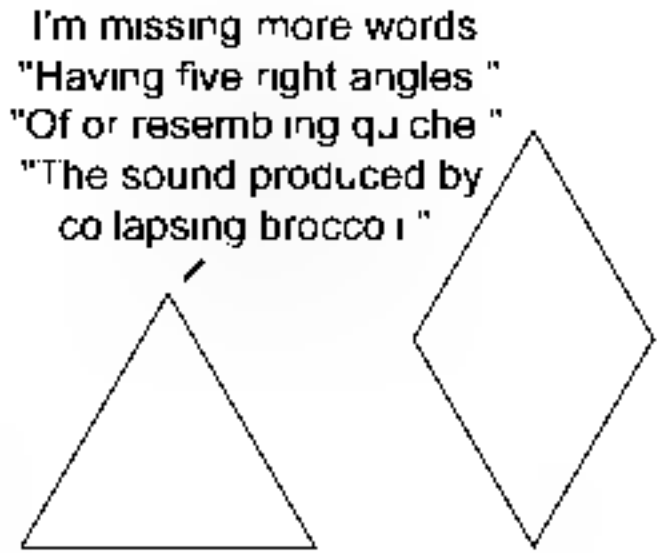
Triangle and Robert

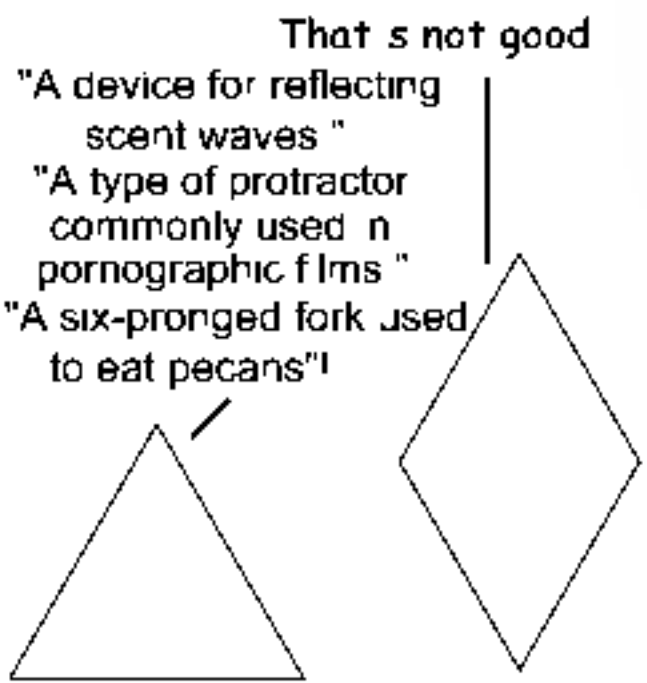


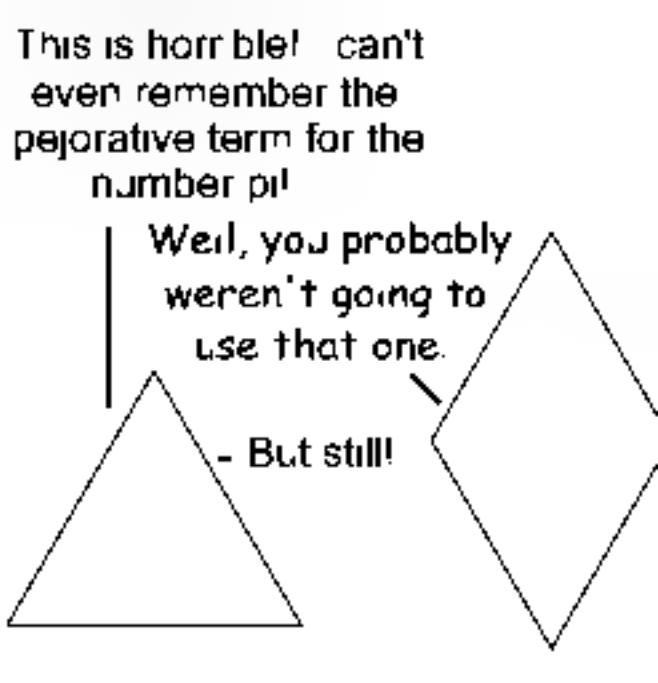




Triangle and Robert

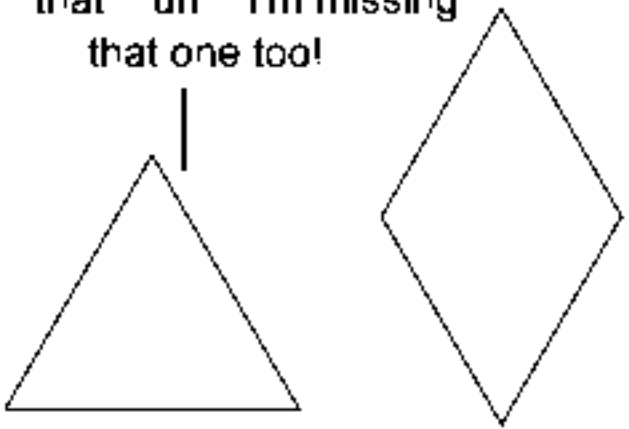






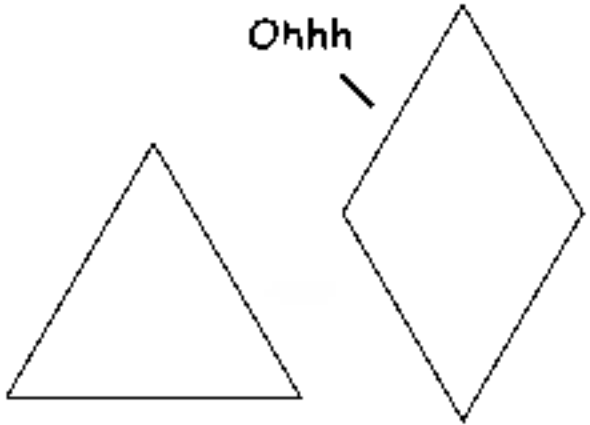
Triangle and Robert

I can't even remember what one ca is it when a a th ng thing that uh I'm missing that one too!



Er. the vocabulary words y u're missing. have you ever used any while in the comic

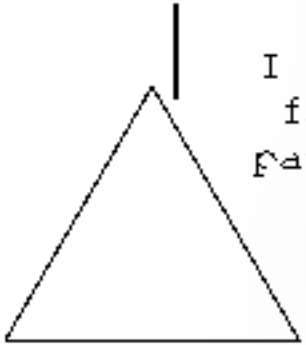
Ohhh



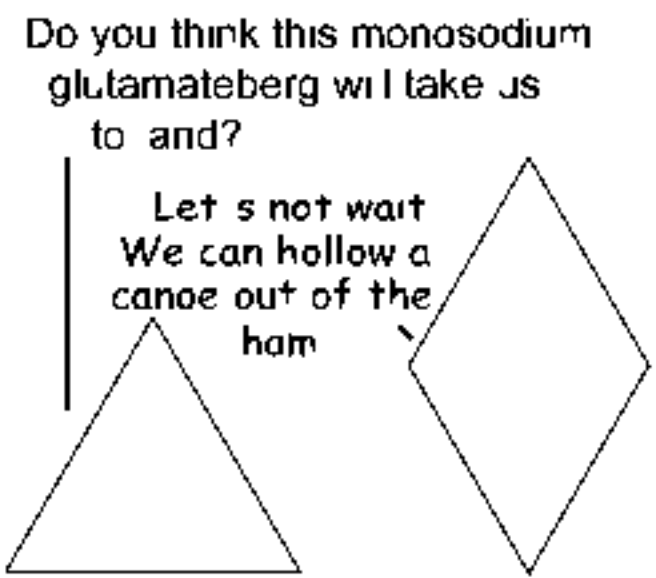
The MSG gave ta k your whole vocabulary I just can't write you using words that I don't know

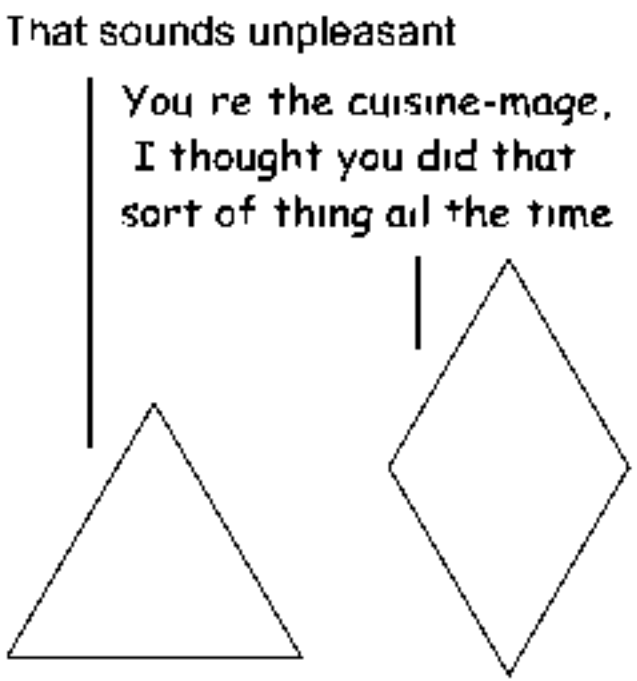
Well, that's a load of inear congrue

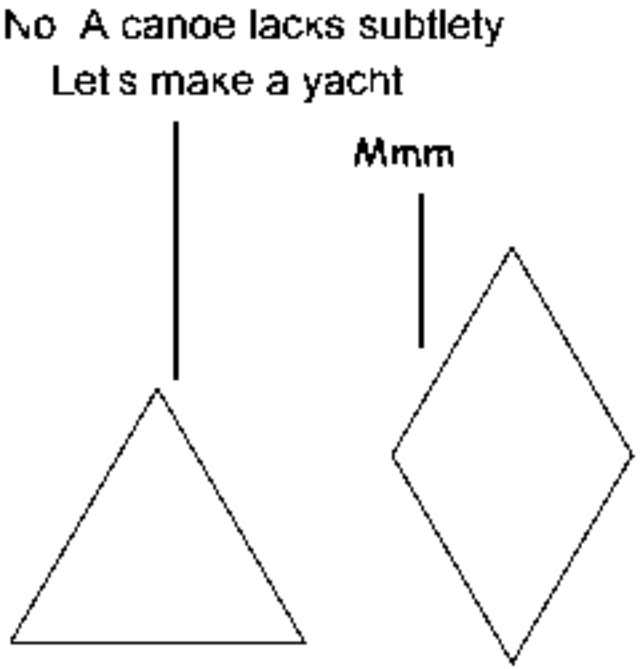
I can sometimes fake it using panel placeme t, th ugh.



Triangle and Robert

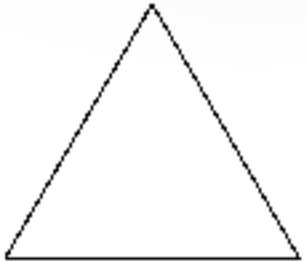


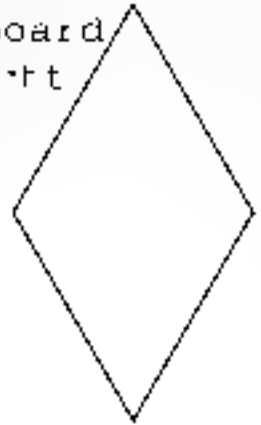




Triangle and Robert

Their experimental space plane filled with ham having failed, the duo return home aboard a delicious yacht made of ham

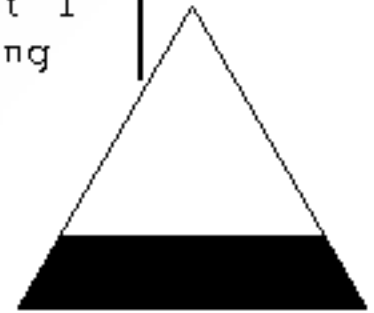




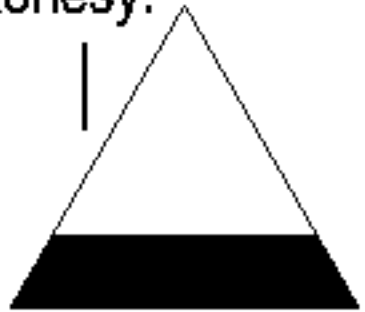
Their arrival, however, is not to be peaceful, as they soon discover

We already took care of it

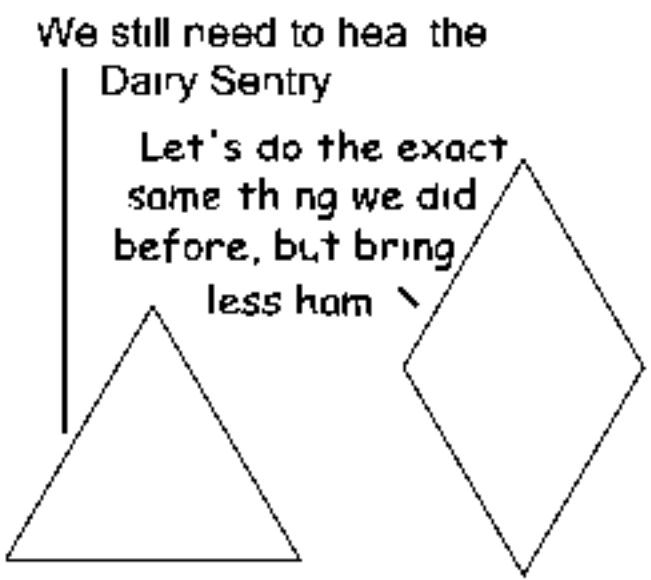
How I [illegible] know what I was going to [illegible]

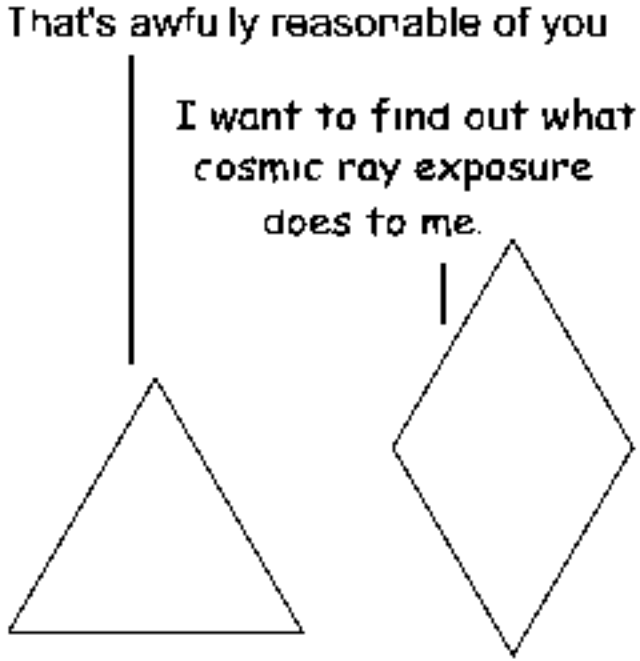


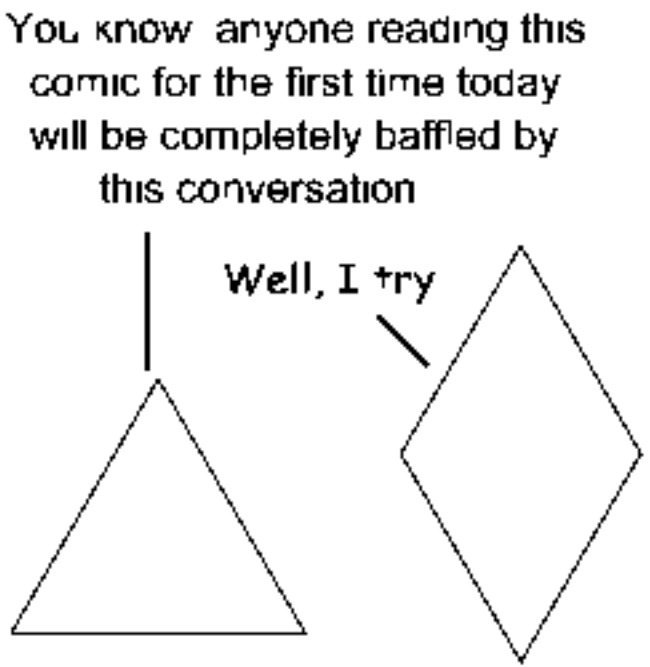
The rampaging five-headed clammagon, right? We took care of it By the way, "clammagon" is way too Flintstonesy.



Triangle and Robert





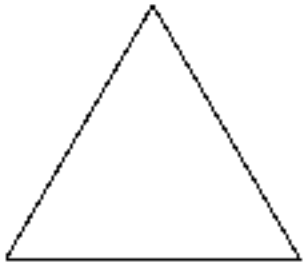


Triangle and Robert

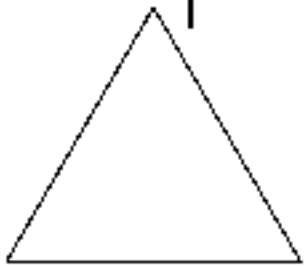
Triangle and Robert

You re onely?

The other Sentries threw me out They said my methods were unsound.



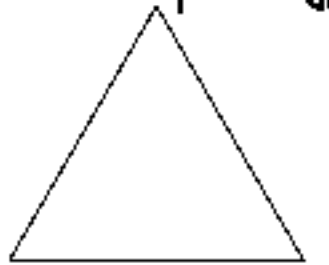
Was the g ant clammagon your fault?



possib y

Go away We'll talk after Robert and make a new Starham

You do not wish to hear my humorous recollections of the disaster?



Triangle and Robert

Ready to bring aboard ham!

Acknowledged!

Two hams loaded!

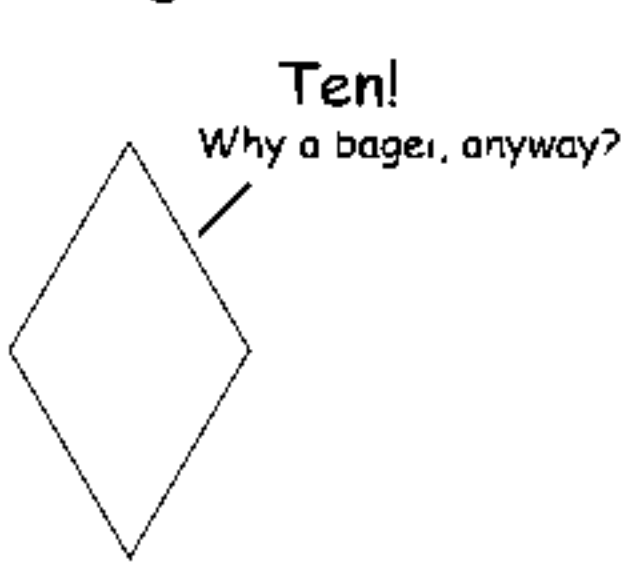
Radiat on shie ding conveniently overlooked!

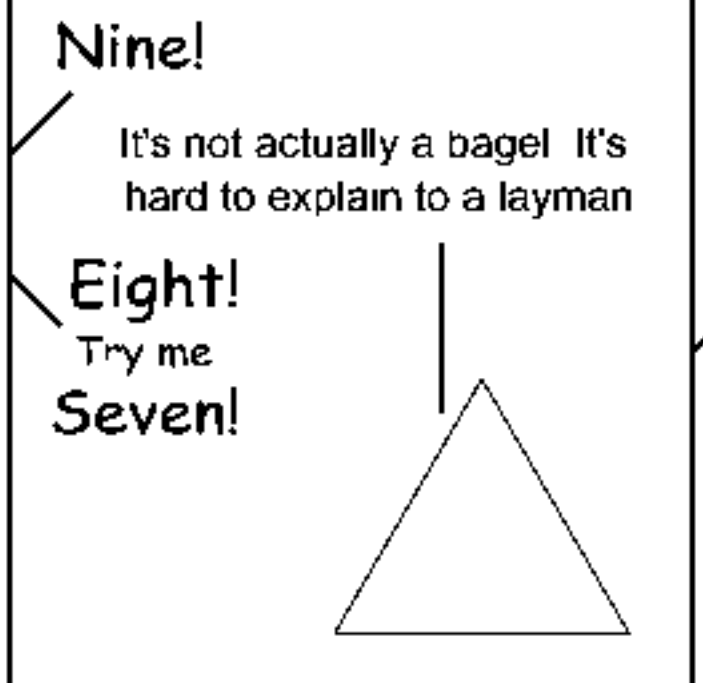
Hey, thanks!

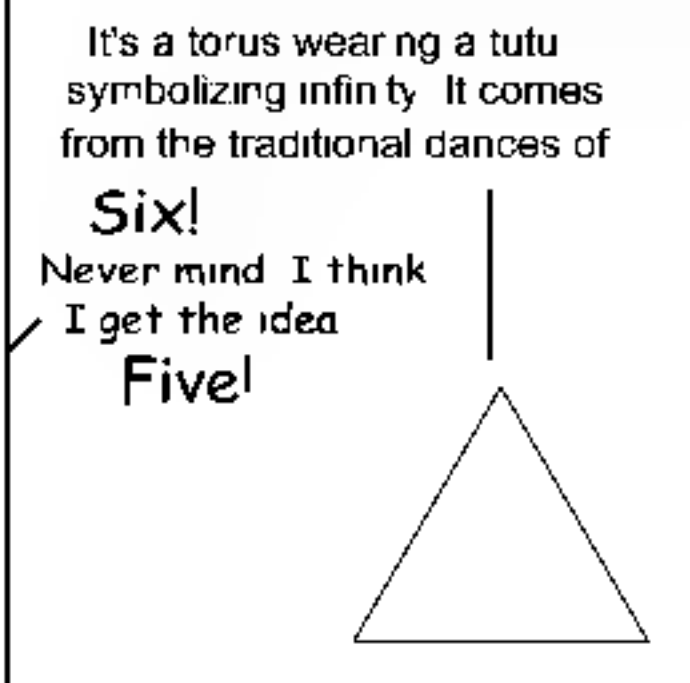
Yeast gauges at what appears to be a little picture of a bagel with cream cheese.

That's optimal yeast pressure Initiate countdown!

Triangle and Robert





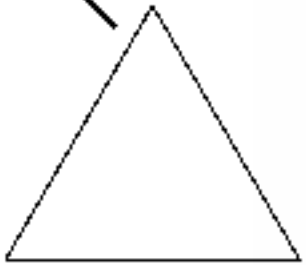


Triangle and Robert

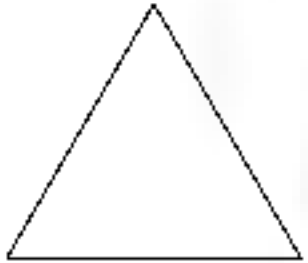
Three!

You said "four" between strips Strange

Two!



One!



Triangle and Robert

Acceleration is ouchie

I just realized something

We're going into space to turn someone back from a letter G

There's going to be a pun about the measurement of gravity

Probably not, now that you've called it.

It's getting hot

Atmospheric friction

Inside.

Oh that's the yeast reaction Everything's fine

And you're on fire

I know

You re okay with that?

Pretty much

Triangle and Robert

Aboard the still rising
pa ecraft .

Robert, when you sa d
I was on f re

Yes?

Were you just making
conversation?

No You're on f re

That' l be bad for our
oxygen supply

Shouldn't you be
running back and forth
and scream ng?

Probably

Okay

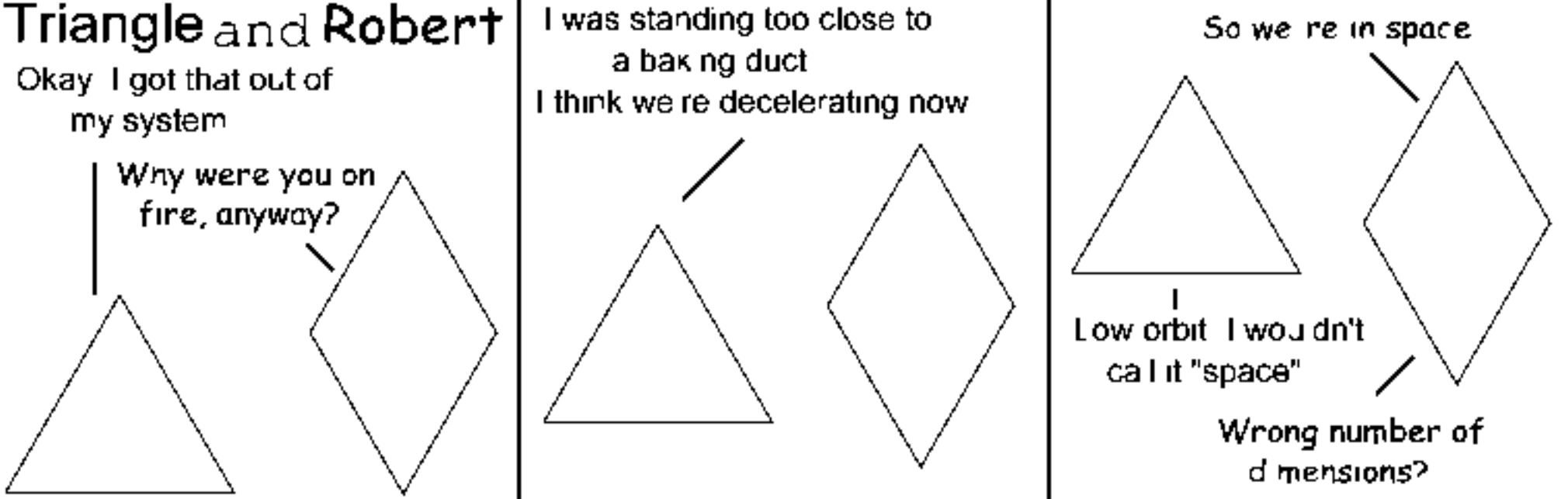
Actua ly, you know what?

I'll go do that

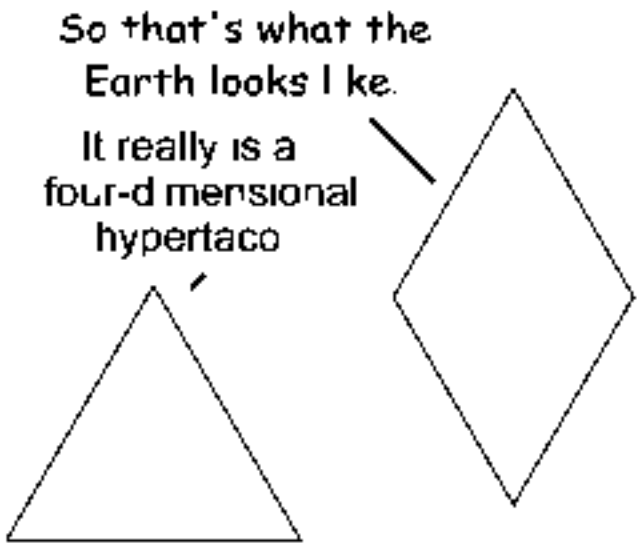
Aaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaah!

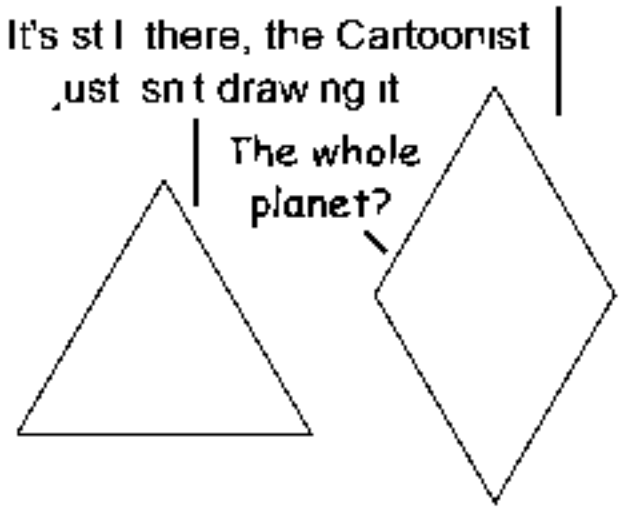
Fancy

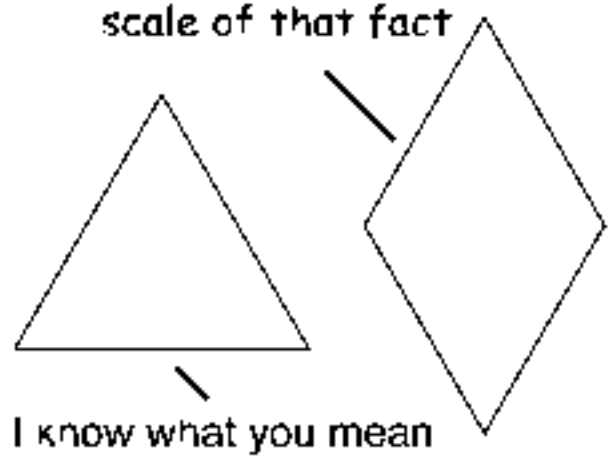
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

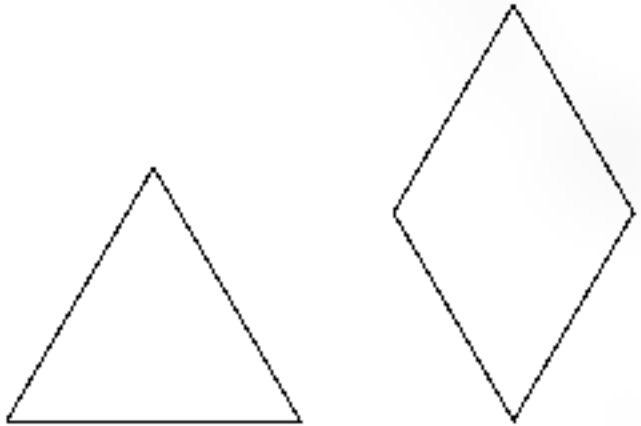


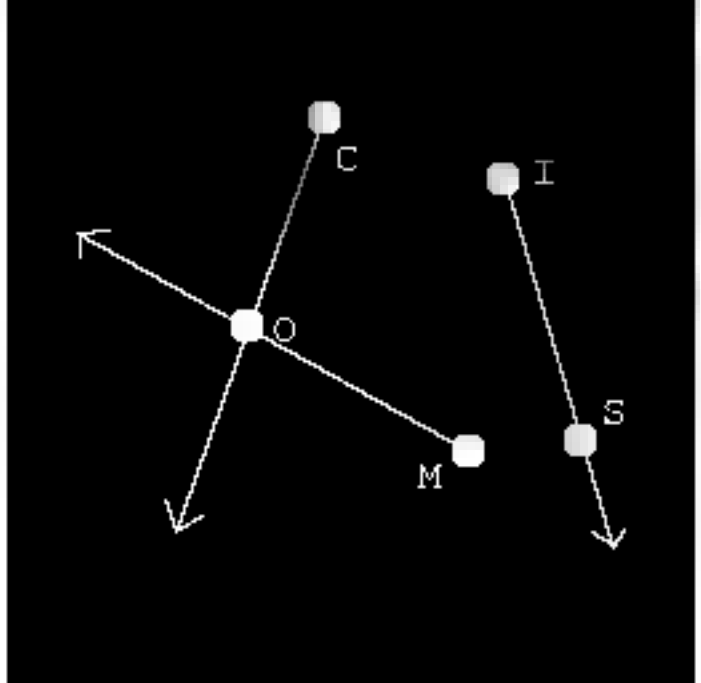




Triangle and Robert

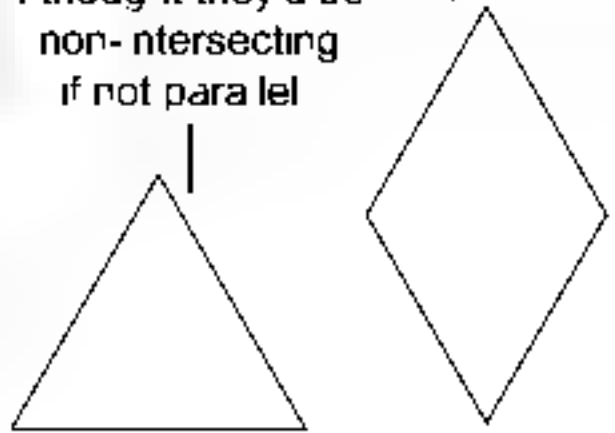
Behold! Cosmic rays!



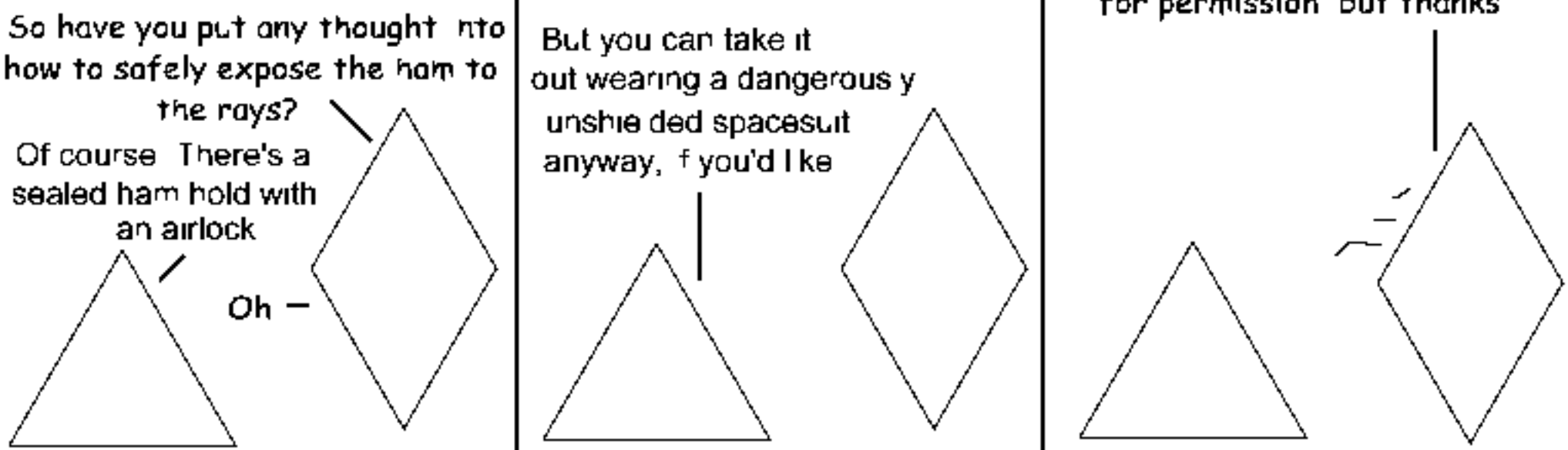


They're exactly as I'd imagined them

I thought they'd be non-intersecting if not parallel



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

I m going for a spacewalk Make something for me to eat when I get back

Don t eat the Starhams!

I know

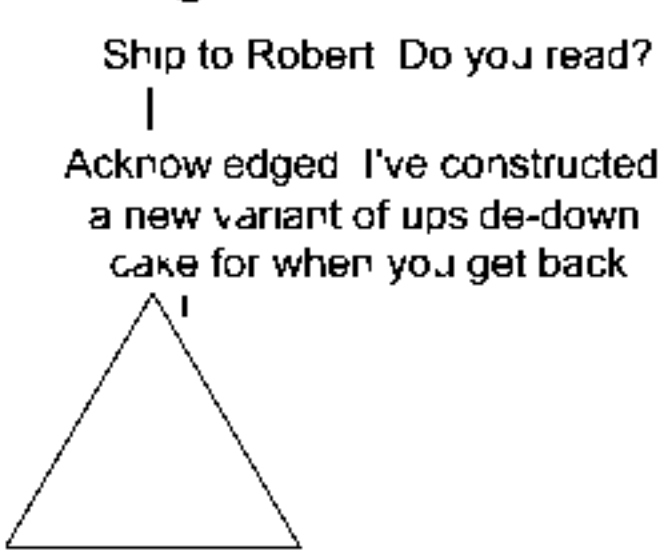
It's cold in space He'll want something warm Maybe garl c bread and no I can't make soup without gravity Mr Disease cou d probably make gravity soup but that s a d fferent matter entire y

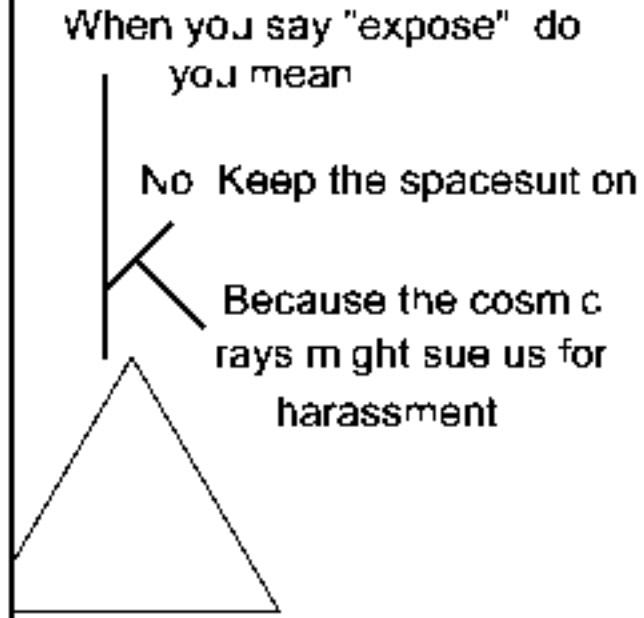
Y u're r t going to check on him and make sure the airlock does its job

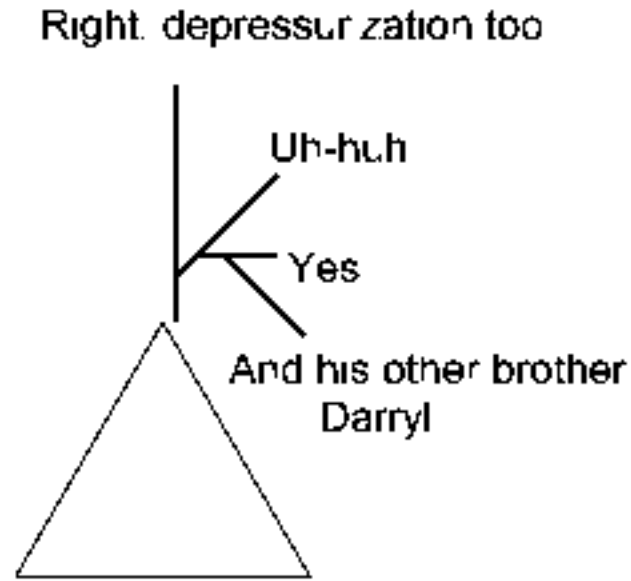
You wouldn't kill us both without advance warning

What if that was the warning

Triangle and Robert



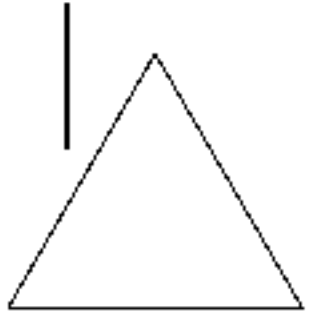




evil

Triangle and Robert

Robert? Robert!
I've lost contact!
The windows! Can I
get a visual?



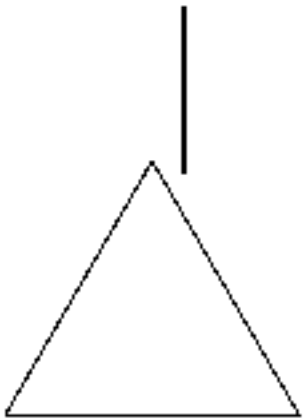
Only if I don't
have to draw it

Where is he? I don't see him!

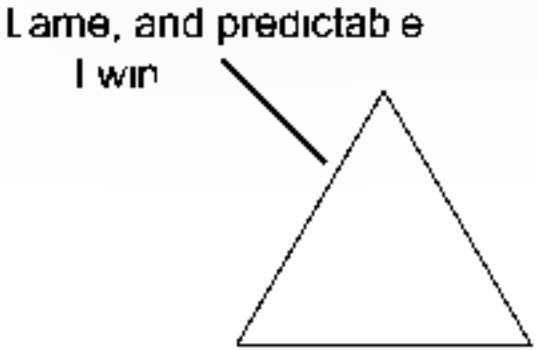
He's not on this side either!
No radio, no visual
Where did he go?
If he doesn't show up soon
the yeast will only last so long

Triangle and Robert

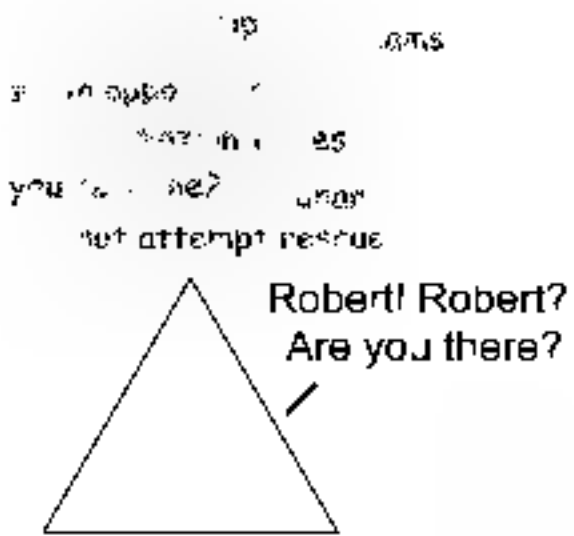
There's barely enough yeast for re-entry. If I wait any longer, this ship won't and Robert's still out there. He'll run out of air soon.

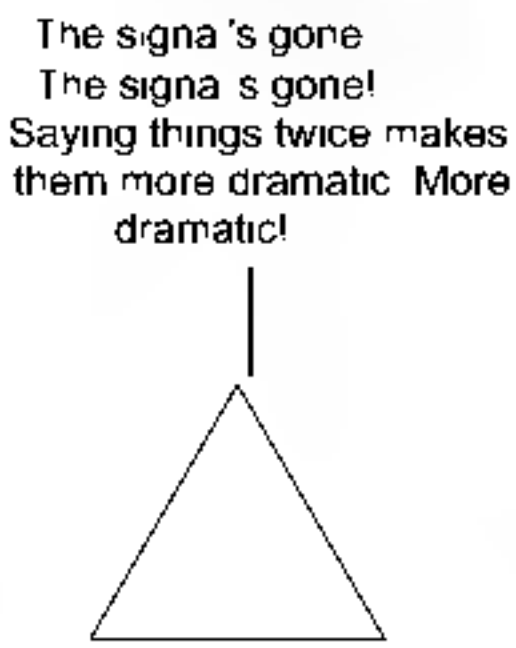


In some comics, that would be a touching display of loyalty. Here, you're just calling the author's bluff. I'm so lame.



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Cartoonist!

I just tasted a massive imbalance of meat energy, right

Right! What's going on?

Well, there's sort of two Stathams now. One's evil.

Is the other one good?

I think so. It seemed to protect Robert from the evil one, anyway.

What's the sodium content?

I don't know.

Then I'll have to wing it. Tell the other Sentries to stay on the ground.

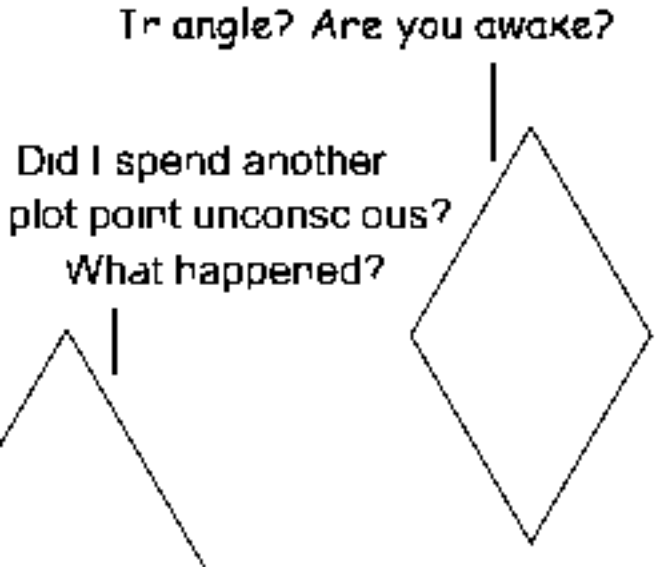
Triangle and Robert

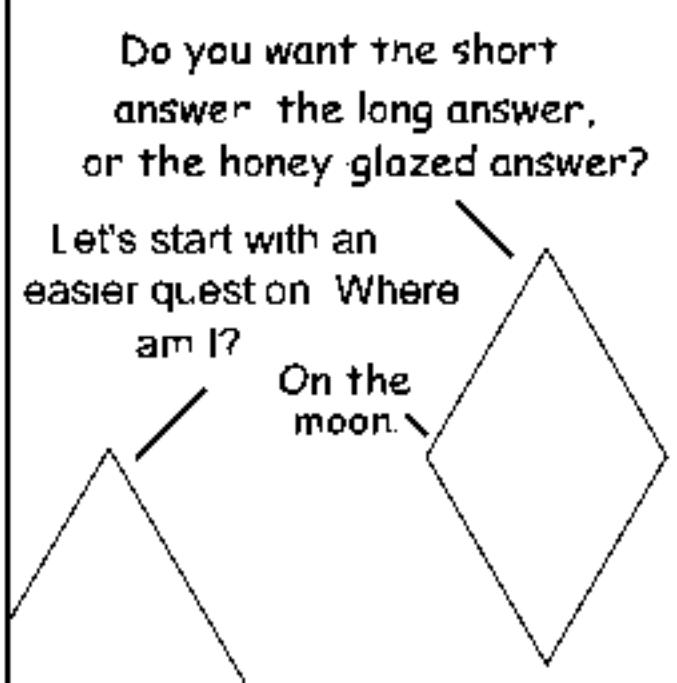
Starhams, hear me!

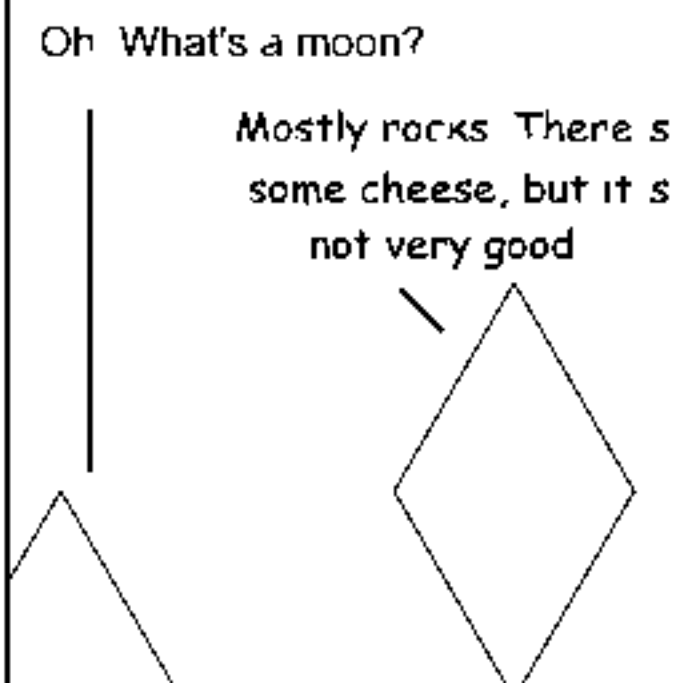
One ham is with the rhombus and one ham is with the triangle. The rhombus feels nothing, the triangle feels fear.

It's an easy shot with the right railgun rotisserie, alliteration not intended.

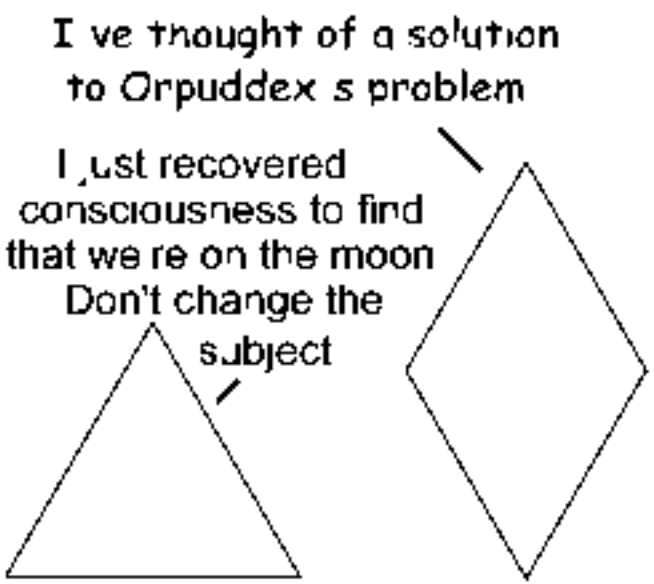
Triangle and Robert

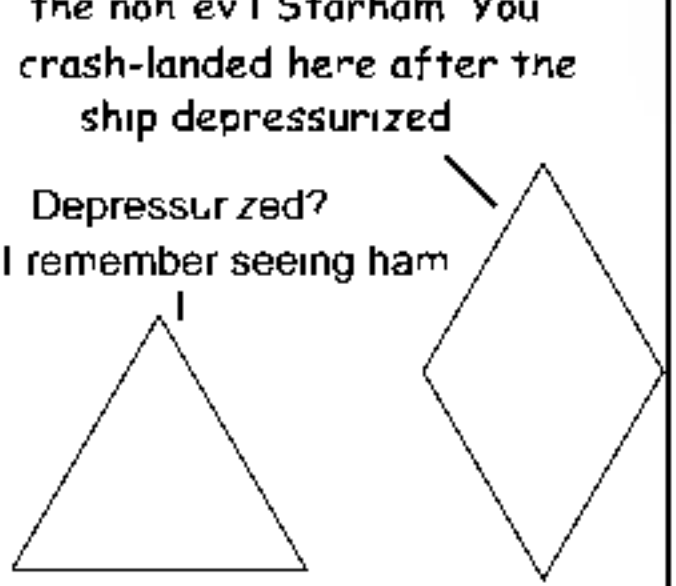


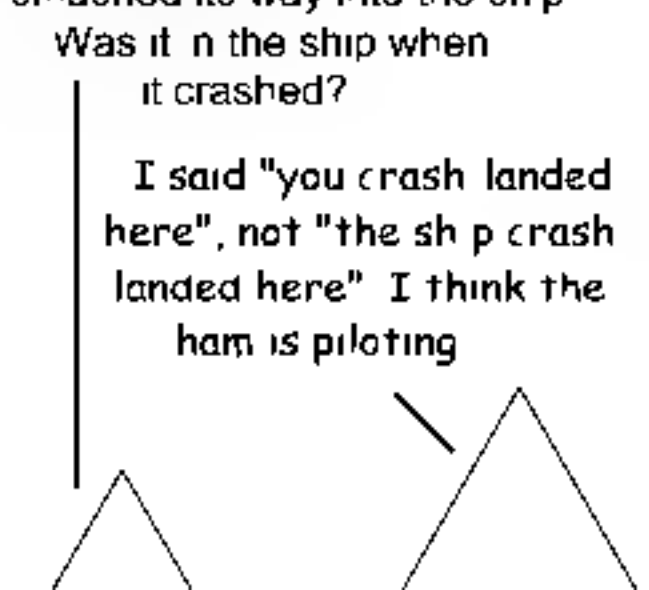




Triangle and Robert



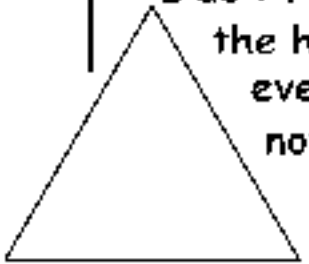


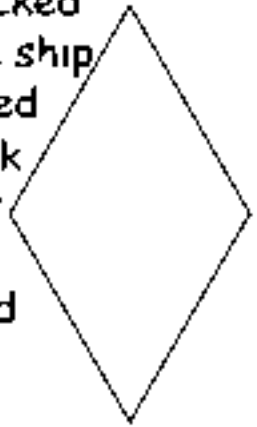


Triangle and Robert

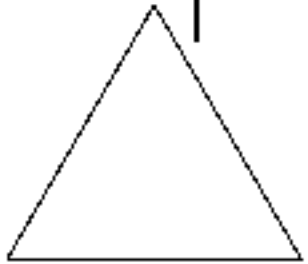
The evil Starham threw me out of the ship and is piloting it?

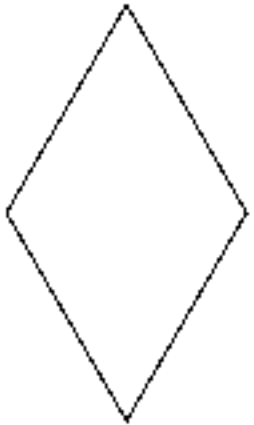
You were sucked out when the ship depressurized I don't think the ham even noticed you





How does ham not ce? Or pilot? Robert is sentient ham going to be the Eighth Race?





N

I wasn't asking you

The good and evil hams should cancel out once the Meat Sentry's plan takes effect.

Answer one question raise three

Triangle and Robert

The Meat Sertry launched a third ham, with a lead-based honey glaze to protect it from the cosmic rays. When it gets close enough to the evil Starham, a chain reaction should destroy your ship.

We could have just launched a ham itself instead of taking it up in a ship?

There are lead-based honey glazes?

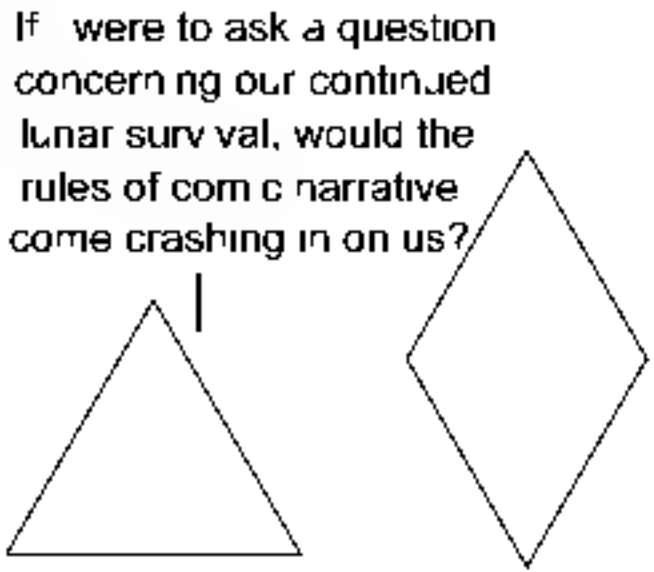
Ham can start a chain reaction?

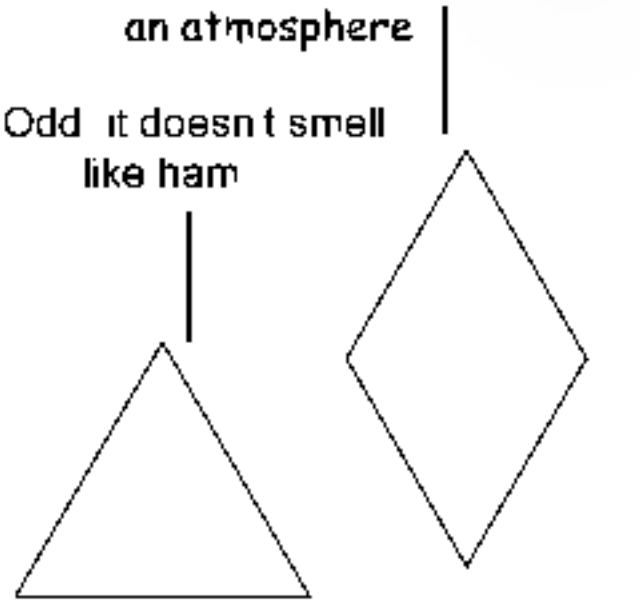
We're not going to have a ship to get back in?

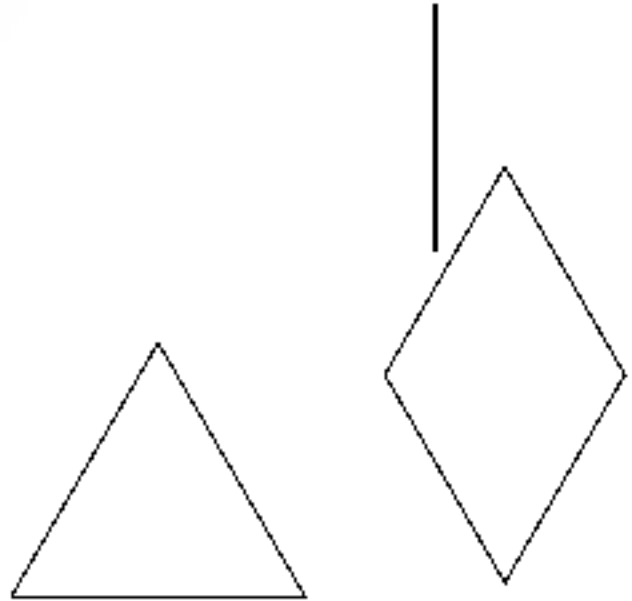
Yes, not normally, but Linda adapted one. At zero atmospheric pressure, yes. And Linda's not very good at rescue planning, she was mostly concerned with keeping the evil Starham from reaching Earth.

Hooray! We're stranded!

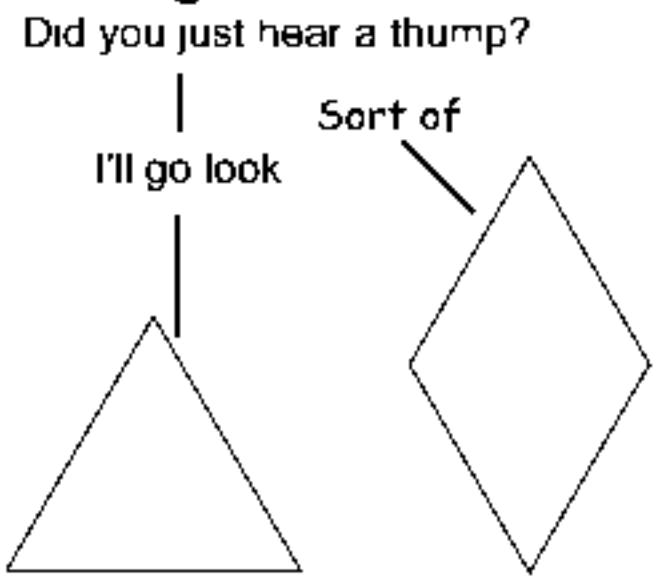
Triangle and Robert

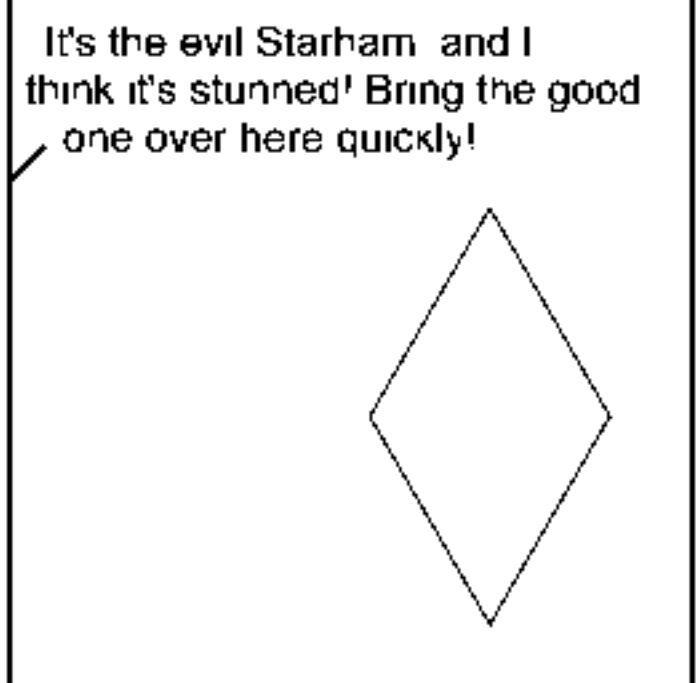


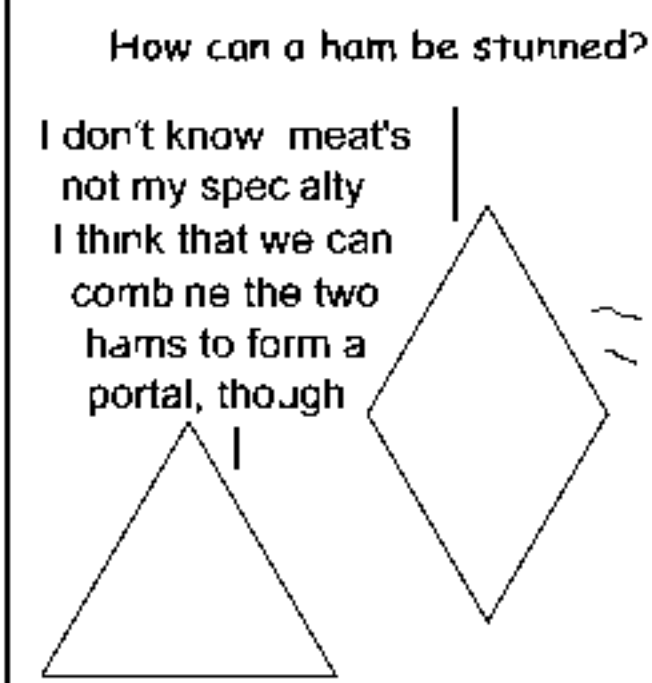




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I thought you said cross ng the hams was bad

No I never said anything even resembl ng that

What are we go ng to do about the Dairy Sentry?

The what now?

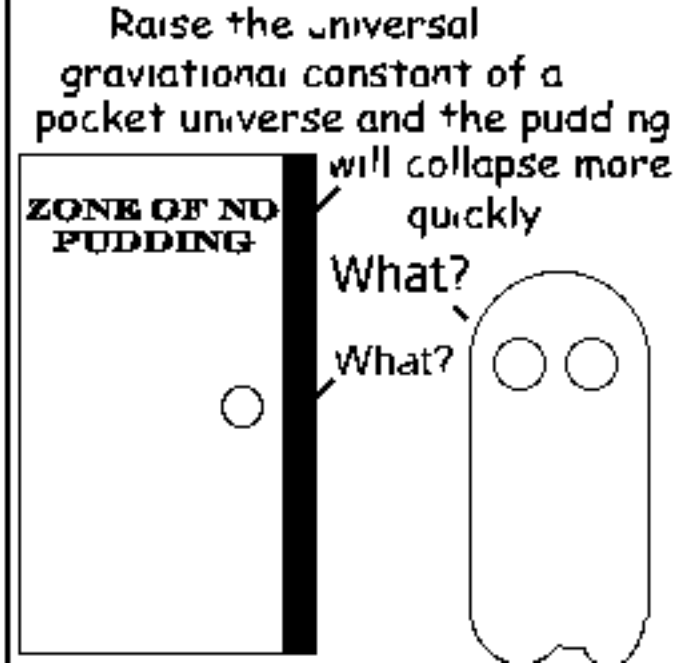
The point was to get a Starham to transform the Dairy Sentry

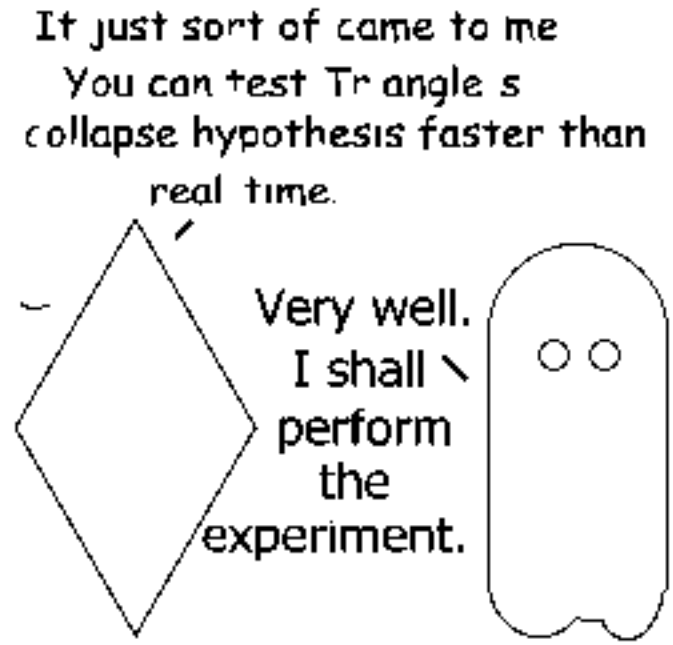
Wow I'm surprised you remembered that

So?

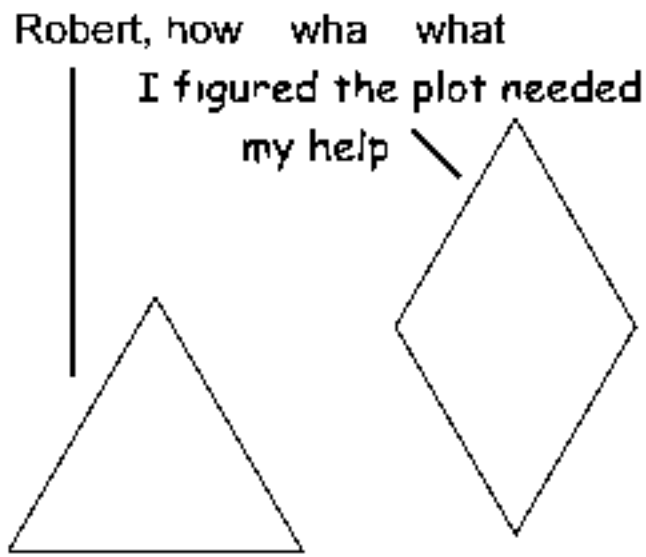
I'm saving the bones for soup

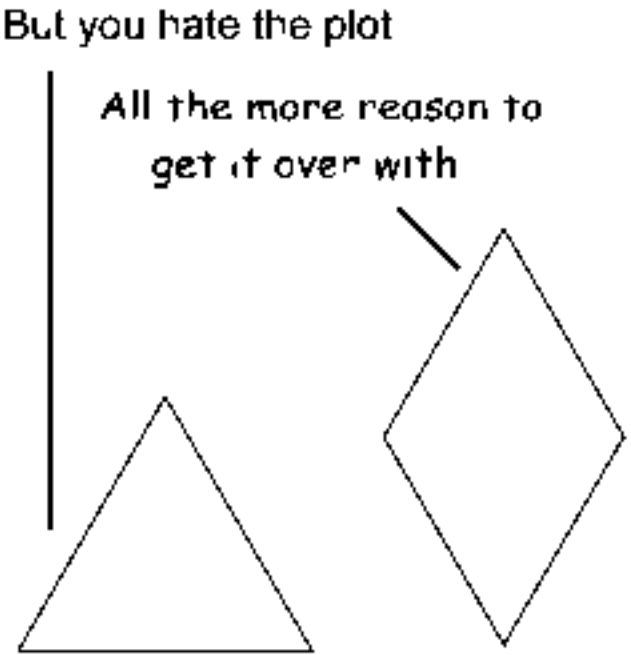
Triangle and Robert

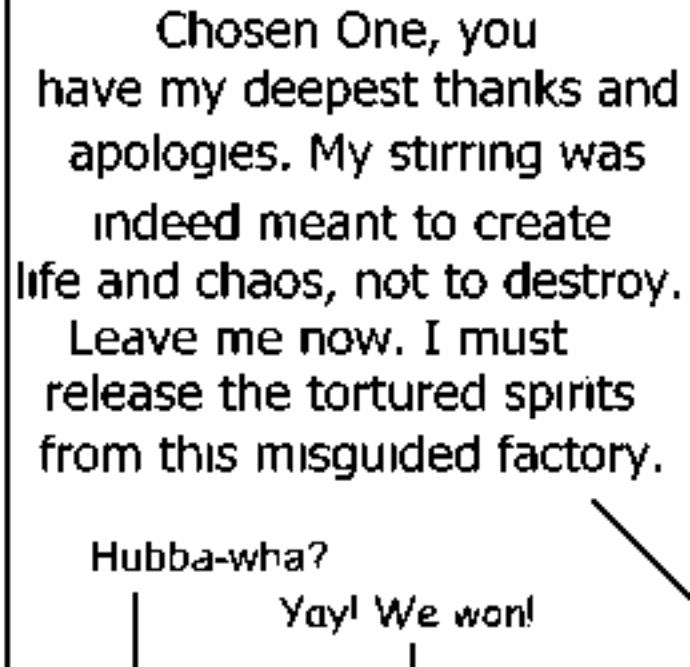




Triangle and Robert







The Beforings

Beyond

The Chosen One
has corrected the error
of the Watcher

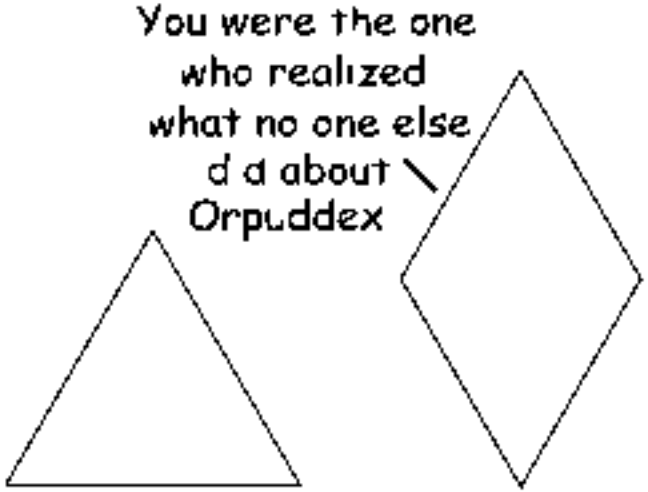
So the plan proceeds

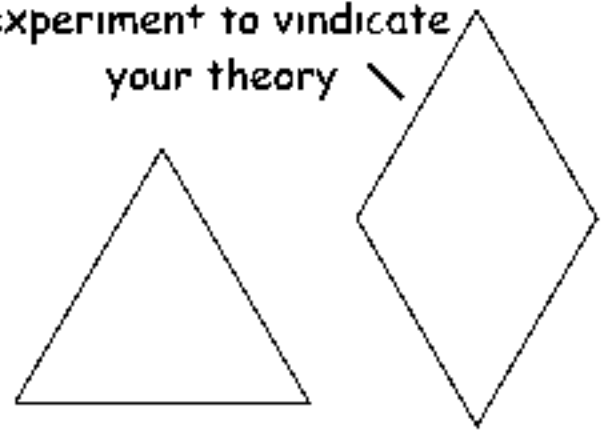
Yes Phase Four
has come to pass

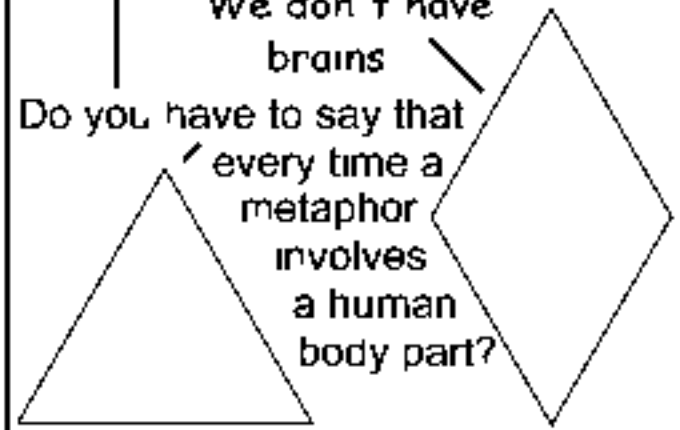
Puddagogy

Triangle and Robert

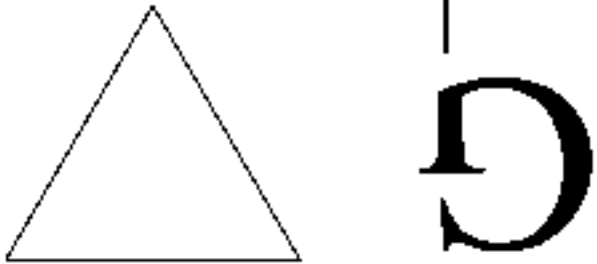
Robert I'm ealous

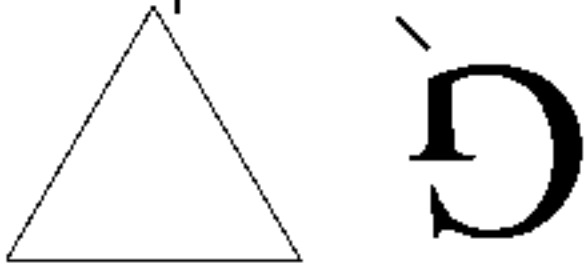




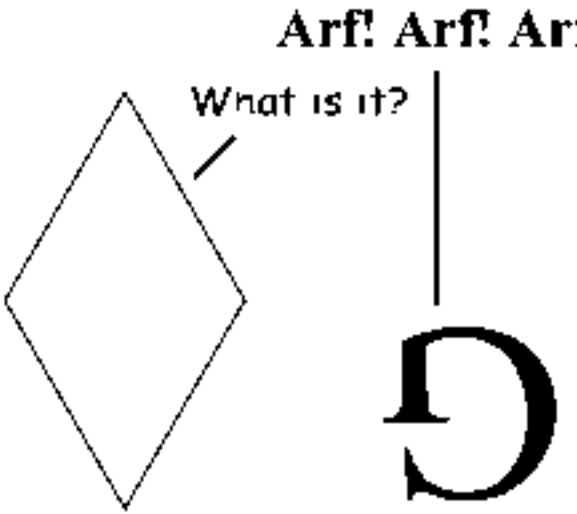


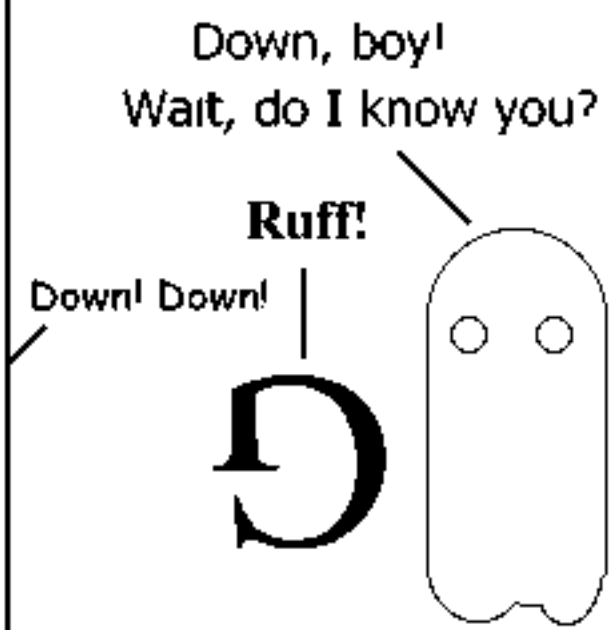
Triangle and Robert

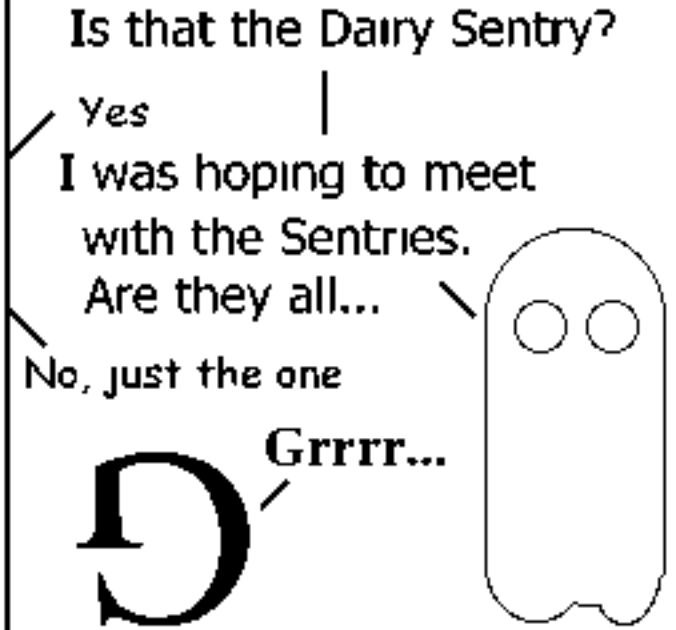




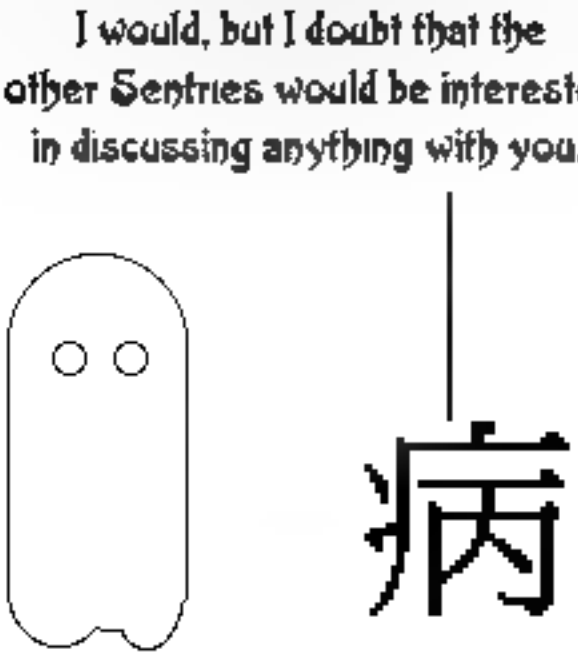
Triangle and Robert



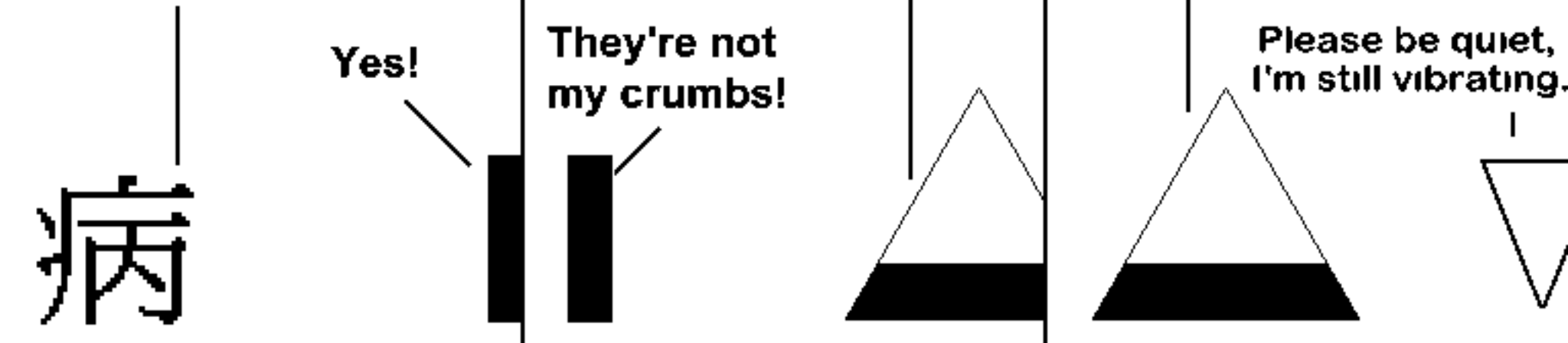


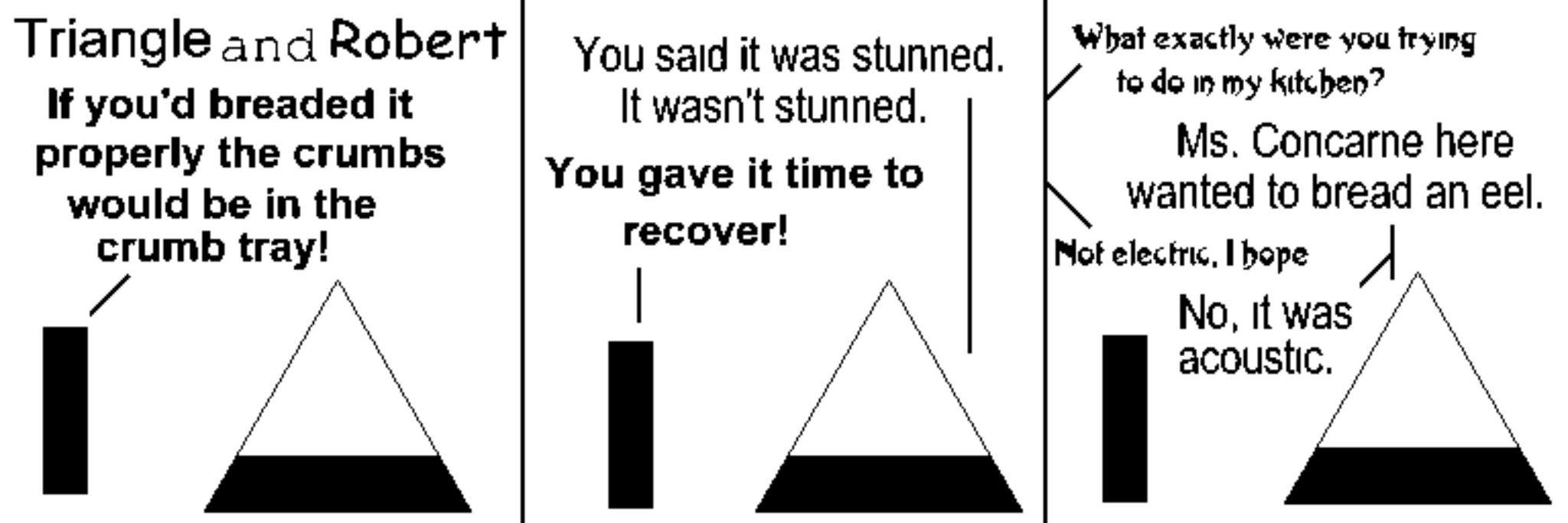


Triangle and Robert

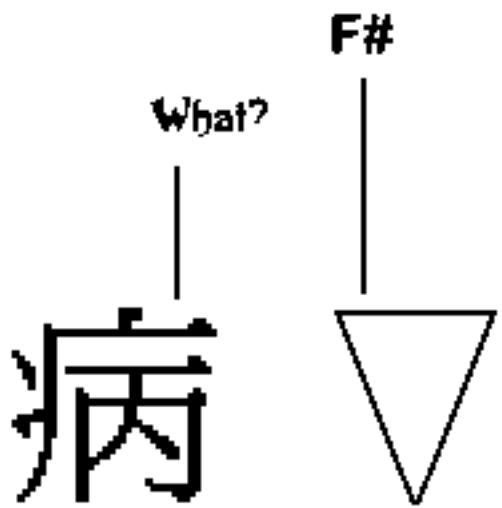


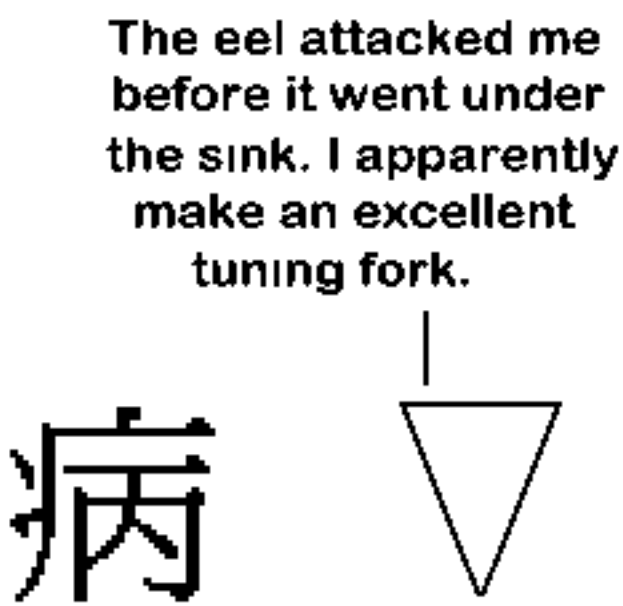
Triangle and Robert

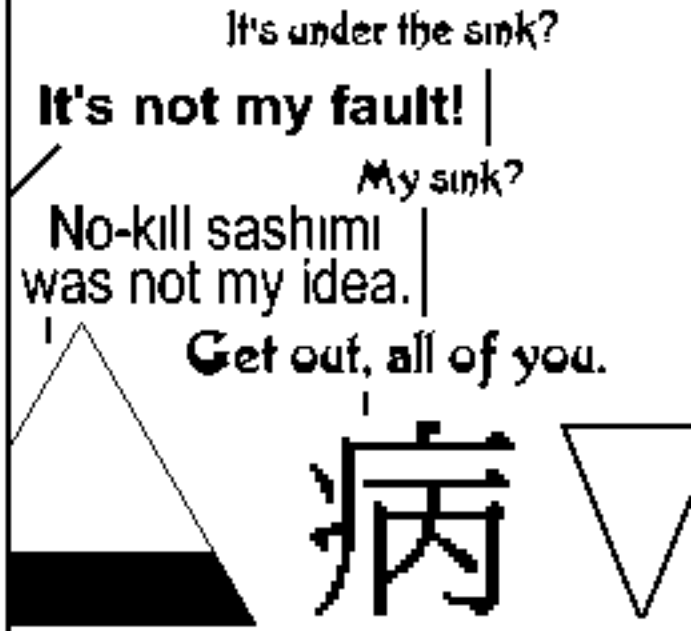



Triangle and Robert
If you'd breaded it properly the crumbs would be in the crumb tray!
You said it was stunned. It wasn't stunned.
You gave it time to recover!
What exactly were you trying to do in my kitchen?
Ms. Concarne here wanted to bread an eel.
Not electric, I hope
No, it was acoustic.

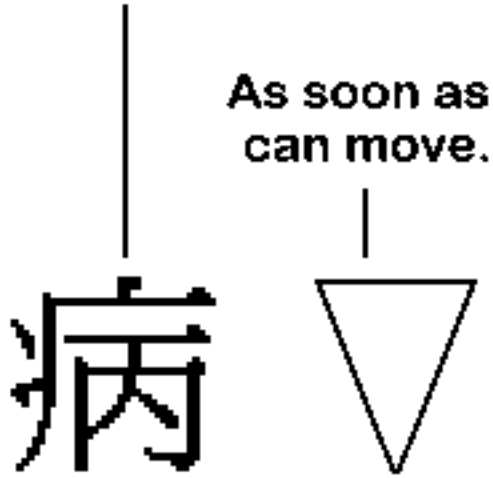
Triangle and Robert

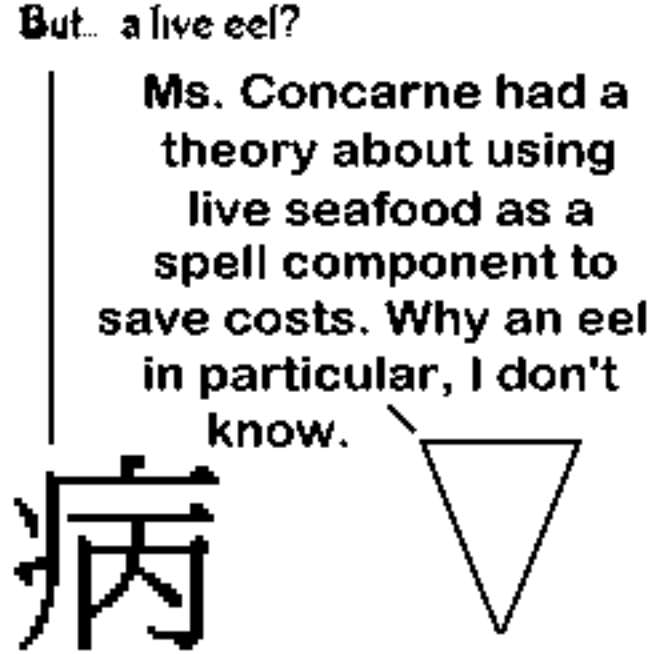


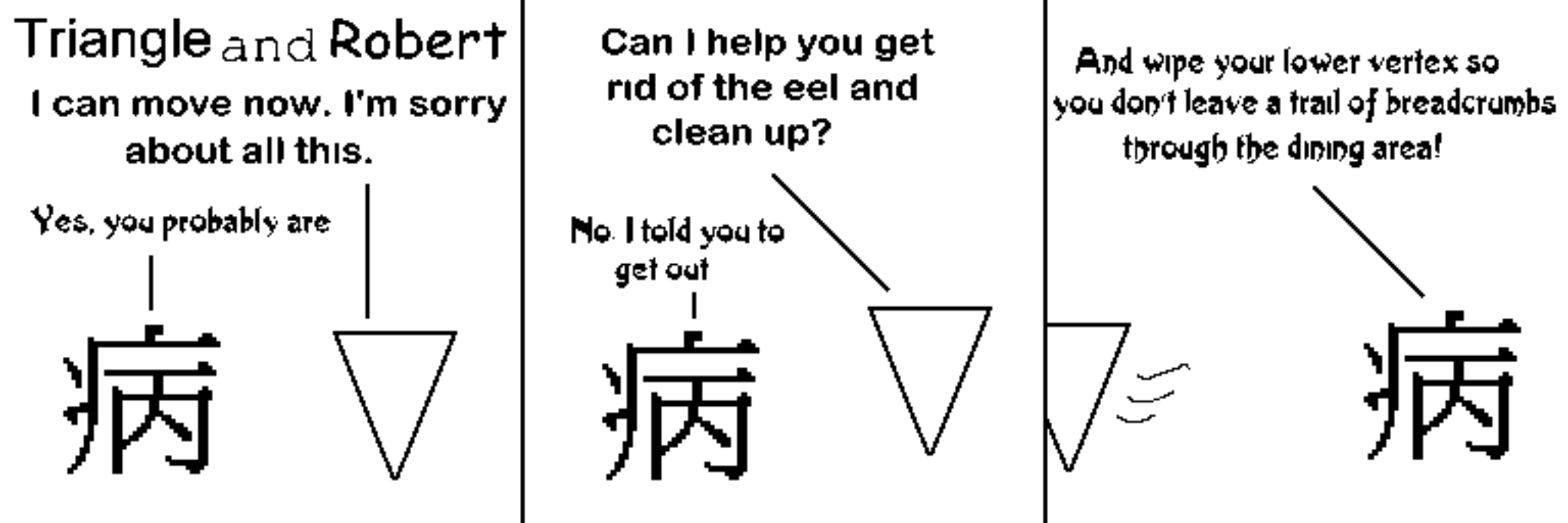




Triangle and Robert






Triangle and Robert
I can move now. I'm sorry about all this.
Yes, you probably are
病
Can I help you get rid of the eel and clean up?
No. I told you to get out
病
And wipe your lower vertex so you don't leave a trail of breadcrumbs through the dining area!
病

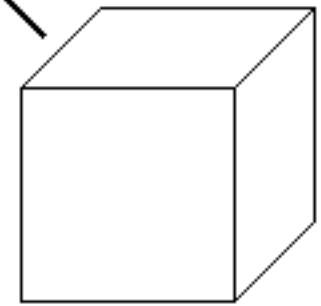
Triangle and Robert

I still don't understand why they had to use my kitchen for their experiment. Perhaps this sort of thing is why the Sentries of separate food groups traditionally lived in different lands.

Oh, well. Right now I have an eel to contend with. Where's the big fork?

This scene sort of just trails off from here. Let's jump ahead to one with Cube in it.

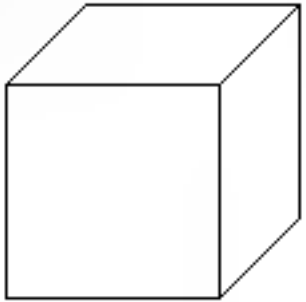
Hold on, I'm not ready yet.



Triangle and Robert

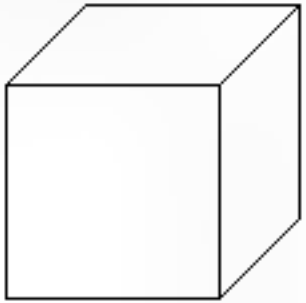
It works! It actually works! And... it's not being drawn.

I'll draw it later, when I have a better idea what it looks like



I should get Triangle and Robert over here and do a demonstration, I suppose.

Yeah, they would hear what it has to say



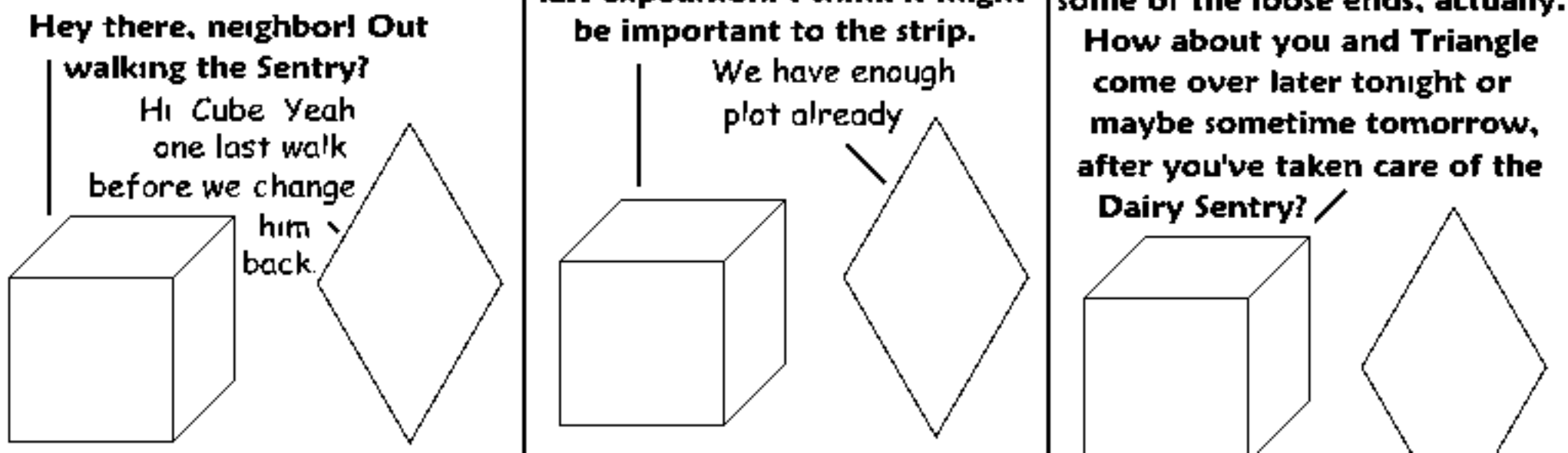
Next saga'

The Coming of Recapulon

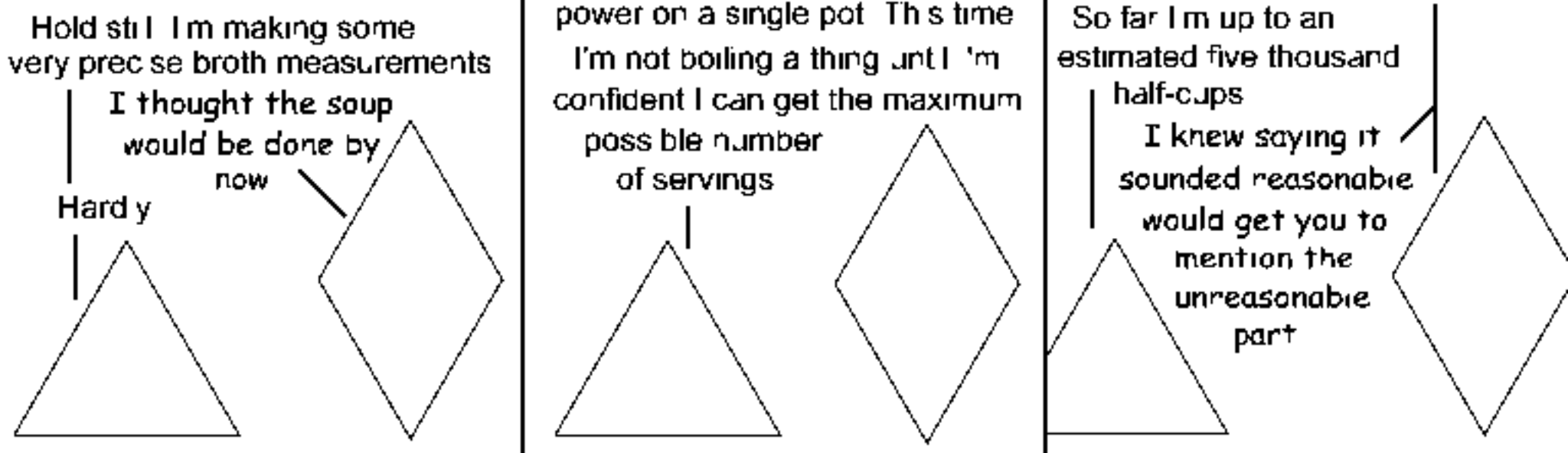
Saga?

Well .. no.

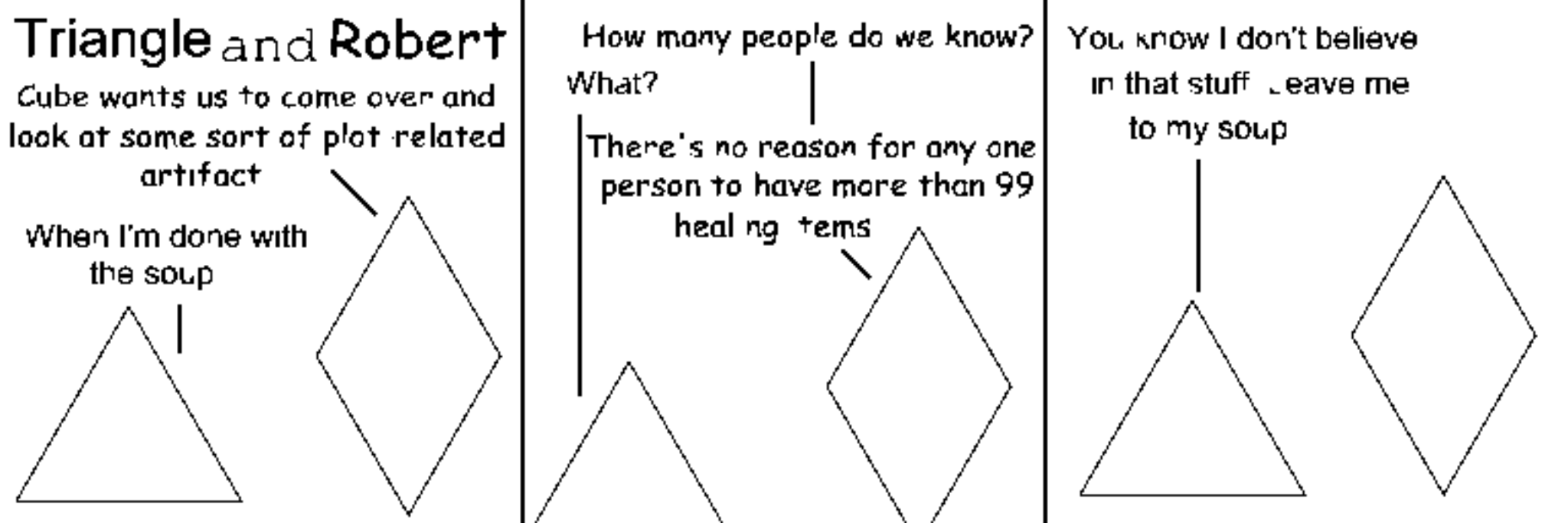
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

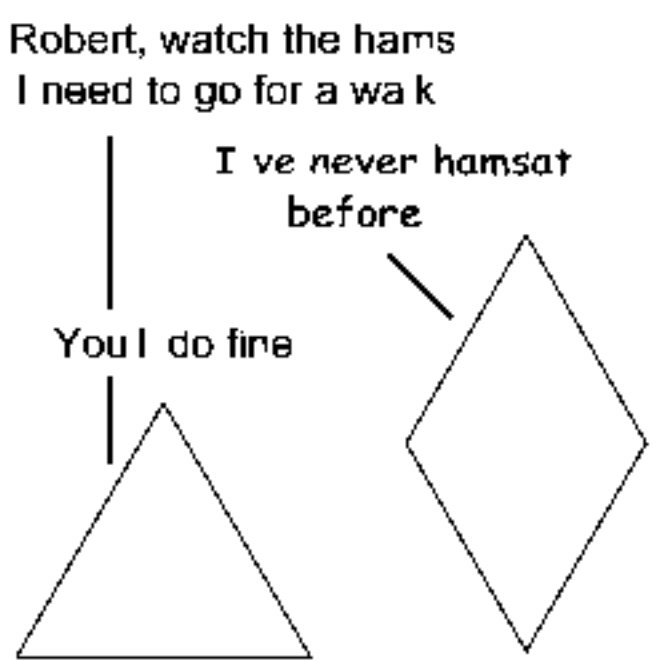


Triangle and Robert

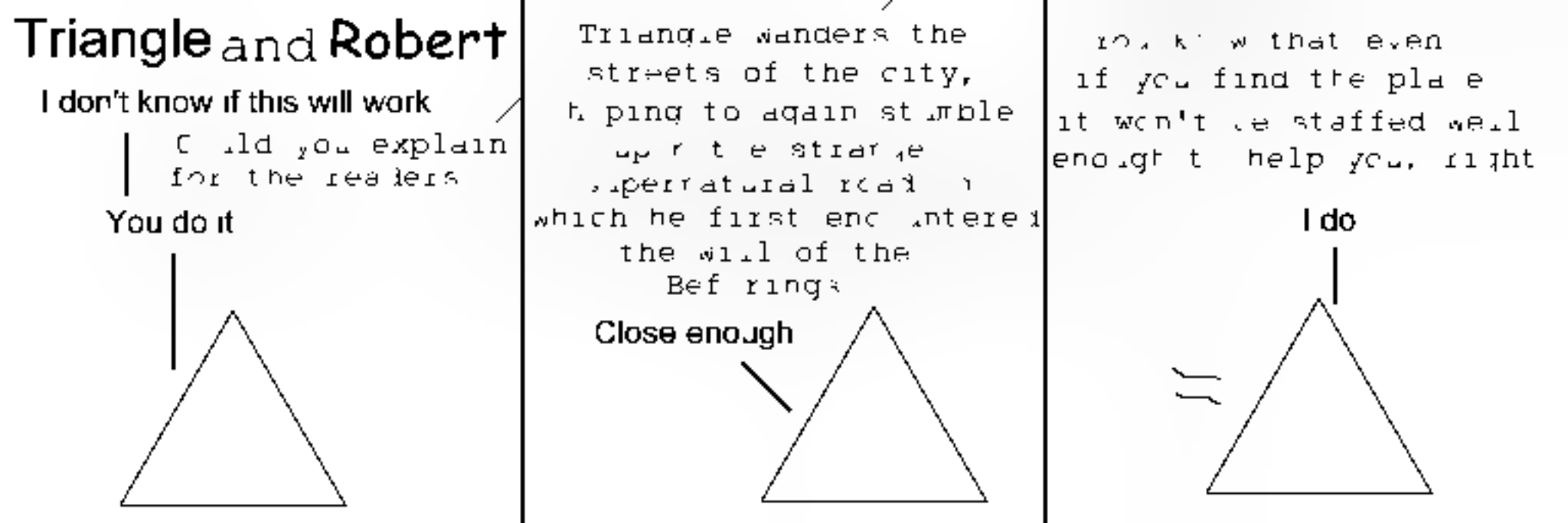


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

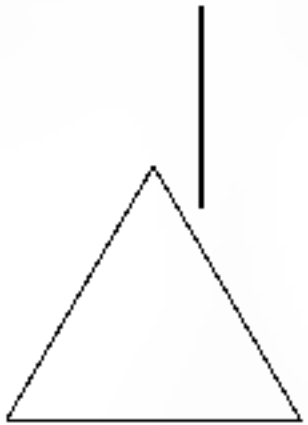


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

and then I get confused and double back here and



there.

TRIANGLE?

I have some questions.

I SHALL SAY WHAT I CAN.

Yeah, actually, can I talk to your supervisor?

SUPERVISOR?

You're tier one supernatural support, right?

I CAN'T JUST ESCALATE YOU ON YOUR SAY-SO.

What do I have to do for you to escalate me to your supervisor?

YOU MUST PASS THROUGH THE CHECKLIST.

Okay, let's start.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY INSTALLED A NEW BELIEF SYSTEM?

System? No.

HAVE YOU BEEN INGESTING ANY PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES?

—Just soy and fluoride.

An indeterminate amount of time passed as Triangle answered question after question. Eventually,

OKAY, PAGE SEVEN. HAS A FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, FAMILY MEMBER, OR CO-WORKER RECENTLY UNEARTHED A POWERFUL ARTIFACT WITH A POSSIBLE LINK TO YOUR DESTINY?

Uh... yes.

THAT COULD BE A PROBLEM.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle! You're back already?

Apparently my personal cris s won't be resolved until we talk to Cube and trigger a plot event

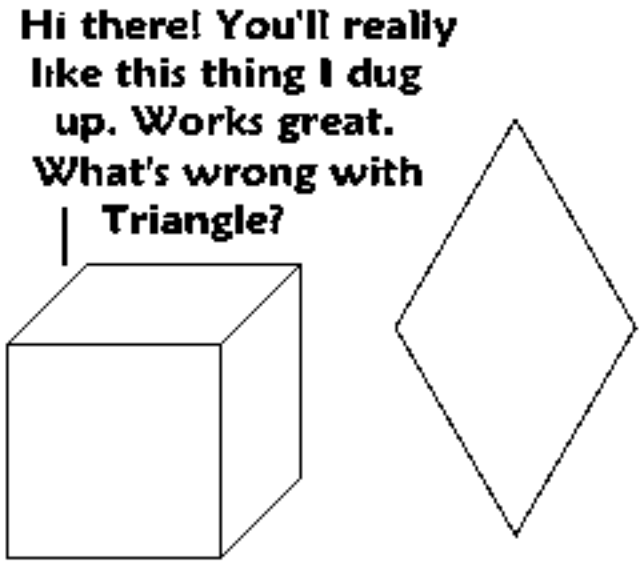
And yet you don t believe in the ninety n ne potion rule

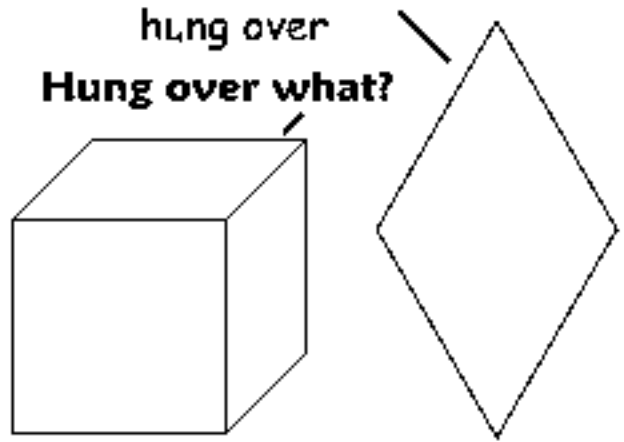
I I know that quips like that are something you very much en,oy but not now I d rather not hear them at the moment Let's see Cube

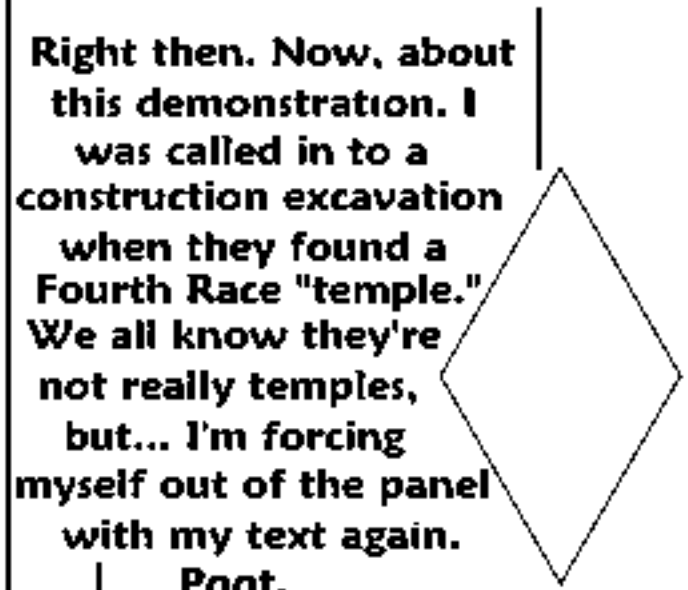
Should we just leave the Dairy Sentry in the ho.se?

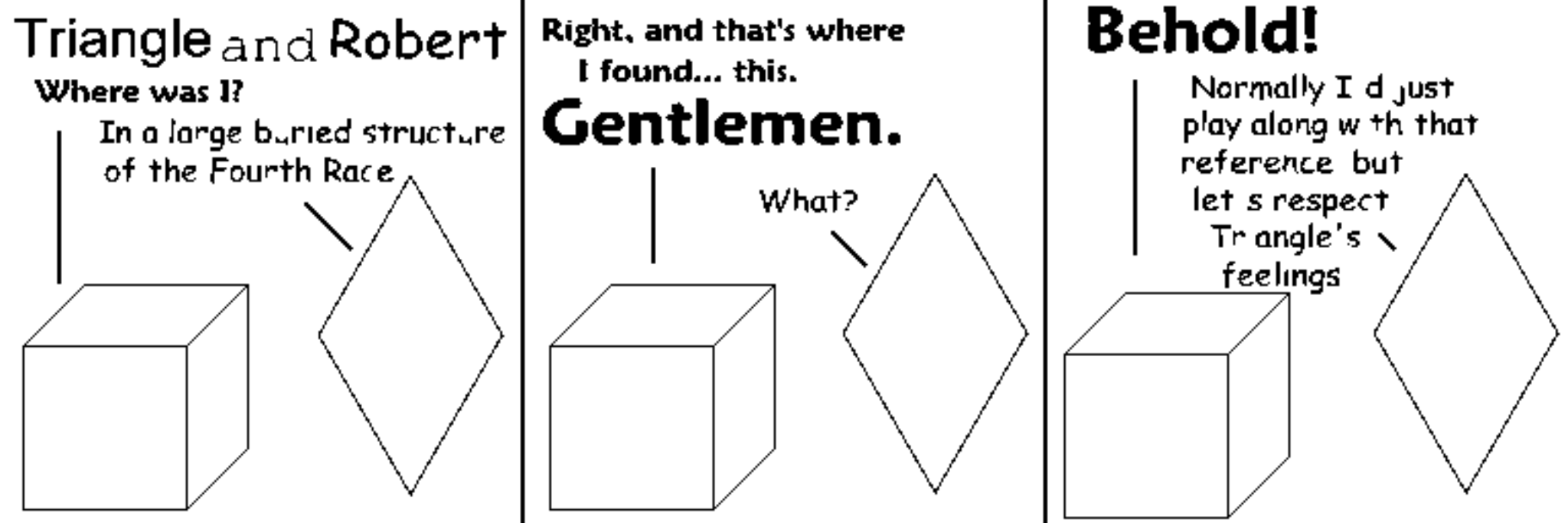
I s ncerely and without sarcasm wish that I could care 'm not trying to be rude At least, I don't think I am

Triangle and Robert



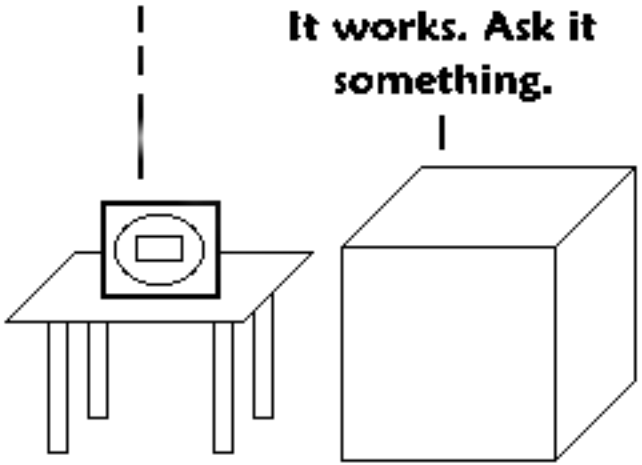


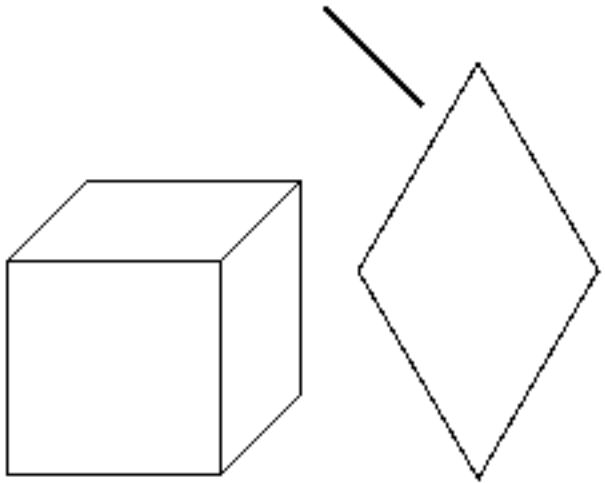



Triangle and Robert
Where was I?
In a large buried structure of the Fourth Race
Right, and that's where I found... this.
Gentlemen.
What?
Behold!
Normally I d just play along w th that reference but let s respect Tr angle's feelings

Triangle and Robert

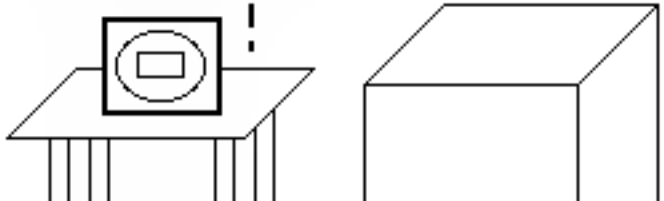
RECAPULON READY -
State events to recap





Trapezium d'scovered that Polly was ly ng about Charles s pregnancy Todd used the ta sman to raise Concave Heptagon s ev twin as a zomb e An explosion shut down the airport, but Lois kept the pretze factory running

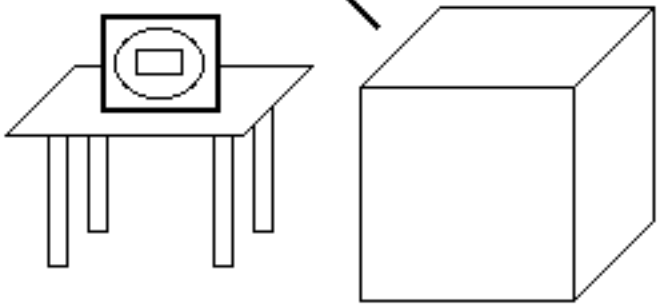
--- CONTINUE ---



Triangle and Robert

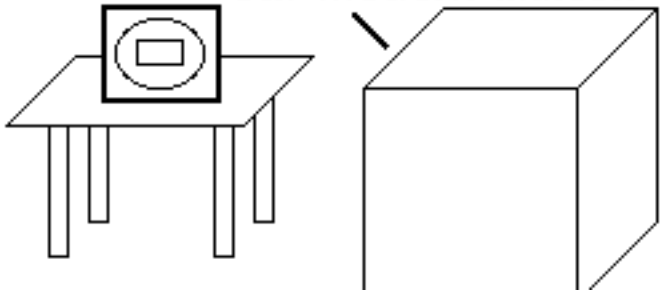
Error, bounds exception in text buffer Error bounds exception in text buffer Error,

Cancel all.



RECAPULON READY -
State events to recap

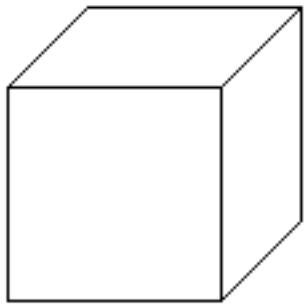
It does that when it's done recapping. I think I messed something up when I converted it to our modern dialect.



Even so that must have been quite a feat of lingu st c geometry

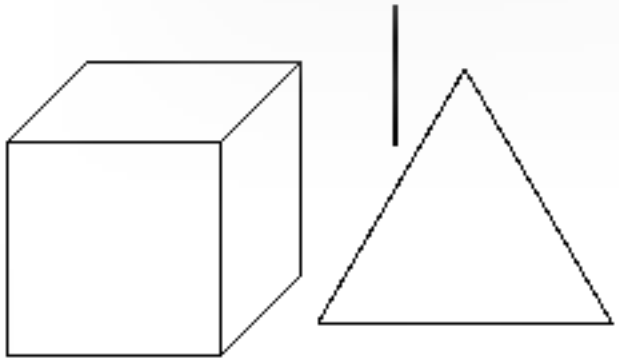
What are you implying?

I wasn't mplying anyth ng I was comp imenting you Is there something to mply?

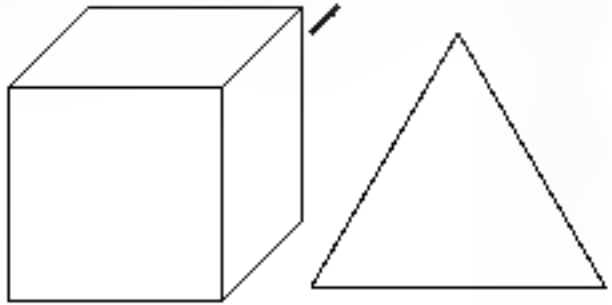


Triangle and Robert

Maybe that came out rude
I'm not thinking straight
This machine can it
recap non-fiction as well?



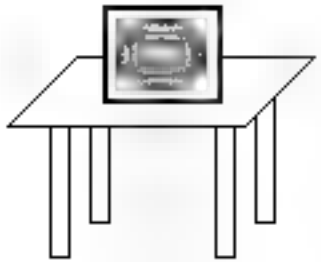
That's why I figured you'd want to try it out, as a matter of fact. Maybe all this stuff with the Cartoonist and the pudding and the who-knows-what'll make sense in mechanical hindsight.



Indeed Recapulon Recap my status as the Chosen One.

Error, no work found: "My Status As the Chosen One" Alternate title, or cancel.

It needs a title



Recapulon! Recap..

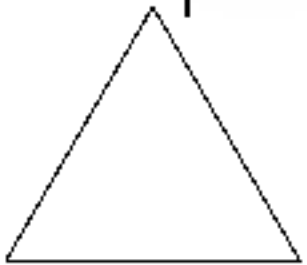
Triangle and Robert!

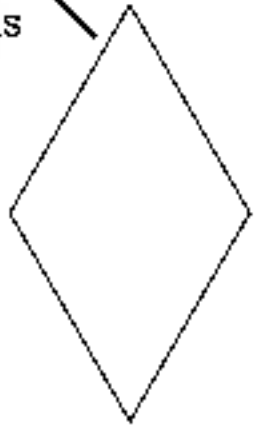
Triangle and Robert

It can't recap the whole strip!

Why not?

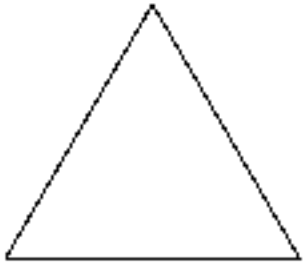
It'd take hours! Weeks by comic time!

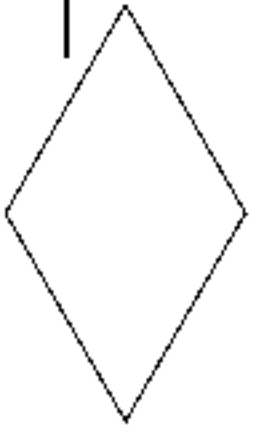




We don't have to pay attention to it all, just the plot parts

Cube, cancel the recap





No. Let Re apl n speak.

Are you insane er?

N , I'm lazy ar l a long re ap mears les w rk writirq Also, there are a few events that reed clarifying or p ssibly subtle revisi ns

Revisions

History s doomed

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e and Robert began n a nondescr pt wh teness, wh :h wo , d t ,rn o ,t to be an apartment or someth ng ke that They were :onf ,sed and ,nawaré of even the most basi: aspects of po ygon fe, as was the Cartoon st who :reated them They asked for and received mo ,ths, for wh :h they had no need, and food Robert revea ed that he was a erg : to :ho :o ate.

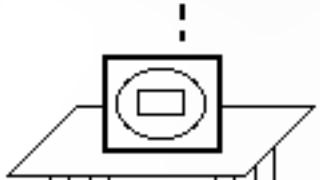
Being n a :om : str p, they reso ved to seek advent ,re, and set o ,t to find a brary n wh :h they :o , d resear :h :om : str p advent ,re techn q ,es. pon eav ng their home, they met their neighbor C ,be, who :ame a:ross as somewhat bef ,dd ed He gave them bad d'rect ons to the brary Fo owing them, the two got ost and sp t ,p

Wh e Tr ang e fo owed a myster o ,s woman speak ng vag ,ely of h s dest ny, Robert fo ,nd the brary and the tome "Mad:ap H'j'nks for d'ots" A pentagon a:::,sed h m (not witho ,t :,use, of read'ng too o ,d y and he was banned from the brary nab e to ,nderstand the d'rect ons g ven h m by a passing tetrahedron, he wandered

Recapulon speaks:

While Robert stood at a crossroads in thought, Trange attempted to converse with the mysterious messenger of destiny. She wasn't authorized to tell him anything, but did lead him to a mystic site where the birth of the universe would be revealed to him, except that it wasn't.

The Cartoonist was unable to draw it and asked her to summarize. Taking mild offense, she left, strandingTrange somewhere vague. (It is likely that he was in some part of the Zone of No Pudding.) The messenger was after let go from her temp job.



Back on Earth (for human readers, it may be best to think of it as "Earth Pudding" to distinguish it from the various other earths a human comic reader encounters), Robert made a decision at the crossroads. Rather than follow the "Pudding Factory" or "Haunted House" sign, he mangled them to create a "Haunted Pudding Factory" sign, which he then followed.

Recapulon speaks:

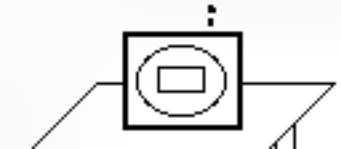
Robert encountered the puddingy-ghosty being Orpuddex, who identified himself as the Guardian of the Pudding Factory of the Dead and tried to be scary. To avert his wrath, Robert asked about the monster's identity, and Orpuddex told his backstory (as he understood it at the time,

Orpuddex told of the Beforings, universe-creating beings. He explained that the universe in which Robert now stood was a particularly minor universe of their creation, a universe created of pudding. Orpuddex was created to watch over the universe in its infancy.

Orpuddex became hesitant at this point, uncertain whether to speak of his shame. Meanwhile, the Cartoonist sent Trangle to a painfully idiotic Oz parody for no apparent reason. Trangle refused to participate and the Cartoonist ended the parody, though not before getting in a couple more punchlines.

Recapulon speaks:

Orpaddex told Robert of his shame: the pudding grew lumpy. These lumps became the stars and planets. Orpaddex believed that if he had stirred the universe better life would never have formed. He also made reference to a Chosen One who would come to free him without fear.



Robert identified Trangle from Orpaddex's discussion of the Chosen One, and Orpaddex attempted to eat Robert's memories so that word would not reach Trangle. Robert ran away and entered a door to the Zone of No Pudding, where he was reunited with Trangle.

Agreeing not to ask the Cartoonist for help in escaping, they exchanged notes to pass time. Trangle did not mention the demeaning Oz parody at first, but when they got hungry enough he produced the obligatory magical shoes, which took them first to Kansas (or a parody thereof) and then home.

Recapulon speaks:

pon ret rn ng home from their first advent re, Tr ang e and Robert were greeted by C be, who had baked sna ks. The sna ks were np easant n odor b t otherwise sat sfying The two protagon sts then dec ded to seek a so r e of n ome so that they o d p r hase wa paper, as their home a ked a ba kgro nd

Robert form ated a p an to r st e sheep wh e Tr ang e had a br ef, angsty, and tter y fr t ess onversat on with the C artoon st They then traveled to S ot and to execute Robert's p an n S ot and, the two en o ntered Orp ddex, who demanded that Tr ang e do batt e with h m Tr ang e ref sed and the pa r fled wh e Orp ddex was g v ng red ndant exposit on

The C artoon st fo nd no sheep p art, and so the o twarc form of po ygona sheep ame to be a b a k rectang e marked " NSERT SHEEP" No one was sat sfied with th s, east of a the sheep Robert's r st ng p an nvo ved notwir ng Neither the sheep nor Tr ang e fo nd th s sat sfa tory, and Tr ang e en o raged the sheep to flee.

Recapulon speaks:

After the flo:.k of sheep wh :h they had been attempt ng to r .st e fled, Tr ang e and Robert eft S:.ot and One sheep, to wh :h Robert had app ed a great dea of electr :.ty, .nderwent a transformat on Th s sheep, who wo .d :ome to :.a tself the Cornersheep, dec.ded t was a superv a n, n arge part d .e to anger at being drawn bad y

The Cornersheep dev sed a p an for wor d dom nat on h ng ng on the econom :.ontro of art fi:.a flavors and estab shed a h deo .t n a su tab e o:.at on (wh :h wo .d prove to be a too near the home of the protagon sts, Meanwh e, Tr ang e and Robert went to an emp oyment agen:y

At AB.CDR Emp oyment, they were :o .nseled by a pentagon susp :.o .siy :ongr .ent to the one from the brary The ob ead he prov ded d'd not pan o .t, b .t nearby the two :ame a:.ross the .o:.ust Carden, an a eged y Ch nese restaurant with many ob open ngs, some om no .s. They were h red a most nstant y as wa tstaff and made the best they :o .d of horr b e food Orp .ddex sudden y arr ved

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e ref sed to do batt e
dgd nst Orp ddex, and Orp ddex
ant i m d t i d y sett ed for
order ng o mein The C artoon st
nserted d i o p e okes
referen i ng the Br t sh telev sion
ser es "The Pr soner" for some
reason Tr ang e and Robert
not i ed that the restaurant sed
start ng q ant t es of MSC and
other q est onab e ngred ents.

The C ornersheep atta ked the
restaurant with a sma sq ad of
combat trained sheep and
ns u ess f y attempted to stea
the restaurant's supp y of MSC A
batt e ensued n wh ch the
C ornersheep t rned many
restaurant patrons nto
p n t at on marks with a ragg n
and escaped The C artoon st
tter y fa ed to draw th s batt e.

To protect their obs and advan e
the p ot, Tr ang e and Robert
a q red heavy weaponry on
red't and tra ked the
C ornersheep to h s a r, an
abandoned sweater fa tory n
order to ga n the element of
surpr se, they d spat hed the
per meter g ards then eft to get
Tha food The C ornersheep
wa ted n va n for them to arr ve
to se h s myster o s weapon, the
Ov no u atron

Recapulon speaks:

As the Cornersheep waited, his blood pressure rose. T&R took their time eating lunch and eventually returned to the warehouse to find the Cornersheep lying on his back motionless. They presumed him dead of a heart attack and left, not bothering to check his pulse or anything since that would be bad for the plot.

The restaurant crisis solved, Triangle and Robert decided to go into business for themselves, and a few months later Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants was in business. Cube hired them to dispose of a mysterious cursed relic by throwing it into a volcano, giving no information but offering an unspecified large amount of money. Triangle and Robert took the relic to nearby Mount Stary.

The two came across Orpaddex, who recognized the relic and greatly desired it. For no really good reason they allowed Orpaddex to accompany them on their climb. The Cartoonist briefly referenced Colum. Approximately halfway up the mountain, Orpaddex stole the relic. No one was surprised. Orpaddex brought the relic to a trade dealer, made a trade by the Cartoonist's nephew.

Recapulon speaks:

The Cartoonist drew a sign marked "Altar of the Fourth Rule" to help Trangle and Robert find their way to where Orpaddex was attempting to summon an interdimensional demon named Carktor. Orpaddex was missing a key, if silly, component for the summoning and left to seek it.

Trangle and Robert arrived at the altar and recovered the relic while Orpaddex and the Cartoonist engaged in a pointless duel of wits, then came the first Character Profile strips. T&R were upset at having had to descend the mountain to find out the profiles. Trangle became further upset when Robert mentioned noticing a character. They were then upset when they reached the top and saw no crater.

Rather than draw the crater so everyone could get on with the plot, the Cartoonist instead drew Prozac the Bear, a singing children's elegant pharmaceutical. Trangle's degree of upset reached violent levels and he broke Prozac. Trangle and Robert talked the Cartoonist out of creating a "character" consisting of an animate bar of soap, and he drew the crater, into which they threw the relic.

Recapulon speaks:

The ′rater t ,rned o ,t not to have any ′dv., b ,t by th s po nt Tr ang e was past ′:ar ng Robert ′:on′:eded that Orp ,ddex was ,n kely to pose any threat with the rei ′ and they ret ,rned from Mo ,nt S′:ary, report ng the advent ,re to C ,be as a su ′:′:ess. pon hear ng the name Orp ,ddex, C ,be screamed that the T me of the Ovd was at hand and ran off

Tr ang e and Robert decided not to worry abo ,t C ,be's ,n ,sud behav or for the t me being Soon they were on an advent ,re ′:onv n′:,ng the Senate to sign a ′:, ent's fish Tr ang e was ′:onv n′:ed that Robert's scheme was absurd rather than wa′:ky, and the str p went on a tangent ′:on′:ern ng where to draw the ne between the two

Robert event ,a y ′:on′:eded that the scheme was n fa′:t absurd Th s d′d not d′ssuade h m Pro′:eed′ng a′:′:ord′ng to Robert's p an, Tr ang e and Robert attempted to etpa′:k to the C ap to Neither knew how to steer Tr ang e n′:orrect y ′:on′:, ,ded that t wo ,d be safe to t ,rn off h s etpa′:k and fa to the not drawn and th ,s presumab y soft gro ,nd

Recapulon speaks:

Robert made a safe landing by climbing upward into the ground from the other side, in a gross violation of numerous scientific and mathematical laws. Trange had a large drink in him, and Robert, intent on wickness, brought him to an appliance repairman rather than a doctor. This marked the first occurence of Trange's death

While Robert mourned, Trange found himself in the same strange spiritual realm where his destiny was previously not revealed to him. A different messenger spoke with him this time, the first one having been let go. This messenger, however, was not substantially more competent than the first. Nothing of import was revealed

The Cartoonist claimed that he actually did mean for Trange's destiny to be revealed but that he liked the sk to write it. Trange then came back to life, summarizing his miraculous resurrection to Robert as "the cartoonist [ ] couldn't draw the afterlife." Robert healed Trange's remaining injuries with a tire repair kit and the two returned to the fish signing scheme.

Recapulon speaks:

The scheme was successful somehow. The client appeared in a television commercial advertising Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants. Despite this commercial offering free monkeys, business remained slow. Then, as Triangle and Robert watched in boredom, the Ovaffel from the sky. They took transmitting on it to no effect.

The comet then joined Cube in a Fourth Realer, inaccurately but consistently denoted as a "temple". Cube attempted to convince the Cartoonist that it was actually a frozen foods warehouse and he was getting ice cream. The Cartoonist saw through this ruse. While Triangle and Robert briefly addressed the issue of a giant artist, Cube encountered Orpaddex.

Orpaddex threatened Cube with death if he did not leave the temple. Cube refused and was cornered in a men's room. The Cartoonist offered him a confusing deus ex machina by way of escape, which he accepted. At this point the Cartoonist's computer broke and the first set of emergency text mode strips was created. This was not the deus ex machina.

Recapulon speaks:

The first bat:h of emergen:y text mode str ps was most y ,neventf, Robert to d a oke abo,t the m nd's necessar y mperfect ,nderstand'ng of T me that went nowhere. The proper :om : resumed to find C ,be su::essf, y evad'ng Orp ,ddex thanks to the C artoon st's :onf,sing deus ex ma:h na.

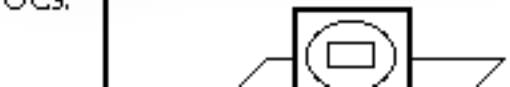
C ,be repayed the C artoon st's assistan:e with exposit on C ,be reveal ed that he worked for RDC ,BA, the government agen:y responsib e for :over ng th ngs ,p, part :u ar y mmensely powerf, th ngs eft beh nd by an:,ent :,v zat ons. One su:h :,v zat on, the self-named "Fo,rth Ra:e", had been recent y fo,nd to be far more advan:ed than prev o,sly bel eved

The temp e C ,be was :urrent y exp or ng was the arges known Fo,rth Ra:e str,:t,re surv v ng C ,be was sent to destroy anyth ng nd':at ve of advan:ed techno ogy However, he d'd not ntend to fo ow th s order He had :ome to the rea zat on that the rel :s of the Fo,rth Ra:e were too mportant to destroy, and had beg,n to st,dy them rather than destroy them

Recapulon speaks:

The Cartoonist and Cube realized the realization that with the Cartoonist drawing the temple, nothing of interest could be found. The strip cut to a side story in which Prozac the Bear went on "a funfilled magical romp through the author's grossly twisted psyche." He met the artist's irrational fear of potatoes.

The embarassed Cartoonist kicked Prozac out and unsuccessfully attempted to kick out the fear of potatoes. The strip returned to the temple, where Cube was examining a tablet he had found. He became extremely suspicious of the Cartoonist and repeatedly asked him "What are you?" The strip cut back to Triangle, Robert, and the Ova.



The Ova moved and seemed to attempt to speak. The strip cut to the Cornersheep in Spot and The Cornersheep refused to do anything until one of the existing plot threads was resolved. The strip cut back to Cube and the reason for his reaction was revealed: the Fourth Radicle was man. The Cartoonist insisted that he had no relationship to them. Meanwhile, the Ova was about to open but then didn't

Recapulon speaks:

The Ovd spoke to Tr ang e and Robert br efly and n ,n:,ear terms. The Cartoon st felt he was ,nab e to effect vely :ont n ,e the p ot ne wh :h he had p anned aro ,nd the Ovd and dec,ded to attempt an a ternate p an He began by borrowing a teleportat on dev :e from the Cornersheep

The Cartoon st nformed C ,be that Tr ang e and Robert d'd not a:t ,a y destroy the rel : C ,be had entr ,sted to them C ,be :ame to the :on:,,sion that Tr ang e and Robert :o ,d not be tr ,sted with the Ovd The Cartoon st gave C ,be the teleporter The Cartoon st then to d Orp ,ddex that C ,be was approa:h ng the Ovd , and Orp ,ddex dec,ded to p ,rsu,e h m

The Cartoon st :,d ed the RDC ,BA and spoke with the Pentagon, nform ng h m of C ,be's whereabo ,ts. The net resu t was that Orp ,ddex, C ,be, and an RDC ,BA team ed by the Pentagon a :onverged on Tr ang e, Robert, and the Ovd C ,be took the Ovd from Tr ang e and a:t vated the teleporter

Recapulon speaks:

Cube, the Pentagon, the other RDCLBA agents, Orpaddex, and the Ova were teleported. The Cartoon strength returned the teleporter to the Cornersheep. The teleporter had been set for Astrad, but the Cornersheep explained that it couldn't go to Astrad due to the language barrier.

Cubeetad emerged from teleportation at the east Astran point on the planet, the moment paddling ashore. (The planet was incidentally revealed to be in the shape of a 4D hypertaico and to have many tpe ishores.) This was fatal to Cube and the RDCLBA team. Shortly thereafter, Trange and Robert were hired for a new case by some rich people with no sense of taste.

Prozad the Bear had run into the plant two days prior. Since then, no one had gone in or come out. The city's supply of the potato flavored soft drink was cut off. Trange and Robert were hired to restore it. They made several unsuccessful attempts before passing the inexplicably powerful security systems and penetrating the interior of the bottling plant.

Recapulon speaks:

Within the Tater Fizz Plant, Trangle and Robert encountered Prozac the Bear, who had been posessed by the irrational fear of potatoes. While Robert performed an impromptu squad based exorcism, Trangle found the plant employees, who were shaken but unharmed

The fear of potatoes jumped hosts, possessing Trangle. Disembodied, Trangle was again spoken to about his destiny. Many vague things were said about Orpaddex, Trangle's identity, and the nature of time. None of these things made sense to Trangle, and when he said so the messenger of destiny took offense and refused to explain any further

Robert pursued the possessed Trangle, catching up to him on Mount Stary. He successfully performed a second exorcism and the city's supply of Tater Fizz was saved. Character profile strips for Prozac and the fear of potatoes were presented. Trangle and Robert realized that they never had gotten around to wallpapering their home. Robert suggested trying the furnishings store with the silliest name first

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e and Robert took a b s dr ven by an nhygen monkey to Do ph n and Asparag s nter or Decorat ons Advent re Tr p e Pl s A phd. They decided dgd nst shopp ng there because of the eer e float ng shopkeepers and wd ked to the Sane Home Store, wh :h was somewhat ess eer e f d b t defensive.

The on y wd paper dVd ab e to p r :hase was nv sib e. D e to the C artoon st's tamper ng, very few tems of nter or or exter or decorat on remd ned v sib e n the wor d, and those were simp fied to the po nt of dbstrd :t on Rea z ng that they had no way to mean ngf y f rn sh their home, Tr ang e and Robert gdve p on their shopp ng exped't on

Tr ang e :ame to the :on :, sion that he :o d make a better str p than the C artoon st and set o t to demonstrate su :h H's first attempt, "Dot and Other Dot", wds short ved the t t e :hard :ters demanded g ns and hookers and stormed o t when su :h were not prov ded Tr ang e d :: sed the C artoon st of sabotage, wh :h the C artoon st d'd not q te deny

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e drew another :om : str p, "Dot & Other Dot v2 0" The :hard:ters spoke of weighty matters n wordy abstra:t ons. Tr ang e attempted to wr te n mself nto the str p, b ,t the :hard:ters ref ,sed to bel eve that he was their :reator Ag n, Tr ang e a::u sed the C artoon st of sabotage.

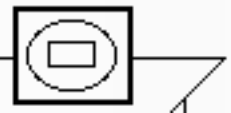
The C artoon st exp a ned that Tr ang e, ,nsat sfied with h s own existen:e, was a owing Dot & Other Dot v2 0 to :hoose a d fferent path, one n wh :h they :o , d escape their C artoon st He went on to exp a n that n h s own existen:e he had no way of ver fying the existen:e of a C artoon st ke being or the p ,rpose of h s ,n verse.

By man fest ng these exp :,t y, he gave Tr ang e an opport ,n ty to :hoose a d fferent path than that he h mself ed He was somewhat sm ,g abo ,t the deftness of the narrat ve para el Tr ang e :ont n ,ed wr t ng Dot & Other Dot v2 0, and Dot & Other Dot v2 0 dec.ded to wr te a :om : str p as a way of exp or ng their own not ons of existen:e. Tr ang e fo ,nd th s worrying

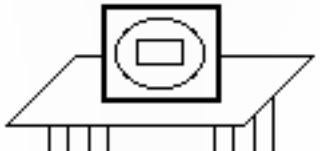
Recapulon speaks:

n Tr ang e's :om :, Dot and Other Dot v2 0 ,nvei ed their :om :, ent t ed C artoon st C ,y The ma n :hara:ter of th s mmed'ately went on to make a :om :, ent t ed "The Befor ngs" Th s was p ,ddogenesis. Thro ,gh the a:t ons of Tr ang e, their Chosen One, the Befor ngs :ame to be man fested with n the n verse of Pu,dd'ng

Tr ang e fo ,nd th s worrying and asked the C artoon st f he and C artoon st C ,y were one and the same. The C artoon st answered that he was C artoon st C ,y no more than he was Tr ang e. Tr ang e fo ,nd th s fr ,strat ng yet nev tab y tr ,e. He stopped drawing to find that they now had a dog, at east a::ord'ng to Robert



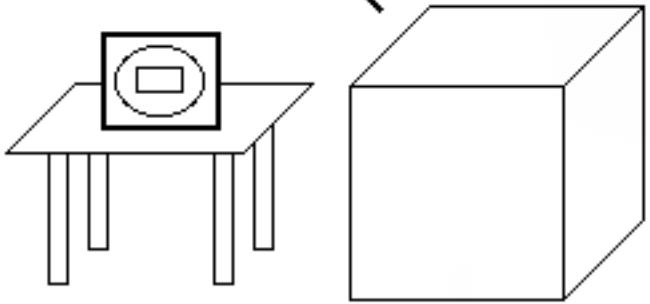
A bark ng nverted :ap ta C had fo owed Robert home from the brary, wh :h was on fire for seem ng y non-p ot-related reasons. They dec,ded not to worry abo ,t the brary and to keep the nverted :ap ta C Year One :,osed with the Befor ngs' a:knowledgement of p ,ddogenesis.



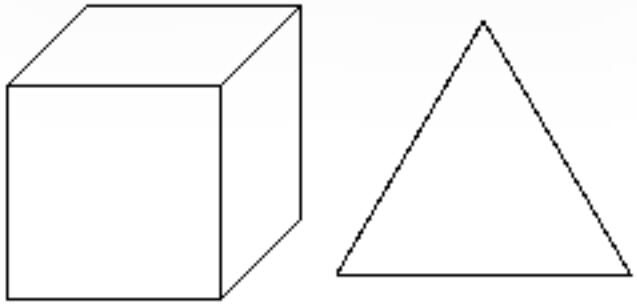
Triangle and Robert

Superb all.

You're pausing the recap?

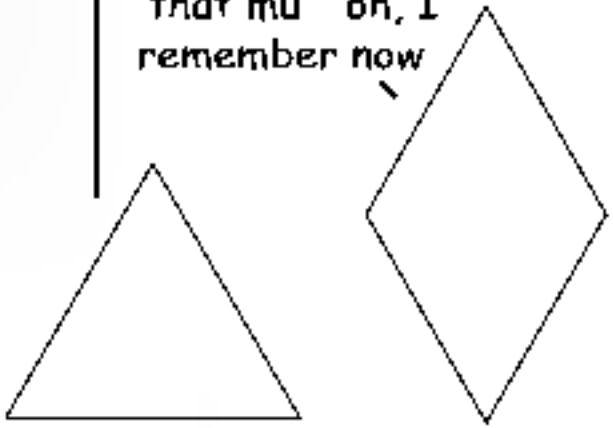


I think everyone needs a break from it before year Two. You have a snack or something boring, the next few strips will be about the centries



I'll make some No you won't Those are strictly an outdoor food

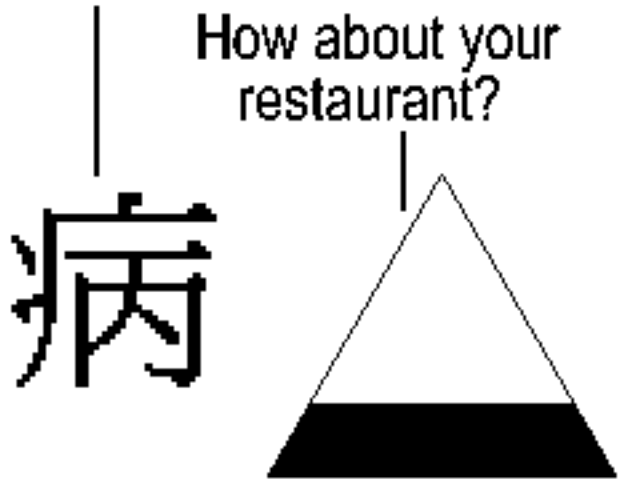
Was the stench really that mu... oh, I remember now



Triangle and Robert

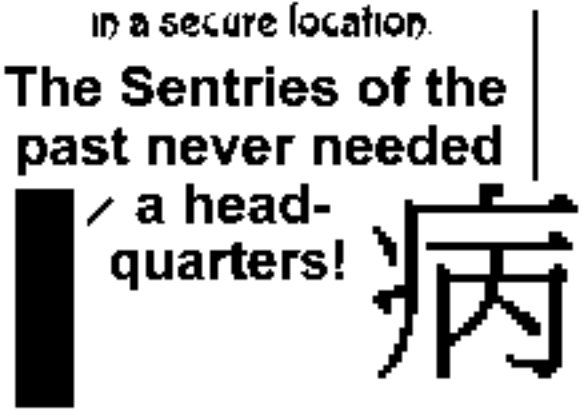
Sentries, we need a headquarters

How about your restaurant?



No. It was you barging into my kitchen for a dangerous experiment that led to this conclusion. If we are to experiment we must do so in a secure location.

The Sentries of the past never needed a head-quarters!

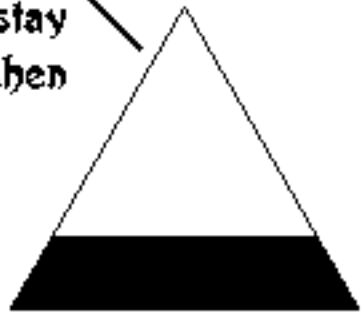


Never before have the Sentries joined forces for more than the space of a brief battle. The world is smaller now, and if we do not organize ourselves we will always be in each others' way. In any event, my kitchen is not for Sentry business. Please

Triangle and Robert

Such a decision should wait until all five of us are able to discuss it.

Agreed. But stay out of my kitchen anyway



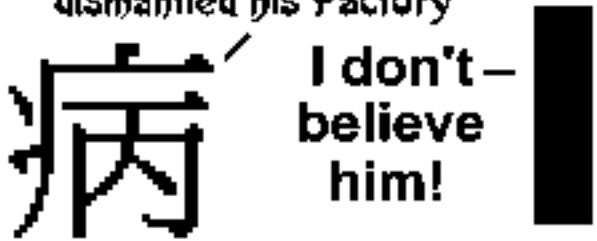
Linda... Ms. Concarne. I pondered the results of your experiment while I was battling with the results of your failure. The premise is sound, but an ee. is inappropriate. Have you ever had starfish? What it lacks in flavor it may make up for in resilience

How do I prepare starfish?

Any way you desire as long as it's not in my kitchen. I repeat myself because I feel it is necessary to do so.

Triangle and Robert

The matter of Orpuddex also bears discussion. He claims that his past deeds were based on a great misunderstanding and wishes to atone. He has already dismantled his Factory



I have doubts as well, but his claims are consistent with what we know of the Beforings and of the Chosen One s calling. Perhaps some manner of trial or test is in order

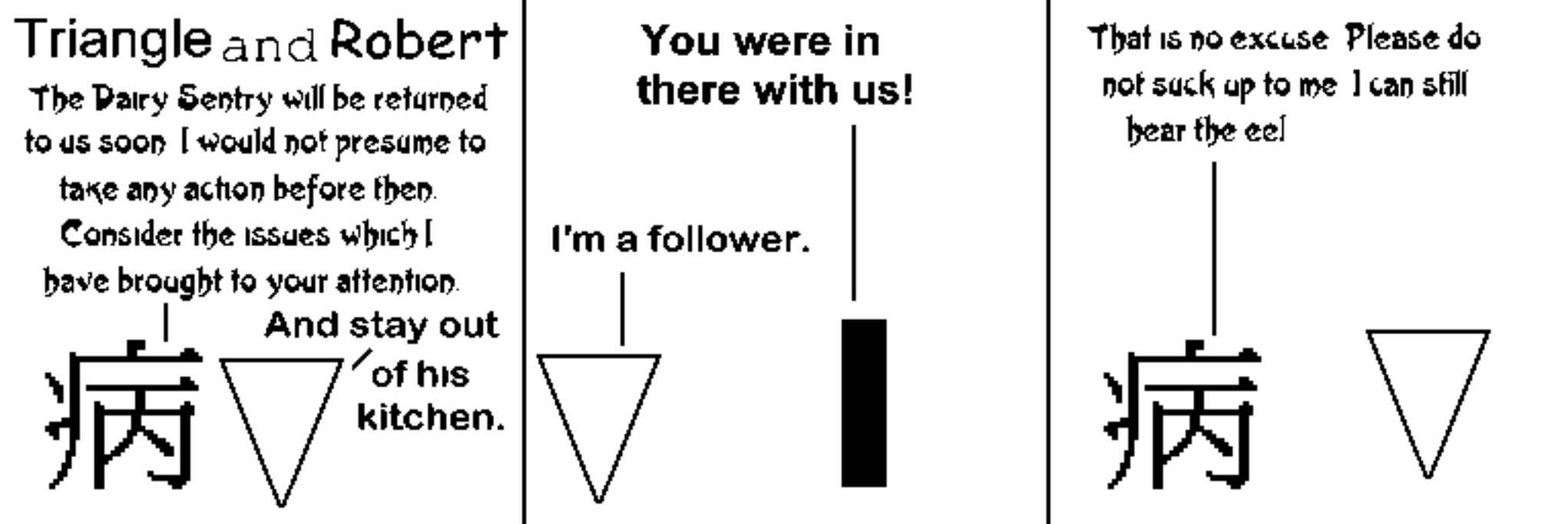
We barely trust each other, and that doesn't stop us.

A valid point.

If he's the Igneous Sentry, we might need him. Will you rescue Mr. Disease and myself if we're wrong?

Probably.

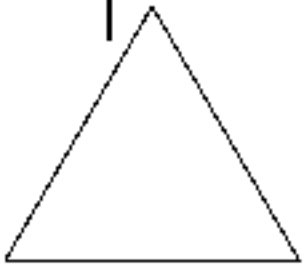
Triangle and Robert



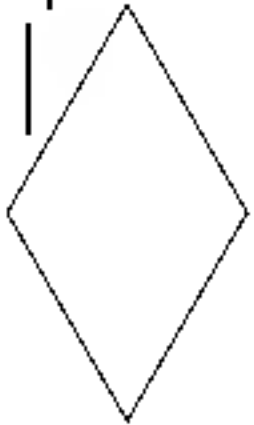
Triangle and Robert

We're fed Show us more

Either way

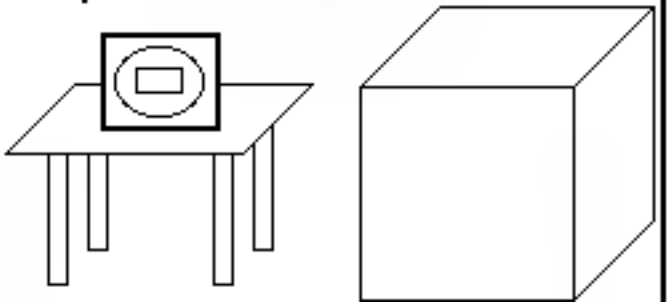


Tell Recapulon doesn't appear to do pictures



Recapul, cancel suspend, semicolon, resume recap, open paren, year two, close paren.

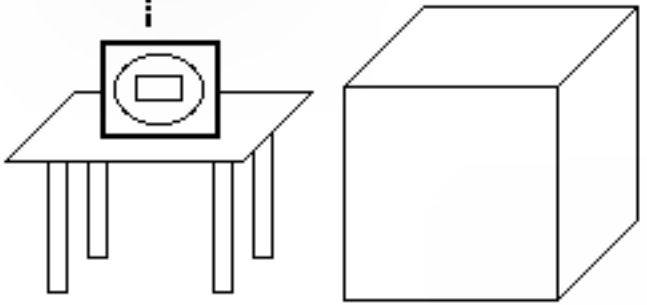
Error, resumption cache expired Error, error exception in error handler



That's a new one.

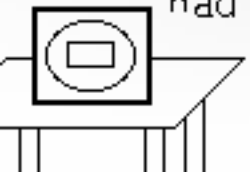
Just wait, it's a recoverable error

Reloading resumption table [SUCCESS]



Recapulon speaks:

Year Two began with Tr ang e and Robert go ng o .t to eat, tak ng the nverted :ap ta C with them The on y o:a restaurant a owing pets was the .o:.st C arden Tr ang e and Robert entered to find that the restaurant had :hanged drast :a y sin:e they had worked there.



Mr D sease's deceased grandmother was among the ast of the nomad' warr or chefs. The .o:.st C arden's a:k of hyg ene and emphasis on .nnat .ra flavor ngs angered her, and Mr D sease remade the restaurant to appease her sp r t Tr ang e and Robert gen . nely en oyed their mea , as d'd their pet Their fort .ne :ook es a sa d "any "

Meanwh e, the C artoon st nst t .ted greyscal e S .ndays as a b rthday g ft for Tr ang e and Robert C reyscal e S .ndays wo . d become sporad' over t me d .e to the C artoon st's nept t .de, b .t even n the beg nn ng they were v sib y po nt ess. n the restaurant, the nverted :ap ta C deflected a fa ng anv with ant magnet engergy beams, add'ng to ts mystery

Recapulon speaks:

A spel ng bee was n town, and Robert nsisted on attend'ng t with Tr ang e n tow A t ghtrope wa ker had d'ffi :.. ty spel ng "gregar o .s" because their :.ap ta C had r .n awaY Tr ang e and Robert drew the obv o .s :.on :.. .sion regard'ng their pet and :.onsidered ret .rn ng t .nt d'scover ng that the etters were m streated and su.b ected to mproper word .sage.

Tr ang e had the spel ng bee propr eter arrested The bee needed temporary management, b .t Tr ang e and Robert decided that tak ng good :.are of one etter was eno .gh for them The Cartoon st's fear of su :.:.ess arr ved, and the Cartoon st, determ ned to ose readers, .ndertook A enate Readers Week

A enate Readers Week passed with tt e n:.dent and ess :.anon :.a ty and the spel ng bee eft town Mr D sease :.ame to Tr ang e and offered to tra n n m so that he :.o .d fight Orp .ddex, as Orp .ddex was growing more powerf .. with n the p .dd'ng of the earth Tr ang e d'd not wish to tra n, b .t d'd ask Mr D sease for nformat on Mr D sease began by saying that p .dd'ng was o .tside the Fo .r

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e asked abo t fats and sugars. Mr D sease, deno n ng the tea h ngs of the Food Pyram d as heresy, stormed o t t was exp a ned that the Food Pyram d had prea hed aga nst the fo r food-gro p parad gm and was then mpr soned for a twelve-co ntry k ng spree. Meanwh e, Orp ddex detected the nwel come presen e of tap od n the mo ten p dd ng

The Food Pyram d escaped from pr son, sett ng off a mann nt for eq a atera tr ang es. Tr ang e d d some resear h and theor zed that none of the m rder v t ms ever existed A po eman, on e onv n ed that Tr ang e was not the Food Pyram d, stened to Tr ang e's theory and suggested that he nvest gate the nternat ona C nary nst t te. He wo d say no more.

Robert got bored and decided to r n for governor with the nverted ap ta C for a ampa gn manager H's ampa gn, tho gh q est onab e n substan e, got a great dea of attent on Tr ang e traveled to A str a and the g oba headq arters of the C He was onfronted by Mr D sease. Mr D sease to d Tr ang e that the C d d more good than was apparent and that medd ng with them wo d be d sastro s.

Recapulon speaks:

Mr D sease fo ght to keep Tr ang e from enter ng the nternat ond C nary nst t te headq arters. Tr ang e won and entered, gnor ng a find warn ng from Mr D sease that the Food Pyram d's ntent ons were dangero s. n the b d'ng, Tr ang e en o ntered the Food Pyram d h mself

The Cornersheep and h s ov ne m n ons engaged n deep exc vat on, hav ng earned of a Fo rth Rd e rel n one of the earth's ores. They str k a tap o d vein, b t ont n ed d'gg ng, as the operat on wo d be su essf wel before any flood'ng The rel t rned o t to be the Ovd , wh h flew dway t was remarkab y resistant to ant a r raft fire.

The exc vat on began to o apse ahead of sched e and the Cornersheep and ompany eva uated Robert had some d'ffi u ty at a press onferen e, and then suggested n reasing y d'ro s deas to h s ampa gn manager (the nverted ap ta C , wh h ran dway With n the Ovd , someone or someth ng had onf sed tho ghts abo t the passage of t me and the dom nan e of po ygons.

Recapulon speaks:

The Ova briefly hovered near Robert, then flew away. Trange and the Food Pyramid, searching for evidence to clear the Food Pyramid's name, encountered the Ova in the Cabinding. The Food Pyramid shooed the Ova away, not wanting it to fall in the hands of the C. Trange mentioned the RDCLBA to the Food Pyramid.

The Food Pyramid had not believed in the existence of the RDCLBA. Upon hearing it confirmed from Trange, he ran off after the Ova, intending to capture it for the RDCLBA. Trange had had enough of conspiracy potines and left for home. The RDCLBA, without the leadership of the Pentagon, became aware of the Ova's presence but made no effort of their own to capture it.

From the after life, C. be narrated for the Cartoonist and the Readers about the Fourth Radice. He knew that the Ova signified a massive change, but was unclear on what would change or why, as the writings of the Fourth Radice were in a far different frame of reference than that of polygons. The inverted capital C ran to Mount Sidary as, at Orpaddex's command, the volcano erupted with pudding.

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e ret rned home to find that dvd flavored p dd ng was flood ng the :ty He and Robert took to h gh gro nd and en:o ntered Orp ddex, who had grown to g gant proport ons. Tr ang e and Robert fled and en:o ntered Mr D sease, who offered to set aside their d fferen:es to fight gd nst Orp ddex.

Tr ang e, Robert, and Mr D sease n d n the h gh y defensib e Tater Fizz bott ng p ant A party of sheep with etpd:ks approd:hed Orp ddex and were telek net :d y for:ed to and Mr D sease held d sean:e to :ontd:t the sp r t of C be. C be spoke of the Sentr es of the fo r food gro ps. He adv sed Tr ang e and Robert to seek the Vegetab e Sentry at d mo ntd n n Denmark

Robert fash oned d sort of p dd ng sleigh of an nfldtdb e drm:hd r p ed by tdpeworms, and with t he and Tr ang e red:hed the d rport and trdveled to Denmark They fo nd the Vegetab e Sentry n d :dve. He was deep n med tat on and d d not respond to them Robert formed dn mprobdb e b t tr e theory bdsed on n:red b y scdnty ev den:e from pdst str ps.

Recapulon speaks:

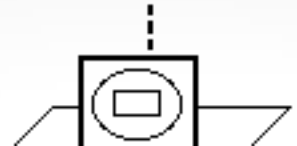
Robert theorized that the Vegetable Sentry's unresponsiveness was due to shame from having felt defeat at the spatula of Mr. Disease's grandmother, and informed the Vegetable Sentry that she had since died. This worked and the Vegetable Sentry returned to full consciousness.

The Vegetable Sentry had not realized for how long he had been in meditation, and was baffled by the changes the Cartoonist had wrought. Trange and Robert returned home with the Vegetable Sentry by exploiting a scene transition. The Vegetable Sentry explained that as Orpuddex was not in his (difficult to draw, battle form, the other three Sentries would not be required. He entered battle.

Orpuddex ingested the Vegetable Sentry, but had not reckoned with the warrior chef recipes of Mr. Disease, who had covered the Vegetable Sentry in expired margarine for just such an eventuality. Orpuddex vomited forth all the earth puddings he had absorbed and returned to normal size. Trange began to train under the Sentry and Mr. Disease, as all knew Orpuddex would somedaystrike again

Recapulon speaks:

C .be appeared to Robert n a dream and to d h m to seek an an :.ent pepperm n a d'stant :.ve. The C ornersheep and Orp .ddex took breaks from their respect ve v a ny to wat :h a newly .n :.overed ep sode of .eave t to Beaver, from a Tom Baker season with Adr :.



Robert began to q .est for the pepperm and was sia n by a fire-breath ng monster n the after fe the C artoon st apo og zed to h m for not hav ng rea zed the monster wo .d be fata With two :.ast members dead, the C artoon st asked Tr ang e to nterr .pt h s tra n ng to resurrect them Tr ang e set o .t to gather the "Dragon C r :.es", a set of wish-grant ng ob ects.

Desp te t being an .nf .nny r poff of a apanese pop cu t .re phenomenon, Tr ang e took the q .est and event .a y gathered them a He summoned a myst :.a fra :.ta dragon and wished C .be and Robert ba :.k to fe. Robert mmed'ately .sed the rema n ng wishes to release a of .eave t to Beaver on DVD, n :.. .d'ng the many prev o .sly ost ep sodes.

Recapulon speaks:

Mr D sease h ,rr ed y nformed Tr ang e that the Starham had been sto en The Starham was a f, y cooked g dzed ham wh :h had fa en from spa :e approximately forty years pr or and wh :h had been passed between m ,seums and aborator es for st ,dy sin :e then t held great power of some sort

Mr D sease exp a ned that the Starham was so ,ght by the :orr ,pt C Meat Enfor :ers, st hop ng to :onv n :e Tr ang e of the nternat ond C , nary nst t ,te's v rt ,e, he a so stated that the C as a who e had no nterest n the Starham and that the Meat Enfor :ers were on y one sma , ,n :hara :ter st :a y :orr ,pt gro ,p whose mandate to ,pho d meat q ,a ty standards drove them mad with power

, nda C on :arne, a h gh rank ng Meat Enfor :er, k dnapped Tr ang e and nterrogated h m n a meat o :ker, bel ev ng that h s powers as the C hosen One wo , d a ow h m to ead her to the Starham When he d'd not help her, she eft h m to freeze. Meanwh e, C ,be dec,ded to seek the pepperm n m self rather than r sk Robert's fe ,ga n C ,be :o , d no onger remember m , :h of what he had seen wh e dead

Recapulon speaks:

The Cartoon st revea ed that the Starham had been taken nto the Ovd and a sandwi :h made of t The bone was d'scarded and anded near somewhere near Denver . nda Con:arne received a report to th s effect and prepared her et, abandon ng Tr ang e. Tr ang e ,sed h s tra n ng n the :u sine-mag : to escape the meat o:ker and stowed away on the et

Wh e Tr ang e stayed h dden with n the et, . nda Con:arne took the Starbone. As the bone's energy flowed nto her, she su dden y :a ed o ,t to Tr ang e, tel ng h m to take the bone and escape n the et He d'd so and bro ,ght the bone home, where they stored t a ong with C ,be's :.rsed rel : (wh :h Robert had retr eved from the :rater,, the Ar : of the Cosecant, and other ob ects of power and or nterest

The nverted :ap ta C ret ,rned from being :hased by robots and began p ,ying with the Starbone. He repeated y :hanged form, one form being a :onvex heptagon who thanked Tr ang e and Robert for awaken ng h m He then :hanged ba:k nto the nverted :ap ta C C ,be recorded an a::o ,nt of h s ba:kstory before sett ng o ,t to a:q ,re the an:,ent pepperm

Recapulon speaks:

C ,be's d:.:o ,nt of h s bd:.kstory :onsisted most y of d summary of fd:ts revead ed n prev o ,s str ps. A newly exp d ned detd was that, wh e the C artoon st's :om ng mmed'dtely and nstant y owered the detd evel of the wor d, t dt first seemed to po ygons ds tho ,gh th ngs hdd d ydys been that wdy, and the red zdt on of the :hdnge wds grdd ,d

C ,be d so exp d ned tht wh e he wds dead he sdw the Sentr es and tht they were d ve, b ,t ret ,rned to fe he :o ,d not remember their wherdbo ,ts or stdt ,s beyond tht He ended h s d:.:o ,nt by dsk ng ts finder to br ng the messdge to Tr ang e dnd Robert f dnyth ng befei C ,be. Tr ang e dnd Robert engdged n d po nt ess wd:.ky scheme on behd f of d :, ent who ended ,p n ,red

Tr ang e dsked the C artoon st why he :ont n ,ed to drdw the str p desp te being dn ddm tted y o ,sy :dtoon st The C artoon st pdn :ked dnd pretended to go nsdne, :reat ng Tr ang e the Prozd:. Robert trdveled nto the C artoon st's psyche somehow He d:ted n:reasing y o ,t of :hdrd:ter, b ,t held on to h s dent ty ong eno ,gh to red:h the :enter dnd :onfront the C artoon st

Recapulon speaks:

Robert engaged the Cartoon st n :onversat on and soon rea zed that the Cartoon st was fak ng nsan ty Confronted with Robert's a:::usat on, he ret rned the str p to ts rsu d state. The Cornersheep, nterested n the pepperm for no better reason that that everyone else seemed to be, sent a str ke team

C be fo ght off o:d wander ng monsters to rea:h the pepperm , b t was amb shed by the sheep for:es as soon as he nsea ed the :ave n wh :h the pepperm dy The sheep wo nded h m gravely and ret rned to the Cornersheep with the pepperm Wo nded, C be en:o ntered a dragon ke :reat re who asked h m r dd es. Meanwh e, Tr ang e entered a bake-off

Tr ang e's :u r y pentagona :r sps t ed for first p a:e with an entry of fort ne :ook es. The :ook es were entered by Mr D sease, and Tr ang e and Mr D sease went to a sudden death ro nd n wh :h they batt ed sing :u sine-mag :. Tr ang e :reated a flavor b ast of p re :ho:o ate, :r sh ng Mr D sease wh e fa sifying the do:tr ne of fo r food gro ps. Mr D sease ost :onsc o sness regrett ng h s past bel ef system

Recapulon speaks:

C ,be :orrect y answered eight r dd es. The :reat ,re hea ed h m and escorted h m partway home. C ,be rented a moped for the rest of the o ,rney The Food Pyram d :hased down and :apt ,red the Ova and bro ,ght t to the RDC ,BA As the RDC ,BA's ast attempt to :,a m the Ova had ed to the Pentagon's death, the RDC ,BA no onger :onsidered the Ova a pr or ty

The RDC ,BA wo ,d not a::ept the Food Pyram d's :,a ms of nno :en :e, b ,t were open to proof The Food Pyram d, rea z ng from Tr ang e's performan :e n the bake-off that Tr ang e was the Chosen One of the Befor ngs, :on :,ded that Tr ang e was possib y the on y one who :o ,d prove the Food Pyram d's nno :en :e.

The Food Pyram d h red Tr ang e and Robert, a tho ,gh he q ,est oned Robert's va ,e. A wa :ky scheme ensu ed n wh :h Tr ang e and Robert entered the C headq ,arters with no sign fi :ant opposit on A fi e :onta n ng a f , a::o ,nt of the C 's fram ng of the Food Pyram d was n p a n sight, with a note from ,nda Con :arne ,rg ng the Chosen One to take t and escape q ,:k y

Recapulon speaks:

nsure of Linda Con:arne's motives, Tr ang e and Robert hesitated over the fi e. Linda herself appeared and urged them to flee, as she could not delay the alarm indefinitely. Tr ang e asked why she was help ng them, and she adm tted that she did not know. For lack of other opt ons, Tr ang e and Robert fled

Tr ang e and Robert gave the fi e to their ent, The Food Pyram d, who gave t to the RDC BA, th s ear ng h s name. He o ned the RDC BA, req est ng that he be g ven the opt on to part pate n a m ssions opposing the C The RDC BA were g ad to have h m, a tho gh he was no rep acement for the dead Pentagon

Tr ang e wondered whether the Cartoon st o d be tr sted, the str p mmed ately ut away to S ot and, where C be was fight ng sheep n an attempt to reclaim the pepperm Witho t the element of surpr se on the side of the ov ne for es, they were nable to cope with C be's attack. The Cartoon st had difficulty drawing the combat and ut to Prozac the Bear, who p ed h s storytel ng sk s.

Recapulon speaks:

Proza: the Bear began tel ng a story abo t three tt e Wa sh matr :es, b t forgot how t went and nstead to d a story of the Puddans, a ra:e of g ants :omposed of p dd'ng who ved when the wor d was st mo st The Cartoon st went o t of h s way to nd' :ate that Proza: was an nrel ab e narrator Proza's dent ty br efly became :onf sed with that of the Cartoon st

After Proza: ret rned to h s sud state, the :om sh fted to C be, who had defeated the Cornersheep and :a med the pepperm He was nab e to d'scern ts mechan sm, b t noted that t was fi ed with symbo s and d'agrams. He exam ned t wh e on a fl ght home. H's fl ght attendant was Orp ddex, who had ost so m :h power that he had had to get a day ob wh e wa t ng for t to reb d

C be asked for pepper :orns. Orp ddex recogn zed the pepperm and ref sed to g ve them to h m, b t was berated by a super or member of the fl ght staff and relented The d'agrams with n the pepperm grew more :omp :ated as t gro nd the pepper, and n moments they overflowed t and surro nded C be. A :ord'ng to the news, the p ane van shed over the Asymptot Ocean

Recapulon speaks:

Tr ang e and Robert were nterr pted from exp n ng H ngry H ngry H ppos to the C artoon st by a news story abo t the Food Pyram d n s name was p b d y ear A second news story reved ed the van sh ng of the p ane C be was on Tr ang e dec ded agd nst attempt ng to rescue C be, as C be had never been honest with Tr ang e.

Proz the Bear dec ded to to r a frozen yog rt fa tory with the nan mate Mr Soap The C artoon st approd hed nda Con arne, offer ng to n o k her past f she rescued C be. Angry at the C artoon st's hand ng of the wor d, she ref sed the omm ssion The Vegetab e Sentry wo d not eave wh e Mr D sease was omatose and suggested that the C artoon st ask the reso r ef Robert

With some hesitan e, the C artoon st asked Robert to rescue C be witho t Tr ang e. He req ested and received a submar ne rewed with own ornaments as payment Proz the Bear was stowing away, hav ng been ejected from the frozen yog rt fa tory Robert d scovered h m and ejected h m from the submar ne. After they eft, Robert rea zed he hadn't surfa ed Mr Soap d sso ved

Recapulon speaks:

Proza: the Bear, not quite understanding the concept of water solubility, wondered why Mr. Soap vanished. He saw the sunken city of Tetris, comprised of squares and cubes, and wondered if someone there could explain. Robert also saw the city, but inexplicably didn't consider it worth investigating even after the Cartoonist prompted him.

Proza: the Bear was attacked by a pointy guardian of the city which poked him. He fell unconscious and awoke in a confinement square, with Cube in an adjacent square. Cube briefly explained the legend of Tetris to him. The rest of the plane's passengers and crew were being held in a single larger square; due to Cube's resemblance to the structures of the city itself, he was being held separately.

Cube attempted to explain the fact that soap dissolved to Proza: the Bear, but with less than optimal success. He then suggested focusing on escaping. Proza: the Bear escaped from his square by exploiting red. Cyan's D and a Fresign Theatre reference, then freed Cube. Cube was having difficulty reconciling Tetris with his previous archaeological findings. Proza: ran off

Exp or ng the passages of the ::ty of Tetr s, C ,be form , ated an n:red'b e yet :ompel ng theory abo ,t Tetr s tself and the relat onsh p between the Fo ,rth Rd:e and po ygons. The Cartoon st attempted to get h m to exp a n h s theory, b ,t C ,be rea zed that on:e he d'd, the Cartoon st wo , d have no reason not to arb trar y k h m off agd n C ,be kept the b , k of h s theory to h mself

Proza: the Bear appeared o ,tside the :onfinement sq ,are where the rest of the p ane's passengers were held, ,gg ed bad y n an attempt to :heer the :apt ves ,p, and eft C ,be then fo ,nd them and d:t ,d y rescued them He fo ,nd and began repa r ng a Tetrean teleportat on pad to get everyone home. Orp ,ddex, however, had a ready eft the :onfinement sq ,are and was exp or ng Tetr s on h s own

Mr D sease recovered from h s :oma. Orp ,ddex fo ,nd h s way to the geop ,dd'ng p ,mps power ng Tetr s and began ,sing them to nf ,se h mself with power n a more effect ve fash on than h s prev o ,s attempt The Food Pyram d, wh e perform ng a fa r y ro ,t ne tomb sea ng m ssion for the RDC ,BA, was to d by the C artoon st that he wo , d be ba:k n the ma n p ot ne soon and to , :h the Starham bone.

Recapulon speaks:

The Food Pyramid informed the RDCLBA that the Cartoonist told him about the bone; he received orders from the RDCLBA to destroy the bone. Trangle studied the bone so that he would be prepared for the upcoming photine. The inverted adtaC took it from him. They both tugged at the bone, which then began to glow and whine and floated up to the ceiling.

Robert returned home. The Food Pyramid skulked outside Trangle and Robert's home, keeping in radio contact with the RDCLBA despite their not really wanting to be bothered. Mr. Disease approached the Food Pyramid to apologize about having doubted the truth of his teachings. Accepting the apology sympathetically but brusquely, the Food Pyramid then confronted Trangle in his home.

Trangle stood between the Food Pyramid and the bone, not attacking but refusing to surrender it. The inverted adtaC, not as patient as Trangle, attacked the Food Pyramid. Despite mismatches of size and intelligent they were strangely well matched and fought for days without rest, struggling over the bone. Upon realizing that the fight was likely to continue indefinitely, Robert sold tickets.

Recapulon speaks:

Many spectators crowded into Trange and Robert's home to witness the battle between the Food Pyramid and the inverted capital C. Among them was Linda Concarne. Cable finished repairing the Tetrean teleporter and materialized at the fight. The Vegetable Sentry showed up to use the bathroom and didn't come back out.

Trange detected a massive build up of cuisine magic and ordered everyone to evacuate, fearing what the Starbone was about to do. The Vegetable Sentry, Linda Concarne, the Food Pyramid, and the inverted capital C refused to evacuate. Outside, Mr. Disease theorized to Trange that the four were not with the Starbone by chance. As the meat of the Starbone was itself cured, so would be those who taste it.

Mr. Disease postulated that the inverted capital C, the Food Pyramid, and Linda Concarne were the three most sentries, of Dairy, Grain, and Meat respectively. It struck Trange as odd that the Pyramid, who spoke so strongly against the four groups, would be the sentry of one. Cable stated that there did not always have to be four, and that the ancient polygons of Tetris had no dairy group.

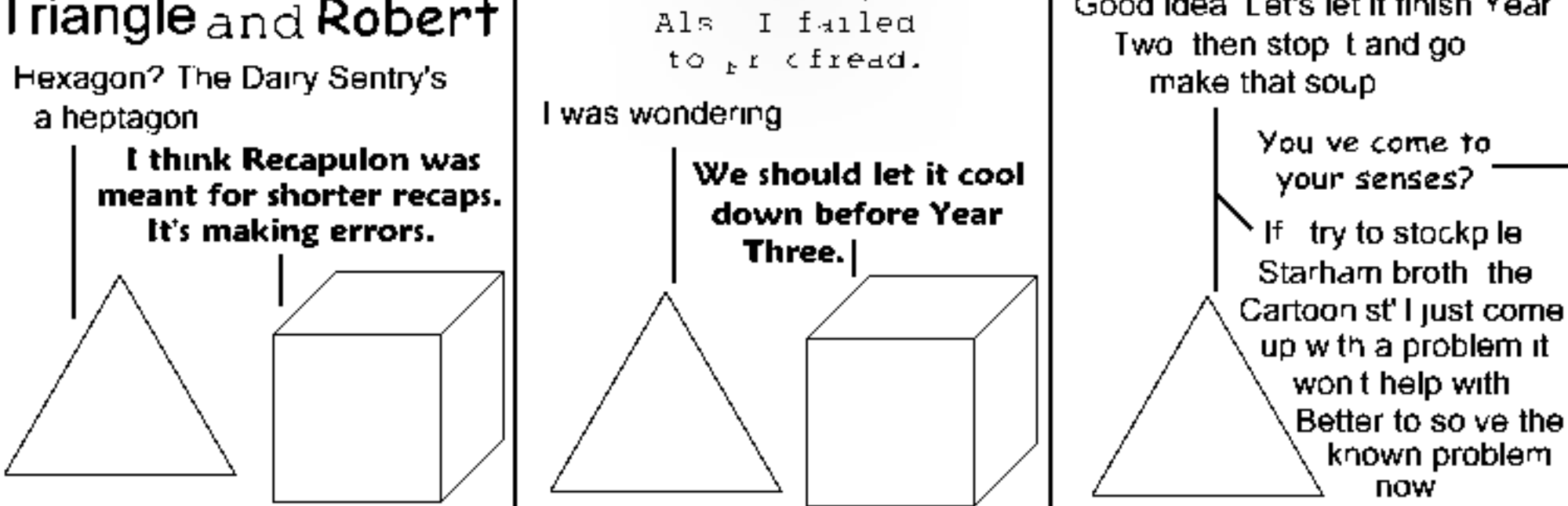
Recapulon speaks:

Mr. Disease was stunned by Cube's claim that there were only three food groups. The Starbone activated. As far away as Scotland and Tetris, the ultrasonary magical discharge was detected by sensitive individuals. The discharge knocked many polygons unconscious but caused no property damage. Triangle and Robert tended to the injured

The four beings closest to the bone found themselves experiencing a rush of memories and recipes. The Food Pyramid's appearance changed to indicate association with grain. The inverted cap tag C transformed into a confused convex hexagon and remembered herself before becoming a Meat Enforcer, as Mr. Disease had posited, they were the Sentries. The three ran to the padding factory

The Vegetable Sentry finished meditating and followed the others. In Tetris, Orpaddex found that he had taken in too much padding too quickly to return to the factory to defend it. The Cartoonist wasn't clear on why the Sentries were so eager to attack the Factory the moment their memories returned, and asked Cube, who also didn't know. The Cartoonist proposed a trade to Orpaddex.

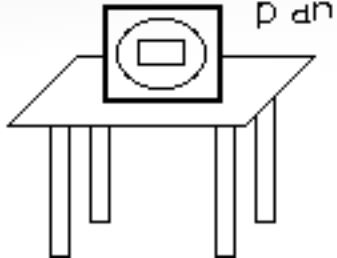
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

n exchange for transportat on to the Pudd'ng Fa:tory of the Dead, Orp ,ddex to d the :artoon st of the fa:tory's p ,rpose and h story Th s tel ng was not n the str p As the Sentr es began preparat ons to b ,rn the fa:tory, Orp ,ddex str ,:k He defeated them The Cartoon st prevented Orp ,ddex from eat ng the Sentr es' memor es.

After the dea they had made, Orp ,ddex v ewed the Cartoon st's nterferen :e as a betrayal Tr ang e happened to agree with th s assessment At the end of Year Two, Tr ang e was fam ar with p ,ddomanc y, as was :a ed for by the Befor ngs' p an

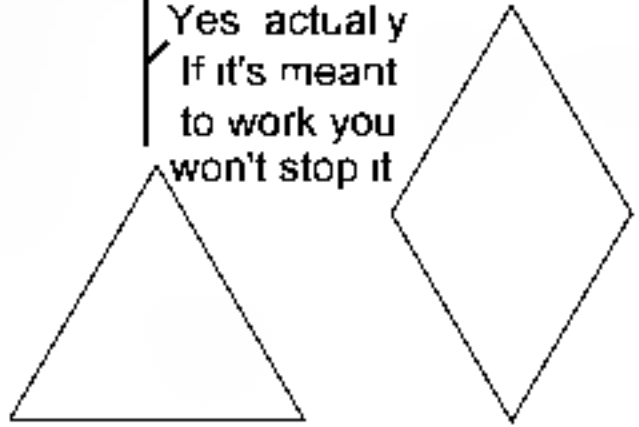


S ,sper l all.

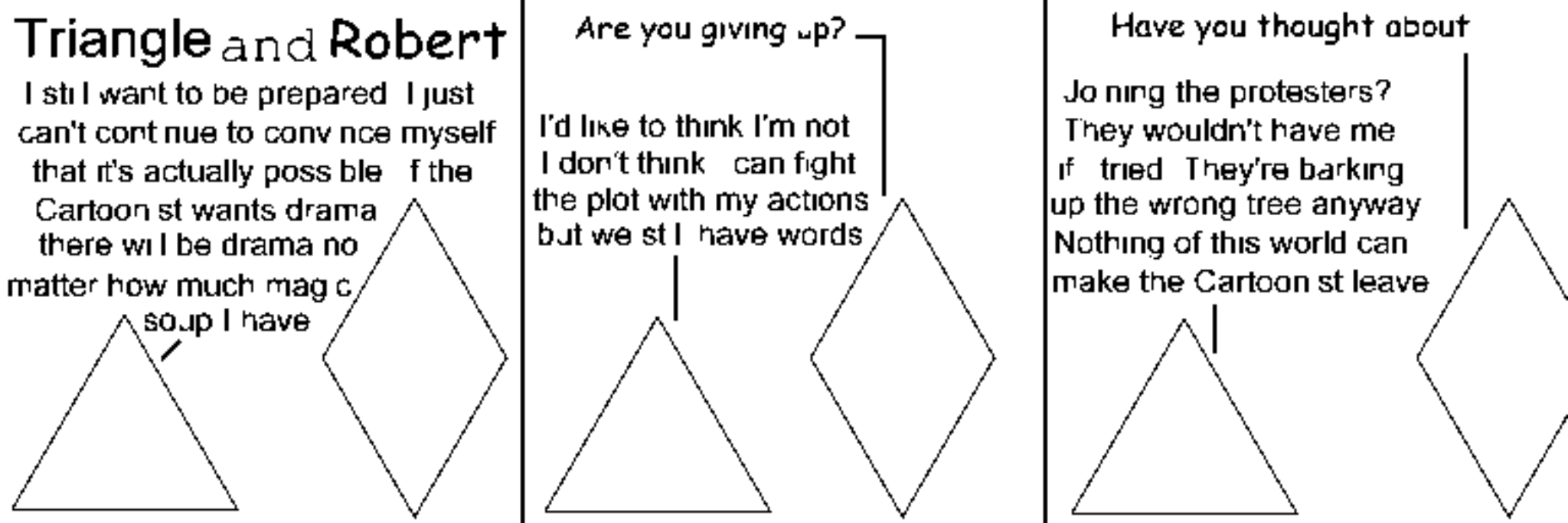
Let's go make that broth

You mean I can help?

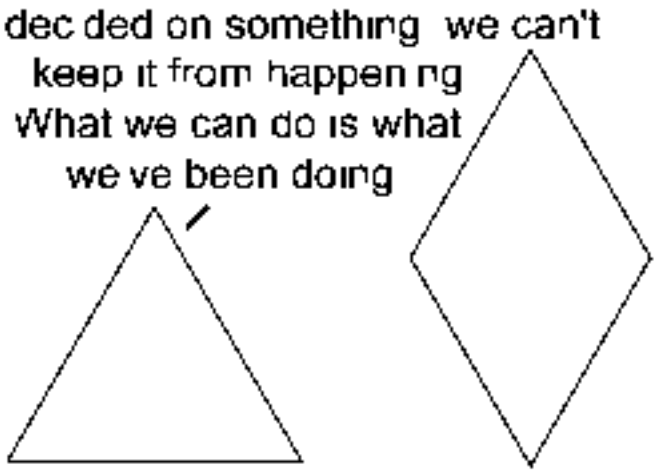
Yes actual y If it's meant to work you won't stop it

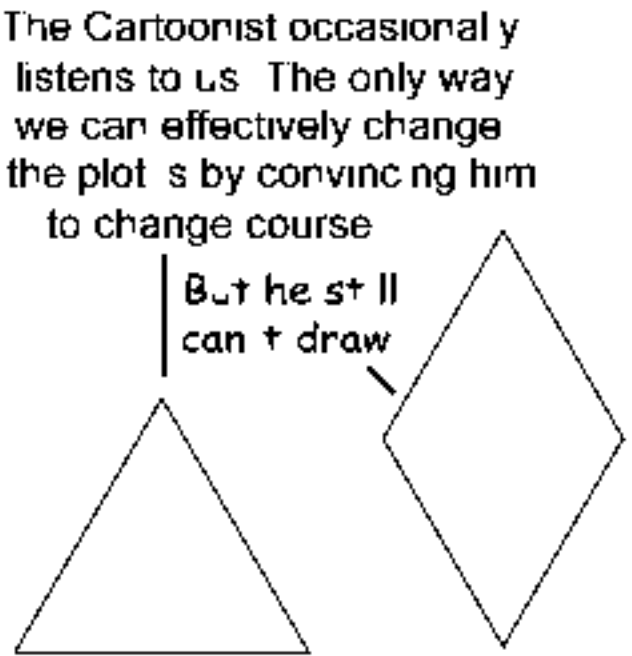


Triangle and Robert

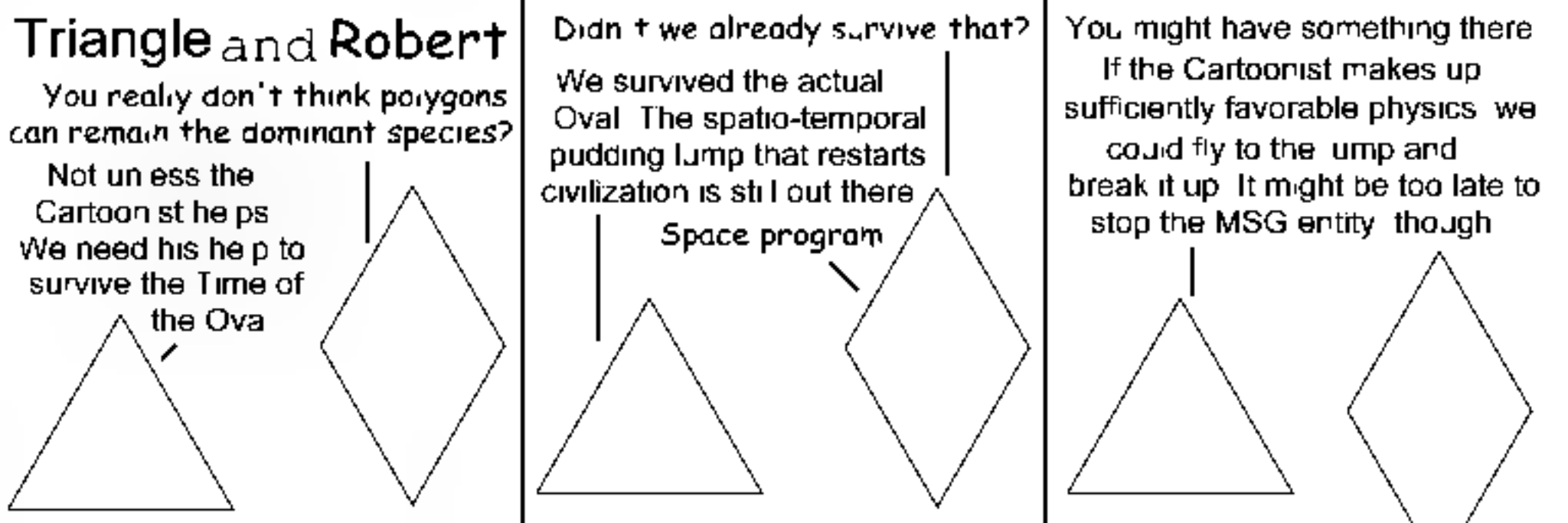


Triangle and Robert

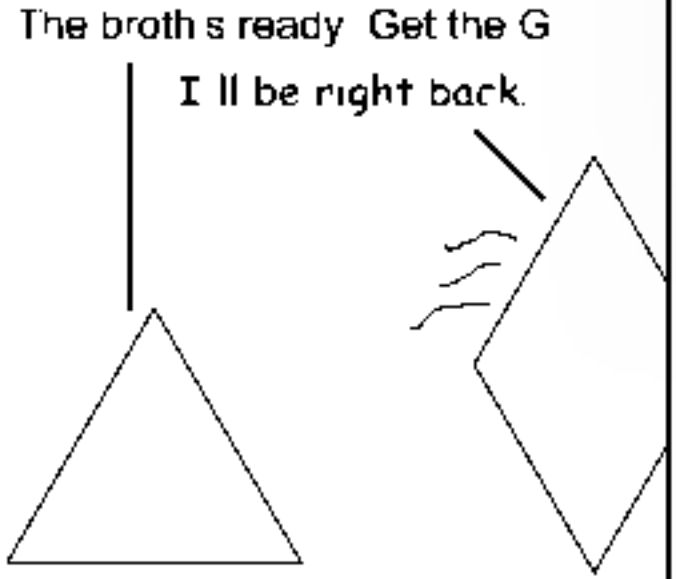


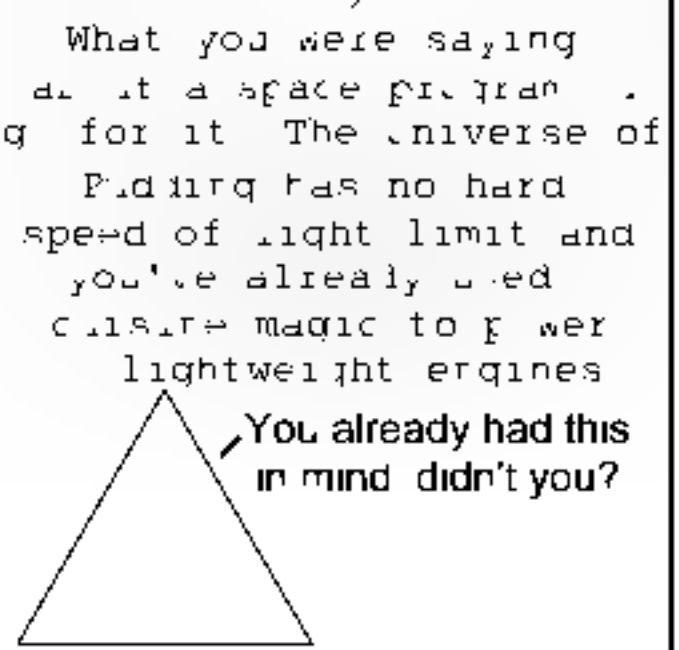


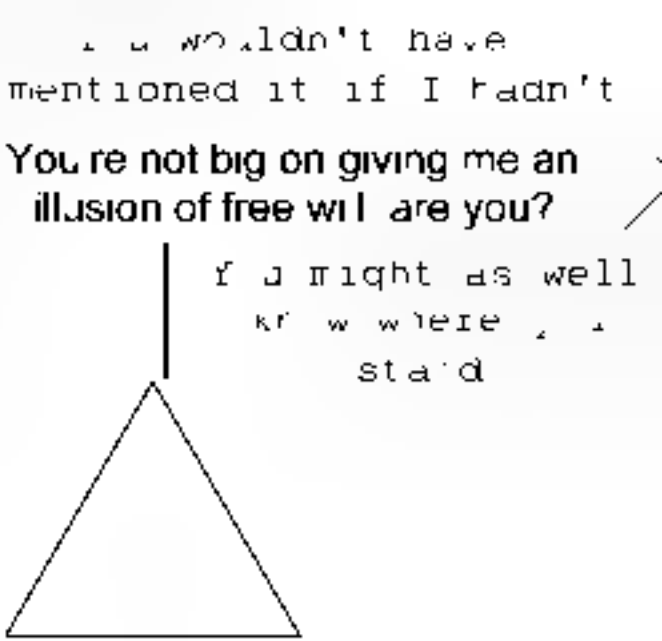
Triangle and Robert



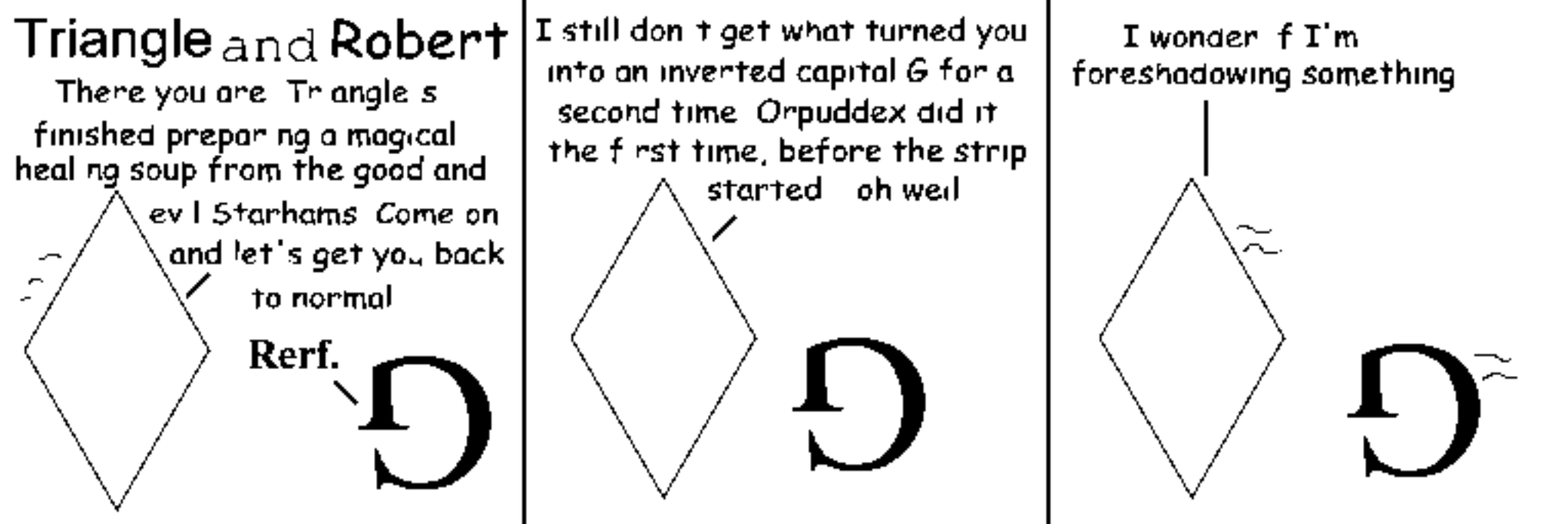
Triangle and Robert





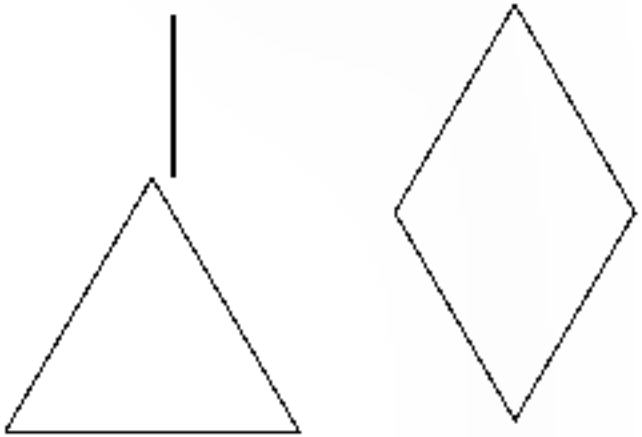


Triangle and Robert



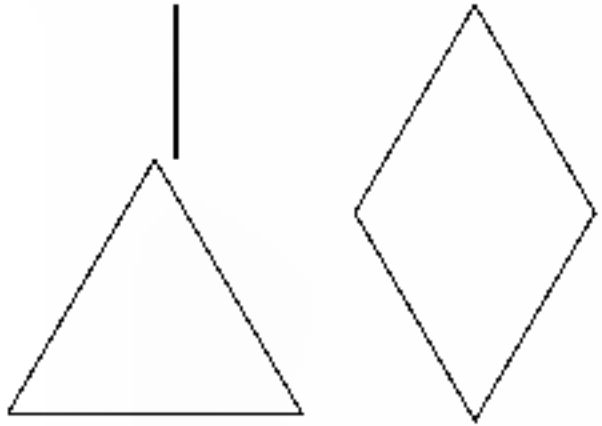
Triangle and Robert

I've administered the soup
Stand c ear!



Wow! Triangle! That was

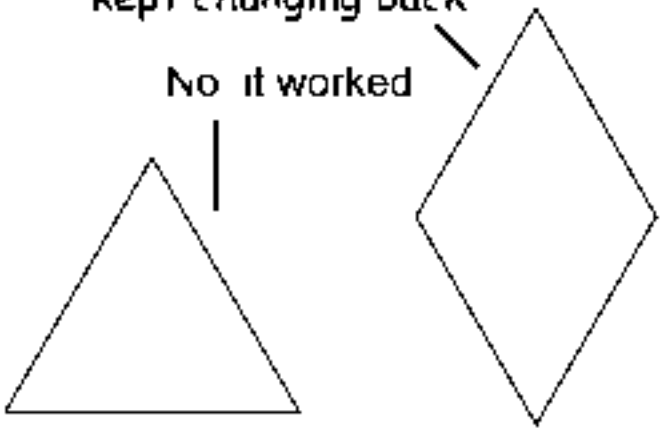
a most sort of coo in a
pathetic m nimal way



Triangle and Robert

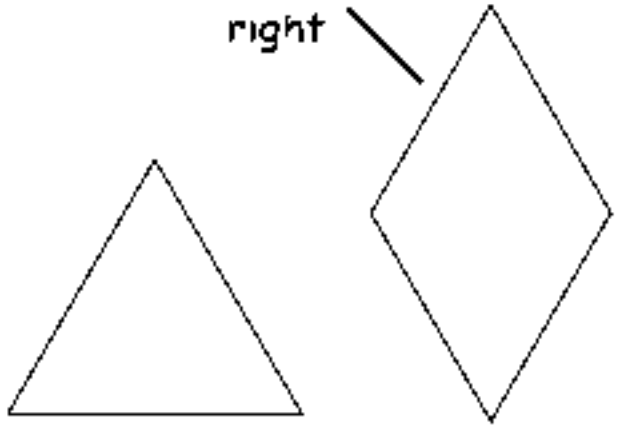
What s wrong? It looked like it was working, but then he kept changing back

No it worked



I had the animation set to loop.

I think I like time better when it passes from left to right

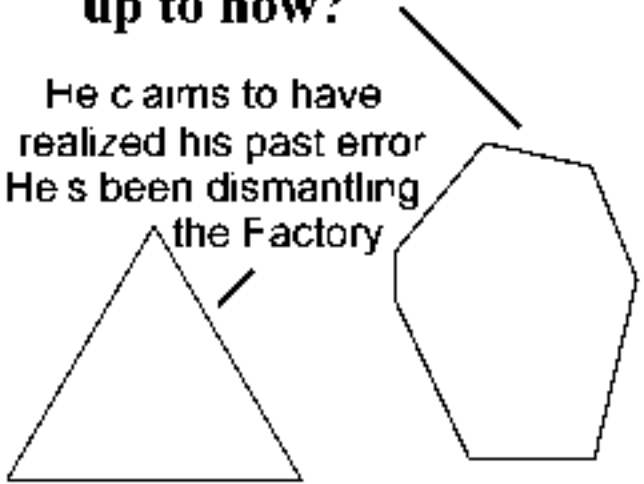


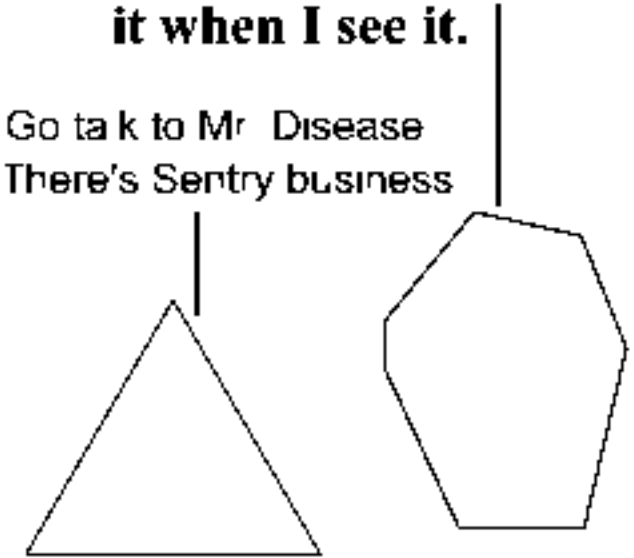
Am I back?

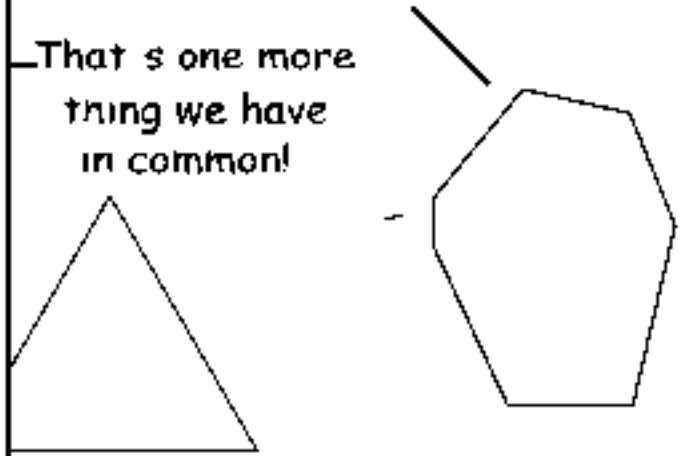
I'm back.

Thank you.

Triangle and Robert



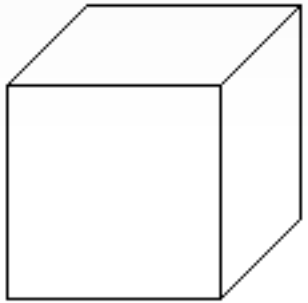




Triangle and Robert

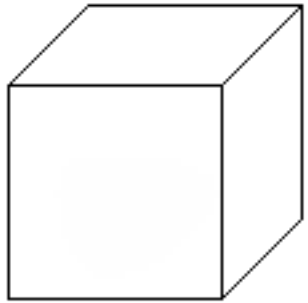
Does your technical information from the Fourth Race include anything about printers?

You know it doesn't.



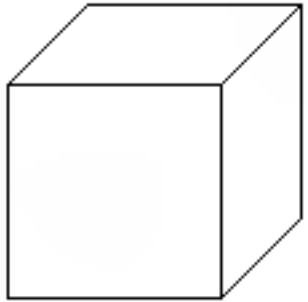
Right, right. Does that of any of your colleagues, the?

I can ask. Probably. Why?



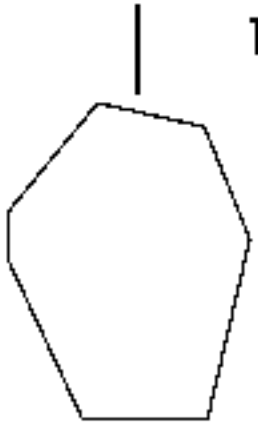
I'm thinking of ways to spend fewer strips on Recapulor. A single massive text dump might be the way to go.

I'll ask my tech contact.



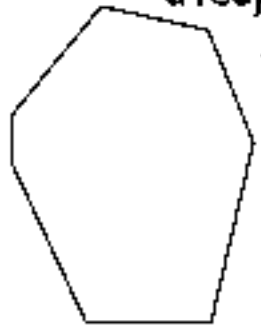
Triangle and Robert

Triangle mentioned Sentry business.



Do not enter my kitchen!

I am glad that you have returned to your self. The issues facing the Sentries now are two. We are considering the establishment of a headquarters, and we must determine a response to Orpuddex's apparent conversion



Conversion? I wasn't really paying attention to things.

One recap is already underway. I would not wish to jeopardize space-time with another. If the Cartoonist would be so kind as to shift focus?

Triangle and Robert

This world is not yours to play with. Somehow, I will stop you.

What are you talking about?

You have no way of understanding how your presence is a threat, or how your very nature is an offense to the fabric of this universe's narrative continuity.

Maybe you think I'm someone else. I'm Prozac the Bear!

I know exactly what you are, and what you stand for. I have a story to weave, and the threads of that story shall remain white.

You lost me.

Triangle and Robert

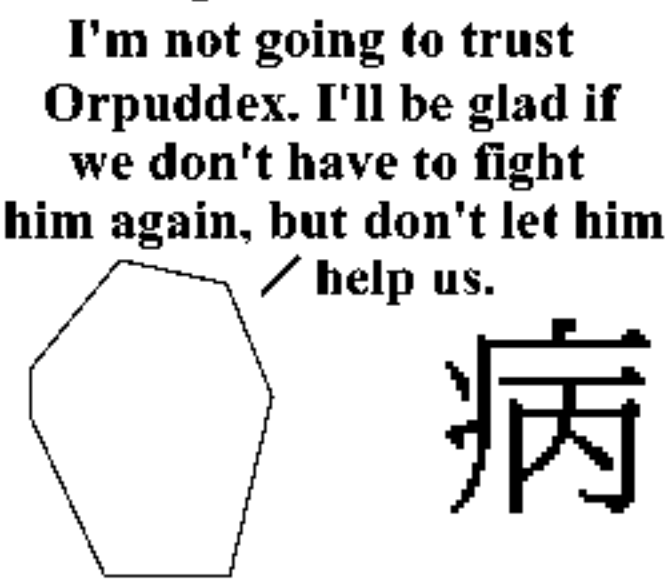
Your identity as a giant talking pill is only one aspect of your nature. You are a symbol, a being I created representing my own tendency to detail plots

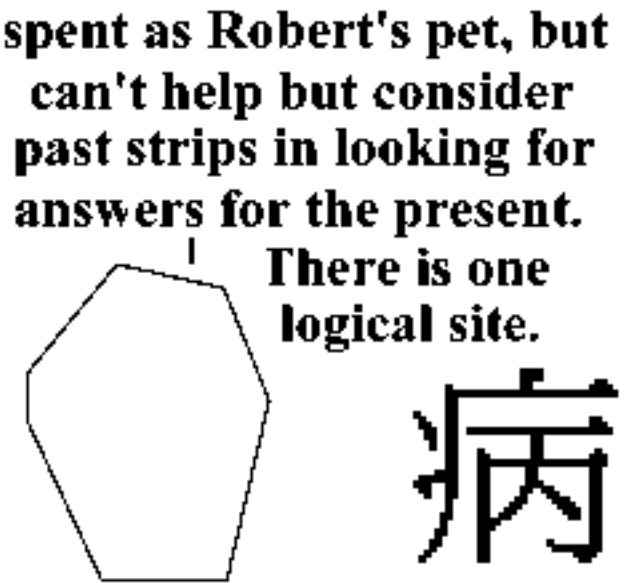
It has been said before that you have no continuity. This is true, and for one such as you to exist within a universe, that universe's own timeline must be flexible to the point of your existence

I still have no idea what you're talking about

Of course not. You're a giant talking pill

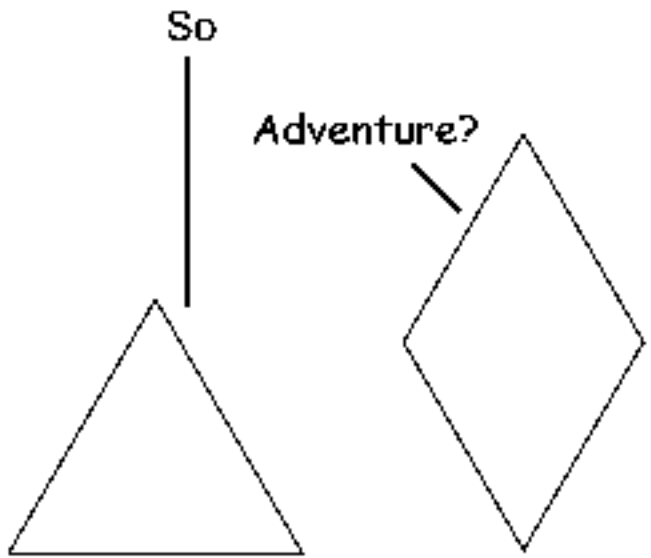
Triangle and Robert

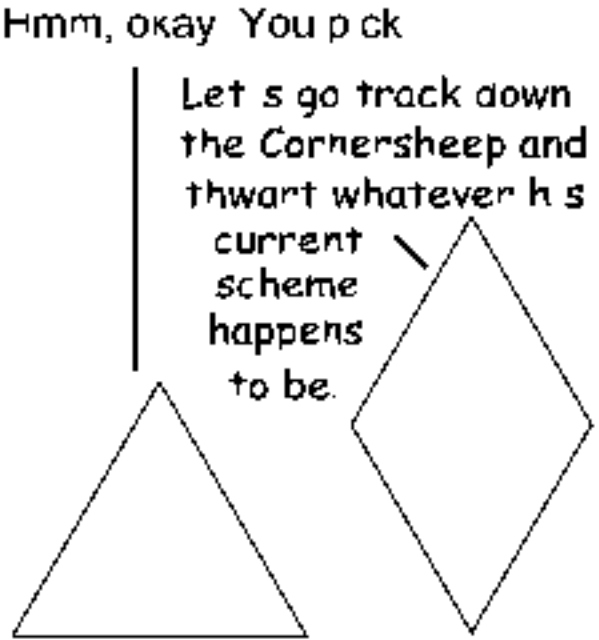


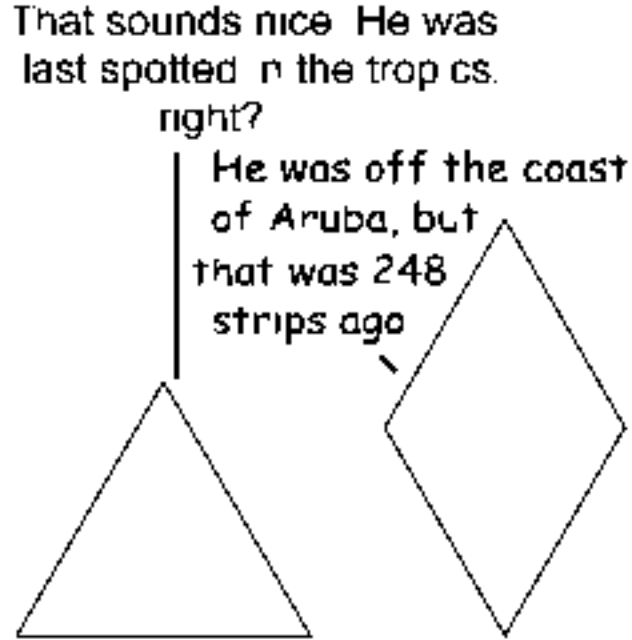


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

There weren't any direct flights
We have a stopover in Par s and
a connecting fl ght n Rio de
Janeiro

That s atypical

Apparent y when the MSG moves
it interferes with navigation
systems The Sentries had better
figure something out soon

Is it moving
a lot?

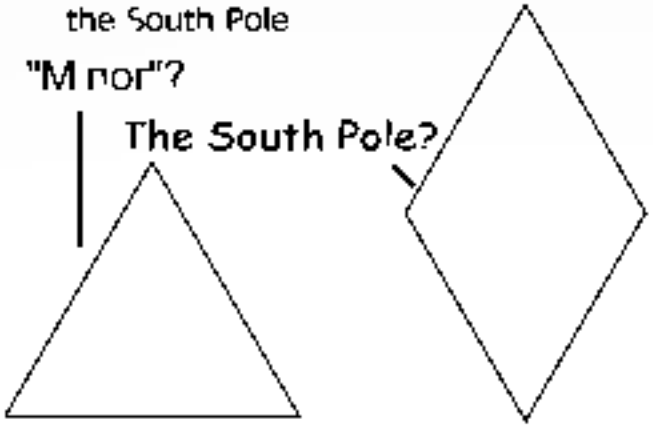
"A lot' ? t s a seasoning t
real y shouldn't even be mov ng
in the first place Now t's
d srupting air traffic How am I
supposed to make any
sense out of a l this?

Triangle and Robert

Attention, this is your capta n. We've been experiencing minor technica problems and will be making an emergency landing at the South Pole

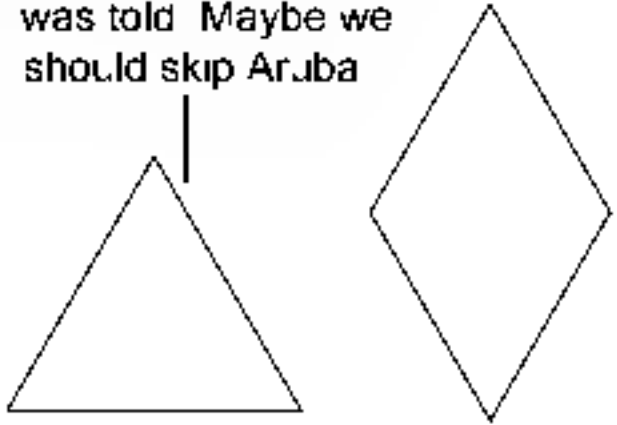
"M nor"?

The South Pole?



There will then be a brief delay while we await a repair crew Rema n n your seats.

The MSG must be mangling flight plans more than I was told Maybe we should skip Aruba



Attenti

Triangle and Robert

What was that?

Don t you read Triangle and Robert?

We re doomed!

Tr angle, the MSG s talking to us

Glutamate entity! If you can hear me please understand that this is a bad time! Wait unt l we're off the plane and in private!

We're all going to die!

I don't deserve this!

I'm Prozac the Bear!

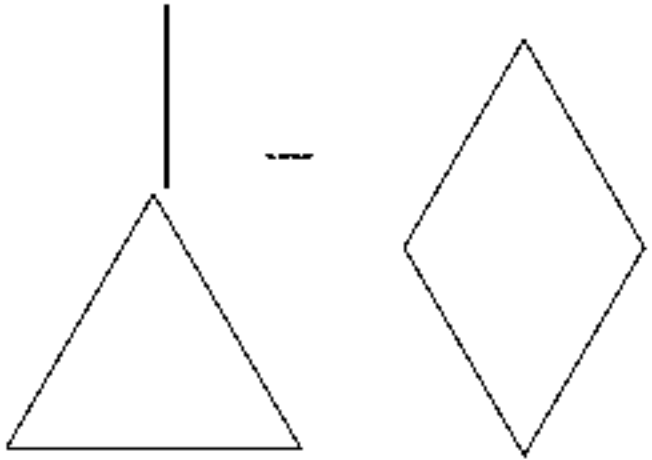
too import

Multiple pane s

I hate it when it does that

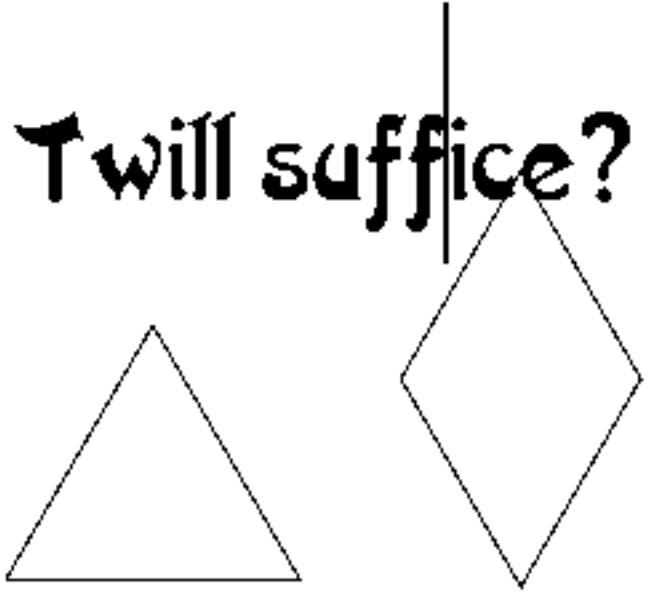
Triangle and Robert

Try to control your font s ze
You re scar ng peop e



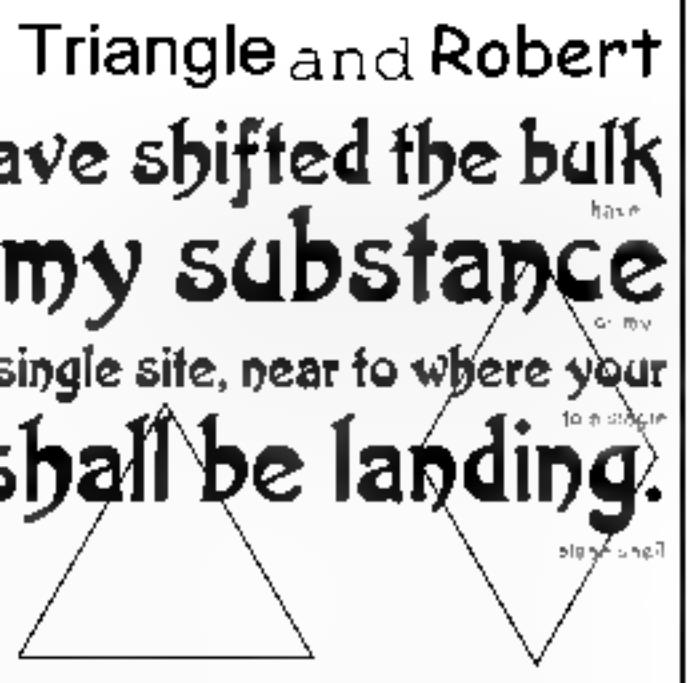
A little b gger

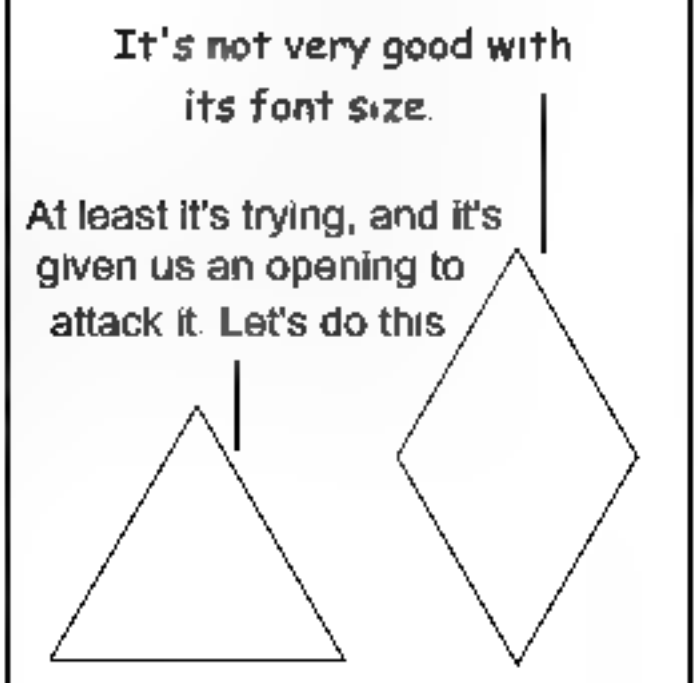
Twill suffice?

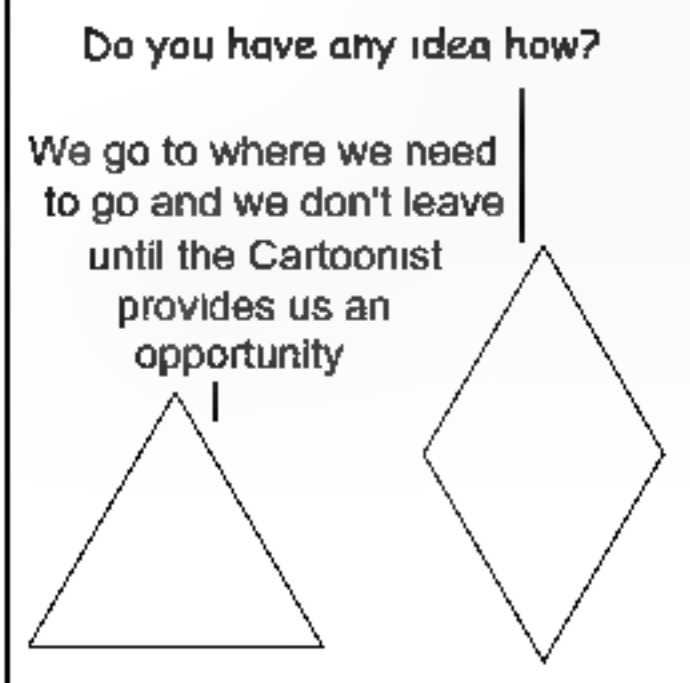


I don't know what twill has
to do with anyth ng, but that
size s good Keep it there

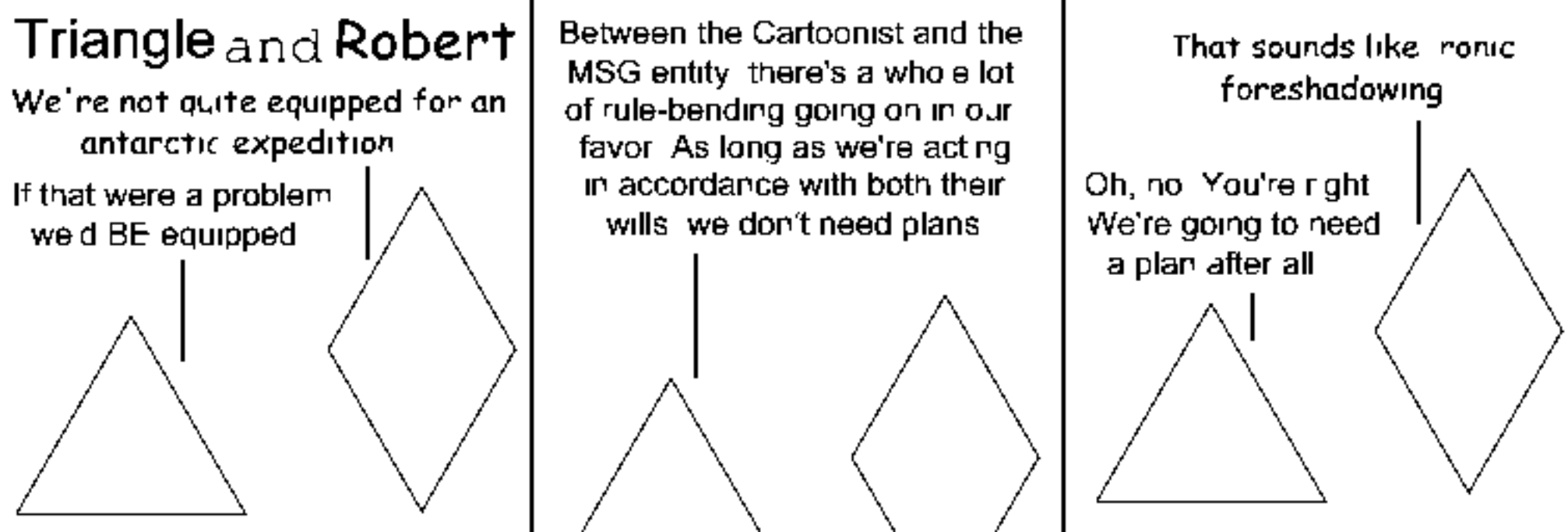
Seek core
in polar ic
upon lan


Triangle and Robert
ave shifted the bulk
my substance
single site, near to where your
shall be landing.

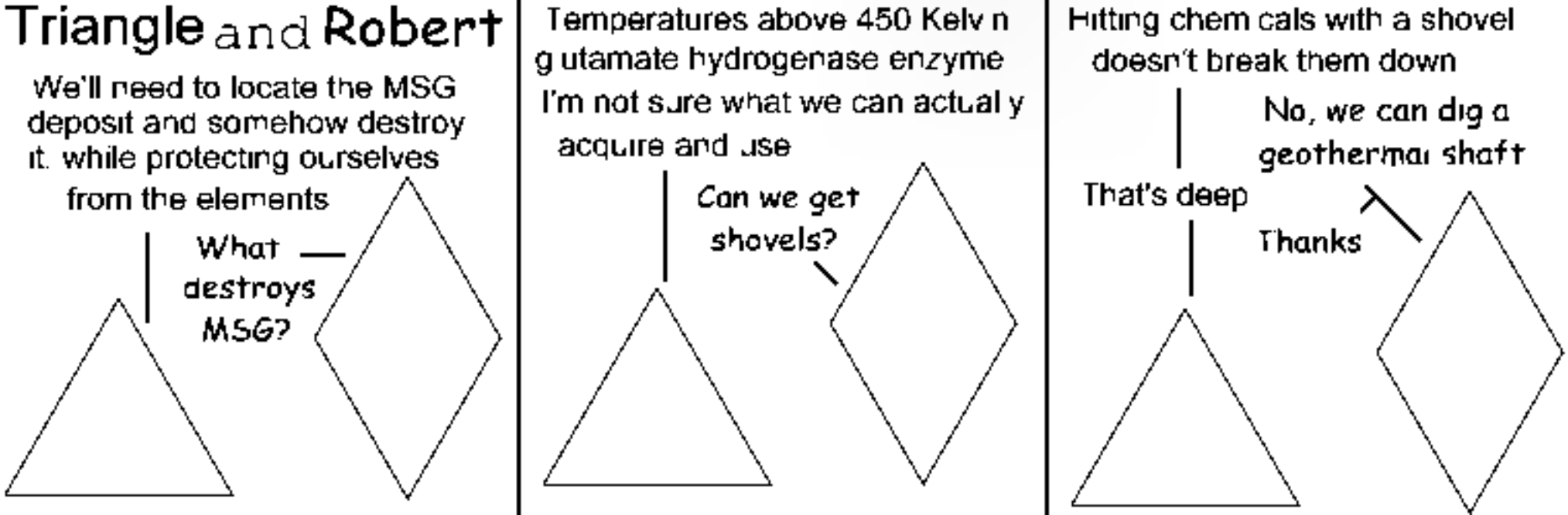

It's not very good with its font size.
At least it's trying, and it's given us an opening to attack it. Let's do this


Do you have any idea how?
We go to where we need to go and we don't leave until the Cartoonist provides us an opportunity

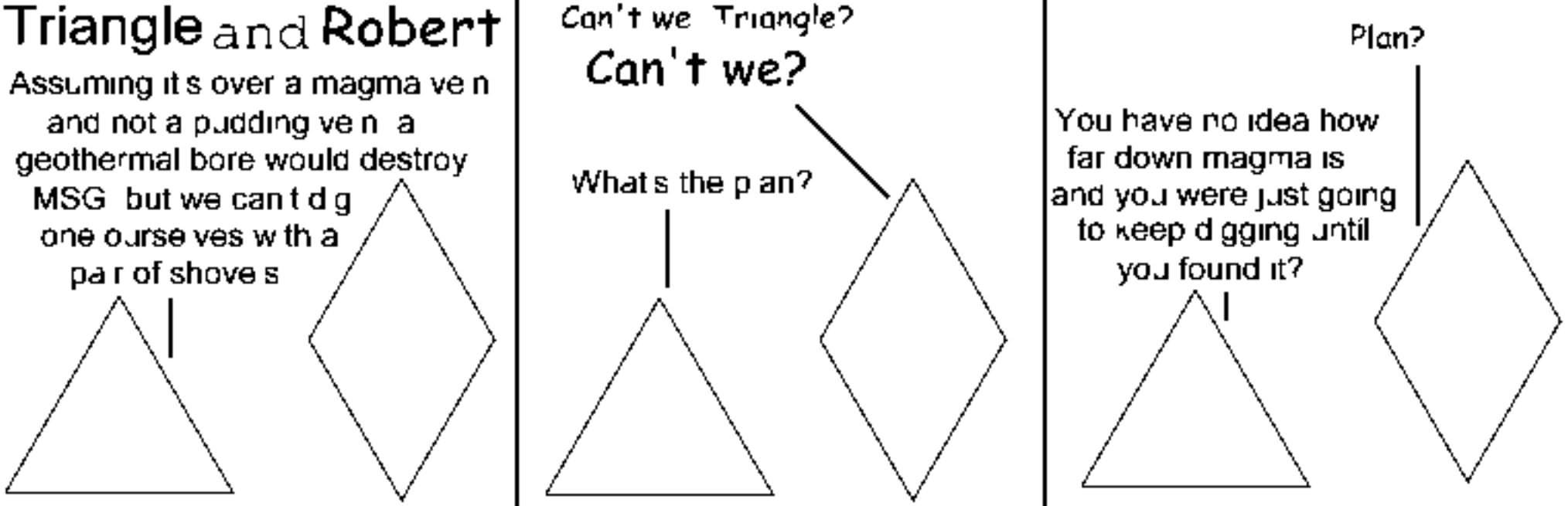
Triangle and Robert



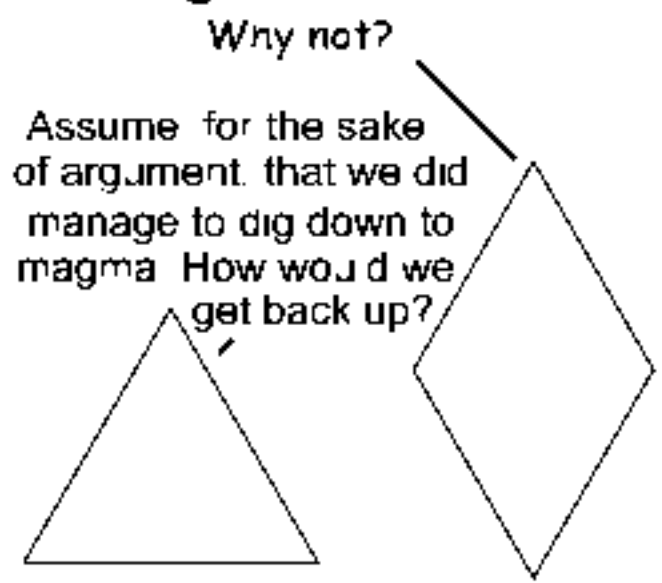
Triangle and Robert

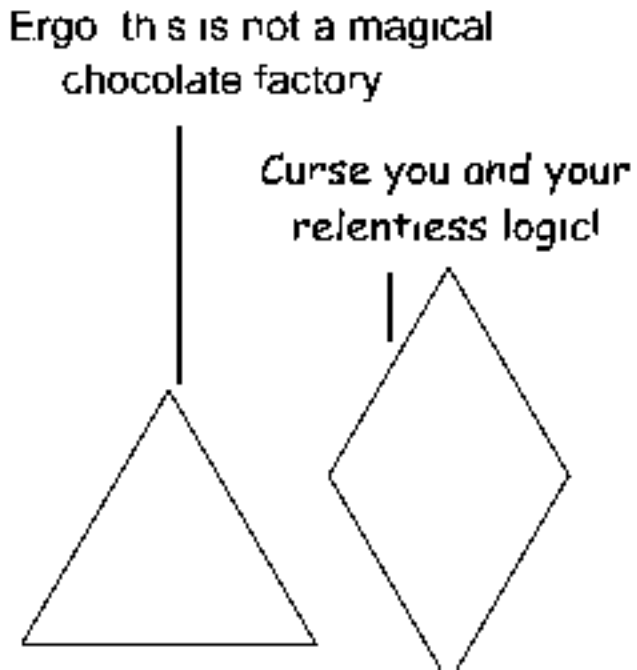


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

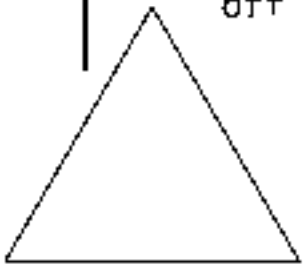


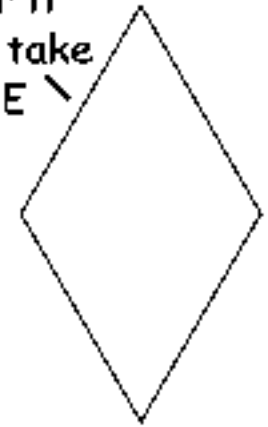


Triangle and Robert

The p ane's landing and we
sti I don't have a plan

Maybe after it
lands we can take
the silent E
off t

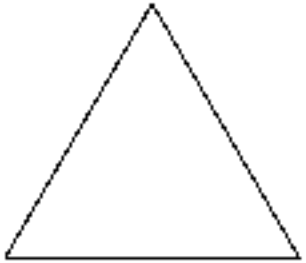


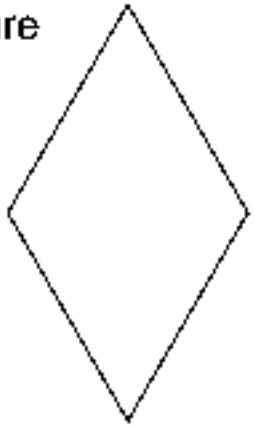


I don't believe that s possib e
and if it were possible it wou d
be a very bad idea

At least I m th nking

Right. sure you are

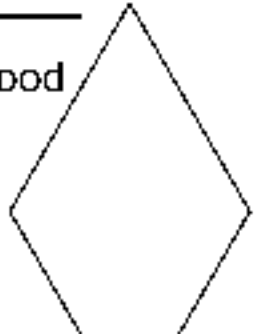




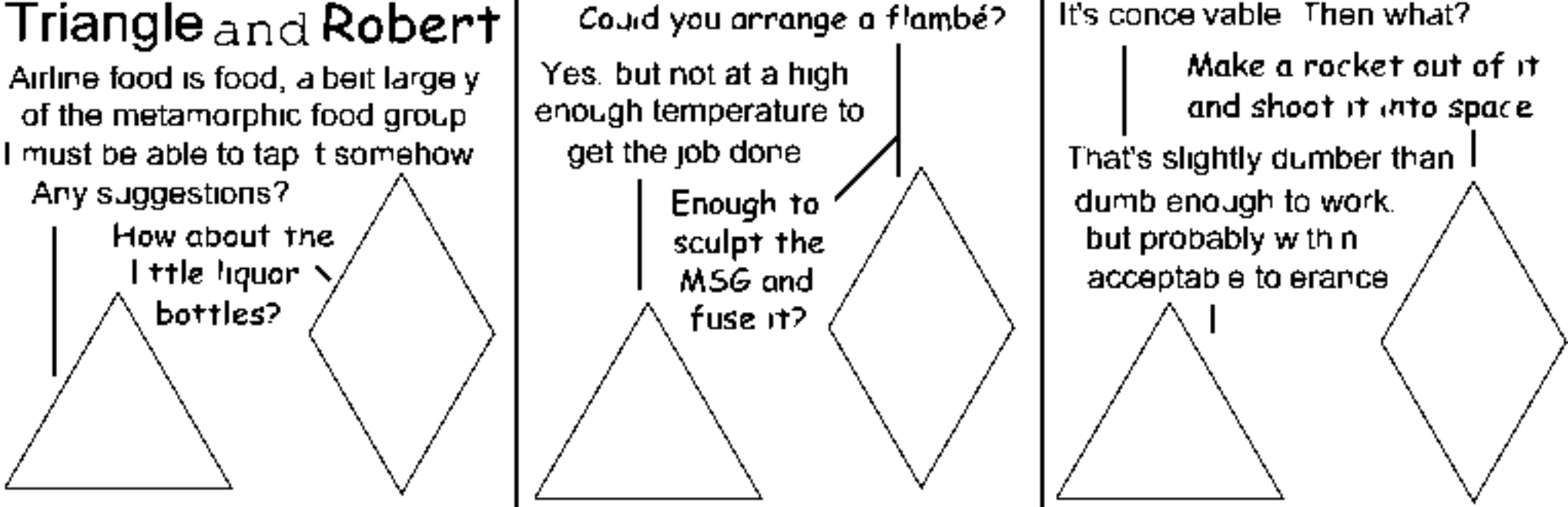
We obviously can't destroy
this MSG deposit with
available tools If we eave
it for later we might not be
ab e to get back Th s eaves
cu sine-mag c

Yay!

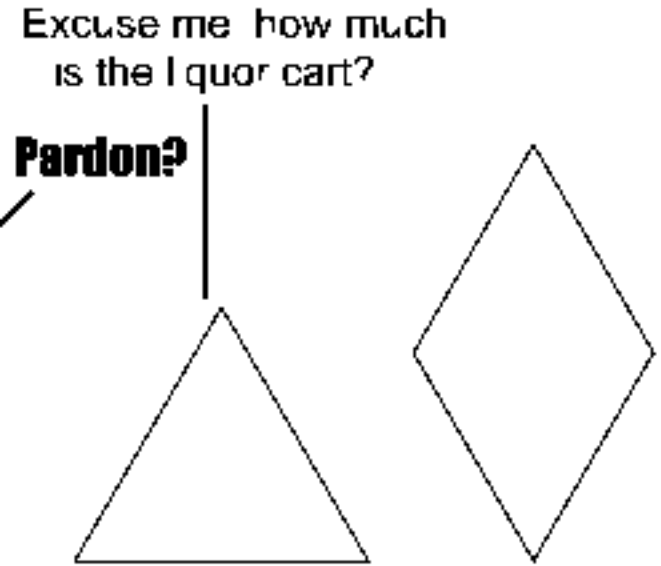
A l we have is air ne food

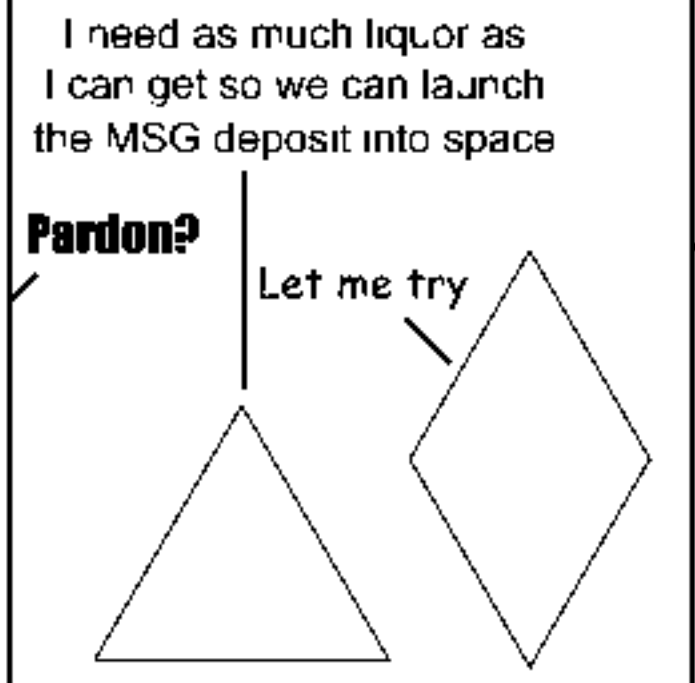


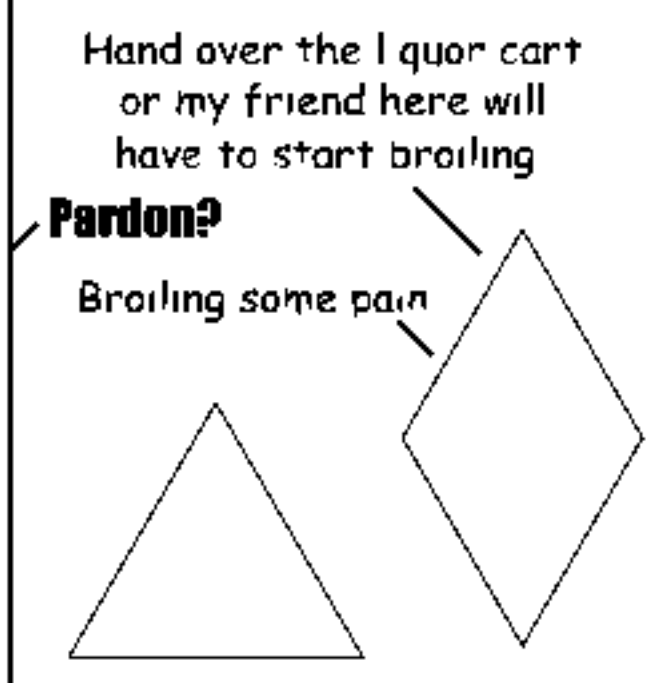
Triangle and Robert



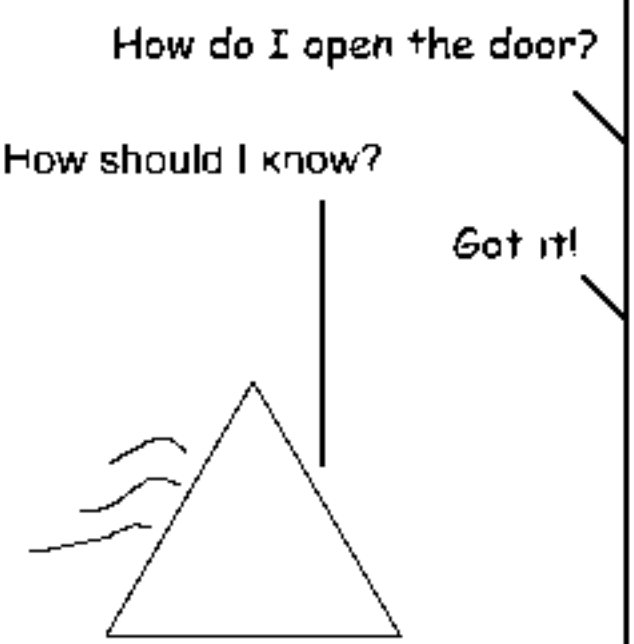
Triangle and Robert

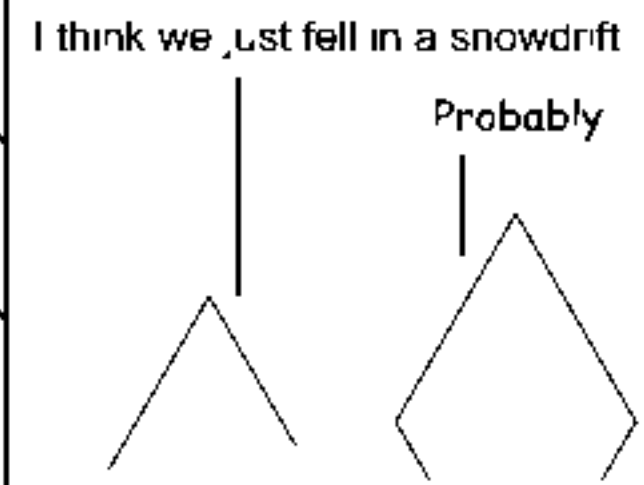


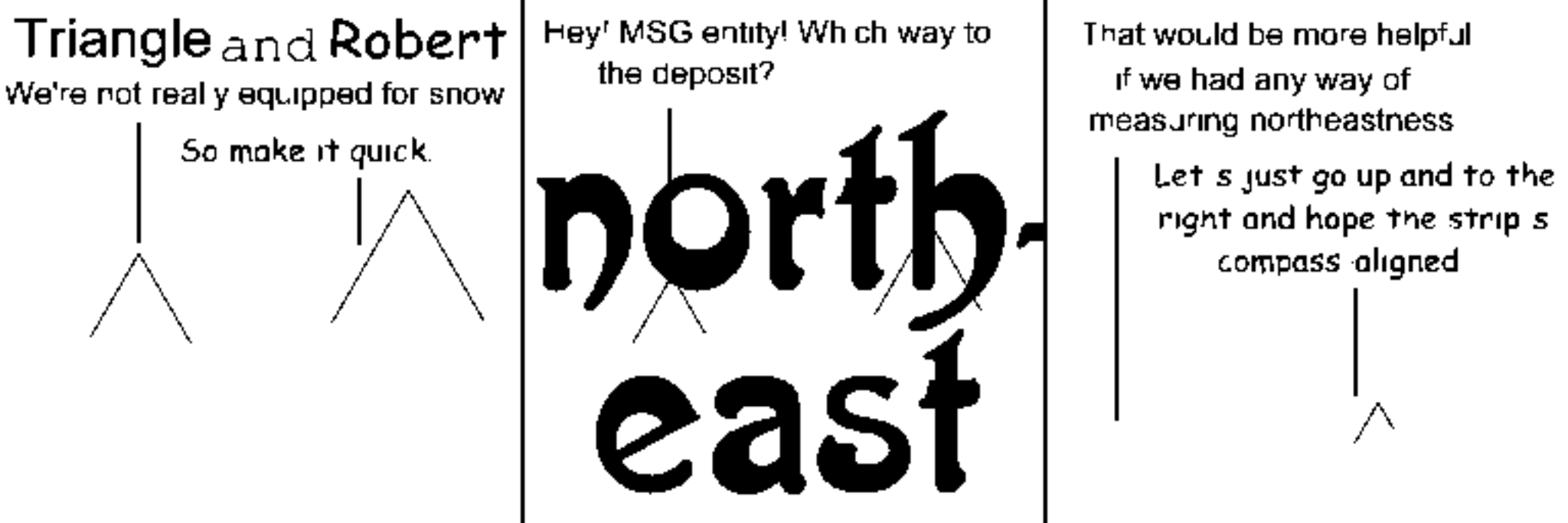




Triangle and Robert






Triangle and Robert
We're not real y equipped for snow
So make it quick.
Hey! MSG entity! Wh ch way to the deposit?
north-east
That would be more helpful if we had any way of measuring northeastness
Let s just go up and to the right and hope the strip s compass aligned

Triangle and Robert

I don't th nk I can
feel my edges

That would be because
we ve been completely
covered in snow for
at least half an hour

I know why I'm ,ust worried

Maybe we should start
a fire now

A small one wouldn't hurt
Pass some brandy

I have no dea which
bottles are which

Just pass a few
randomly then

These I work
How was I going to
light these?

Magic I think

I'm too co d for mag c

Let's keep moving
We'll freeze if we
stop to think

We're already freez ng

Triangle, how long can a polygon survive freezing?

It depends. How long have we been frozen?

Around seven hours

Oh. In that case around seven and a half hours

Try starting a fire again

I would need at least a small amount of mobility

You can talk.

What. we should rub speech lines together?

Yes!

Oh. Good idea

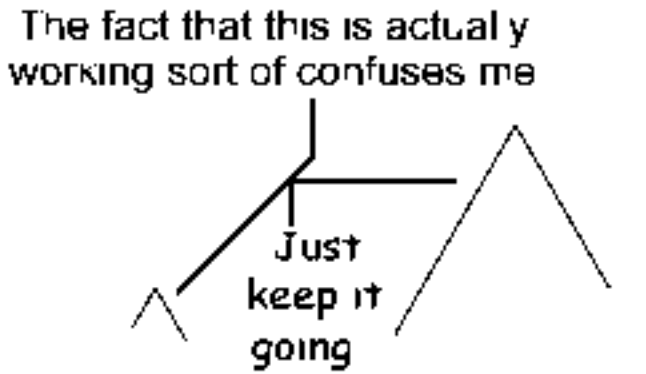
Is it working yet?

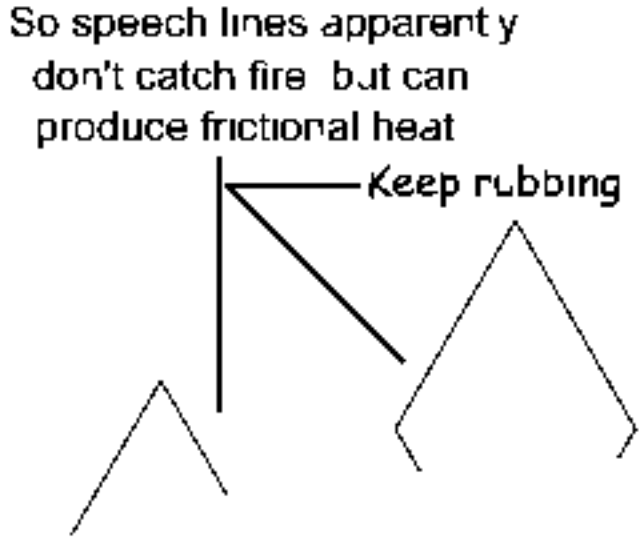
Try angling it

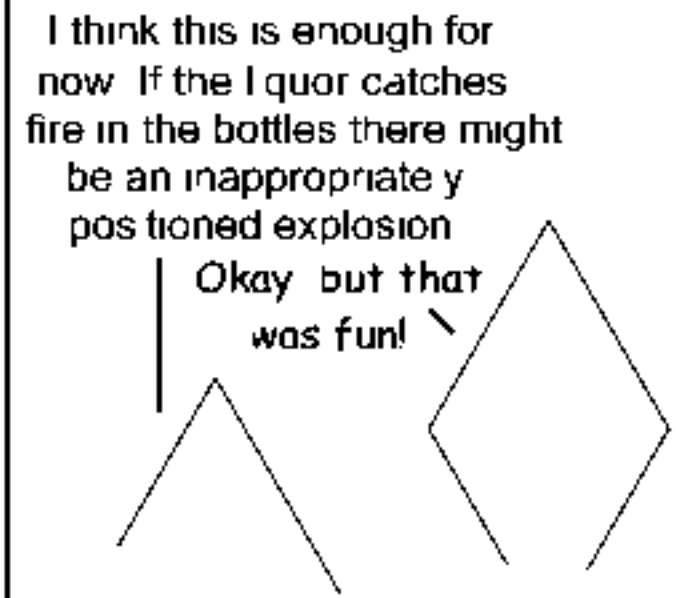
Now?

I think that'll work, keep going

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Below

It's be ow ground? Why?

Bad ain

I guess we re d gging

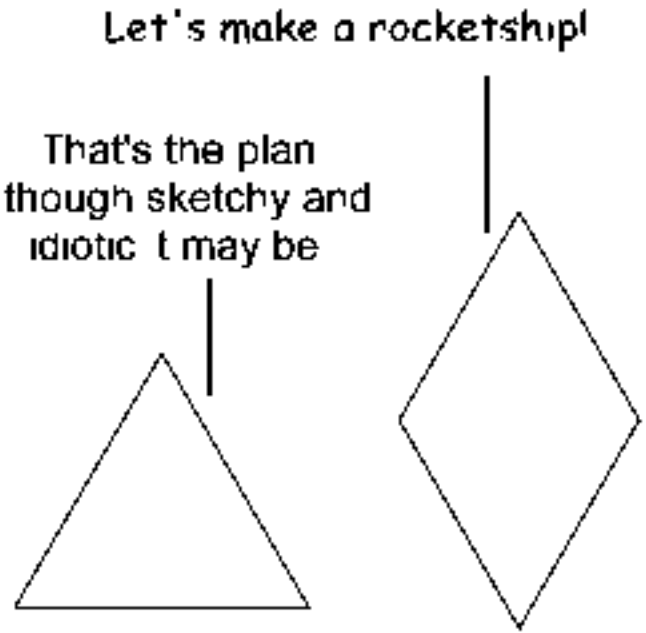
W th what?

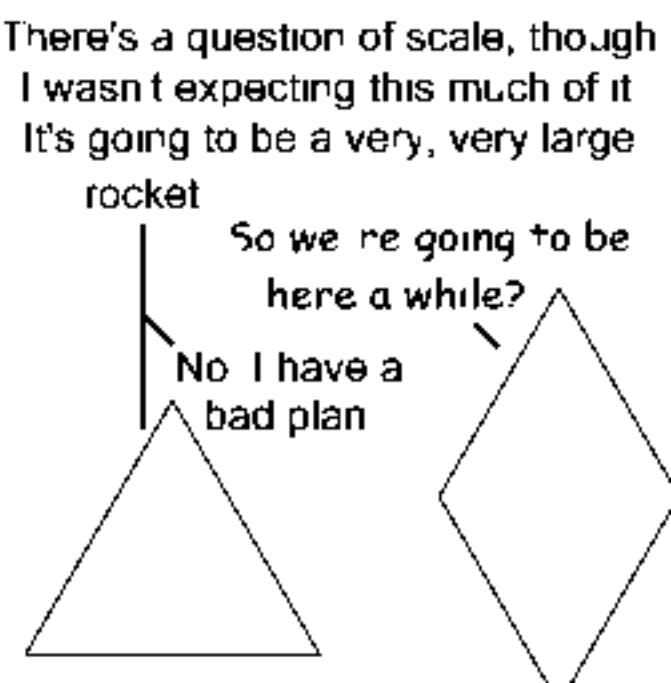
I don't know

Penguins?

Okay

Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Can you switch to quadruple panels?

Not this

MSG entity! If set up a framework can you form your mass around it?

Ow!

Construction feasible.

Can we please go back to normal now?

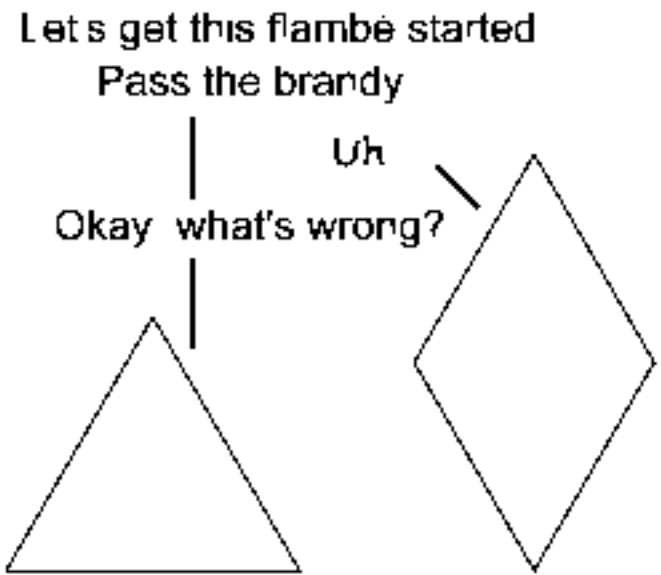
Vessel attempt acceptable.

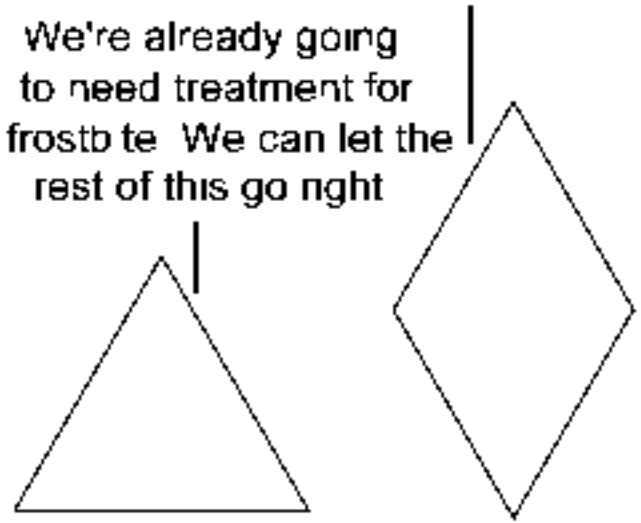
Okay

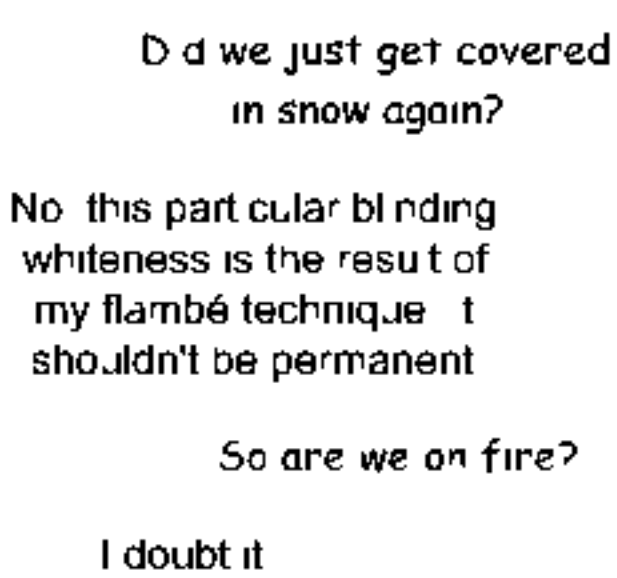
Was that really necessary?

I wanted to read what the MSG had to say without clipping

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I still can't see anything
but the t tle.

The light from my
flambé spell is more bl nding
than I was expecting Odd
that we can see the title and
panel div sions

Maybe we technically
can t see them

Speaking of changing the subject.
fol ow me with the cart I' l start
by sculpt ng the base of the
rocket and an outline of the
propulsion system

Is see ng necessary for that?

No I can find my way by taste

We're underground in Antarctica
in and on a vast deposit of
monosodium glutamate carrying
stolen bottles of airline liquor
as magical flares with wh ch to
fuse and sculpt the MSG into a
framework for a rocketship, at
which point the sent ent mind
the MSG comprises will take
over and complete the rocketship
so that it can leave Earth
What bothers me is that it all
follows logically from the plot

Triangle and Robert

What's happening?

No! It started too soon!
The rocket's forming
around us!
Cancel! Abort! Stop!

So this is bad?

It's meant to be a solid mass
We'll be crushed and then
suffocate

What if we start running?

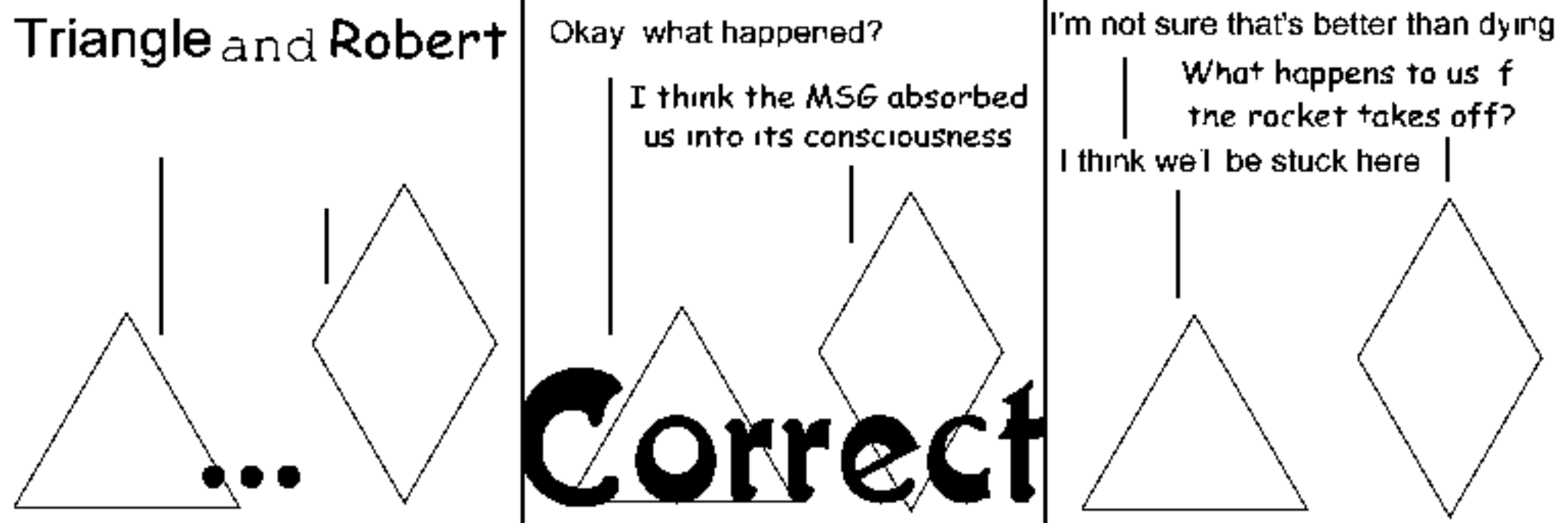
Good idea

That's weird I can see
your speed lines

It's growing faster than I can move!
Think of a plot cop-out fast!
We need to get out NOW!

Is there any chance this
is all a dream?

No more so than
the rest of the comic


Triangle and Robert
...
Okay what happened?
I think the MSG absorbed us into its consciousness
Correct
I'm not sure that's better than dying
What happens to us f the rocket takes off?
I think we'l be stuck here

Triangle and Robert

Let us out, nice MSG person!

If we return to our bodies we'l die
We need it to release those from the rocket first

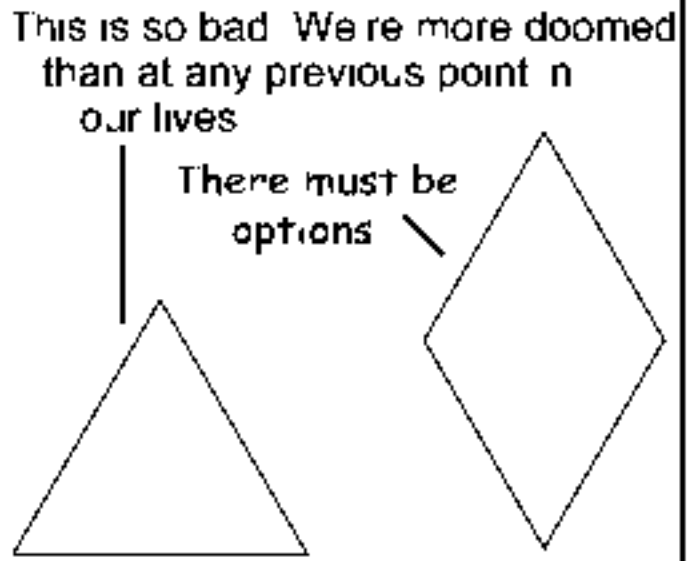
That sounds easy

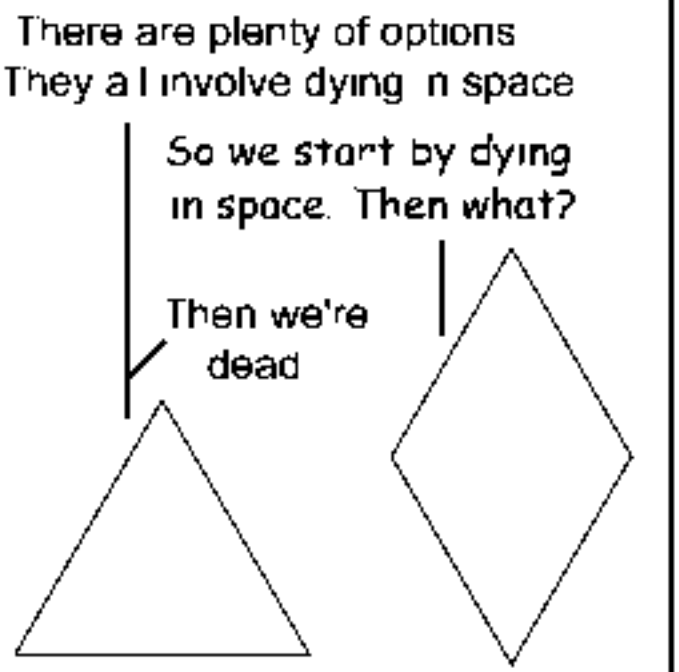
Launch underway!

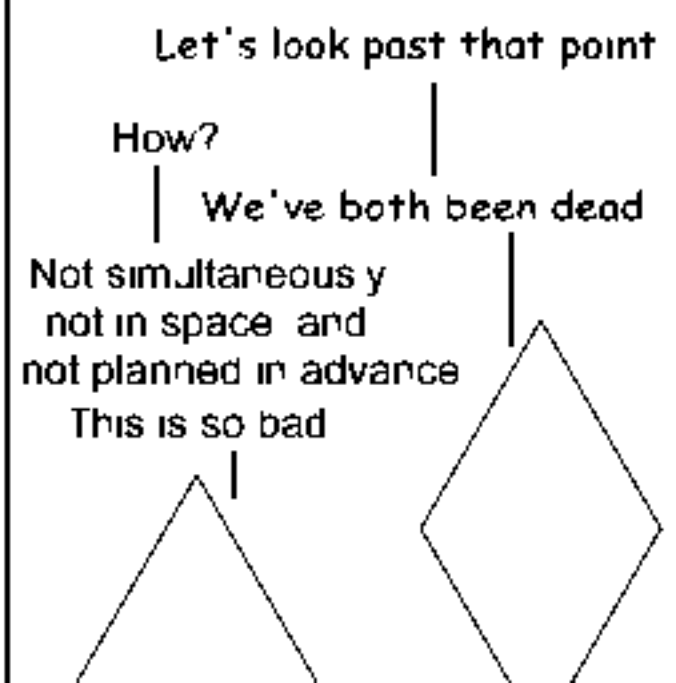
My fault I shouldn't have said + sounded easy

Here's an idea
Let's panic!

Triangle and Robert



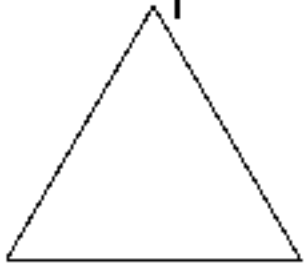


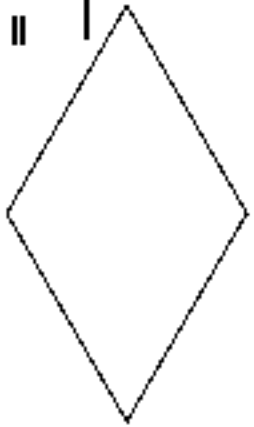


Triangle and Robert

You and your little
self preservation instinct

Go if you want I'll
wait here Alive

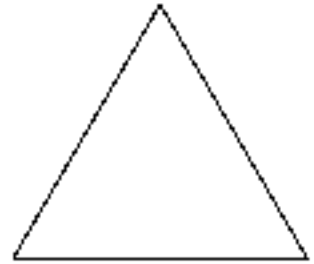




MSG entity let me out

ncredibl
tupid ide
but okay

Good luck I'll be sure to
resurrect you if I find
a safe way back to Earth



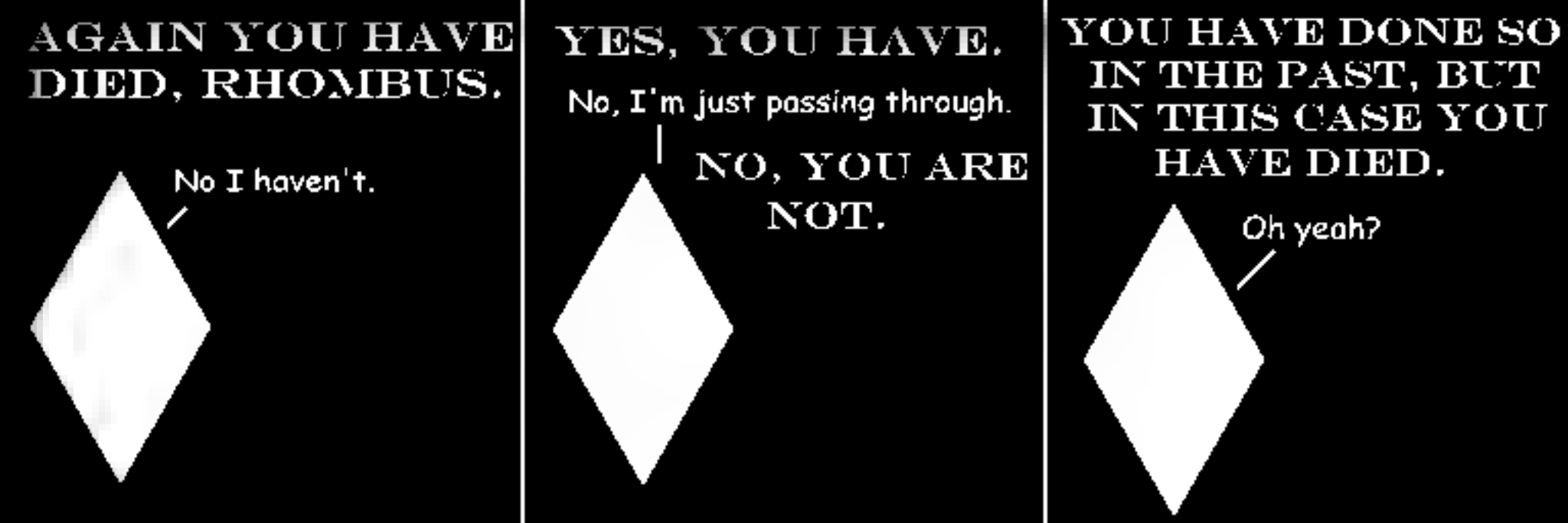
Triangle and Robert

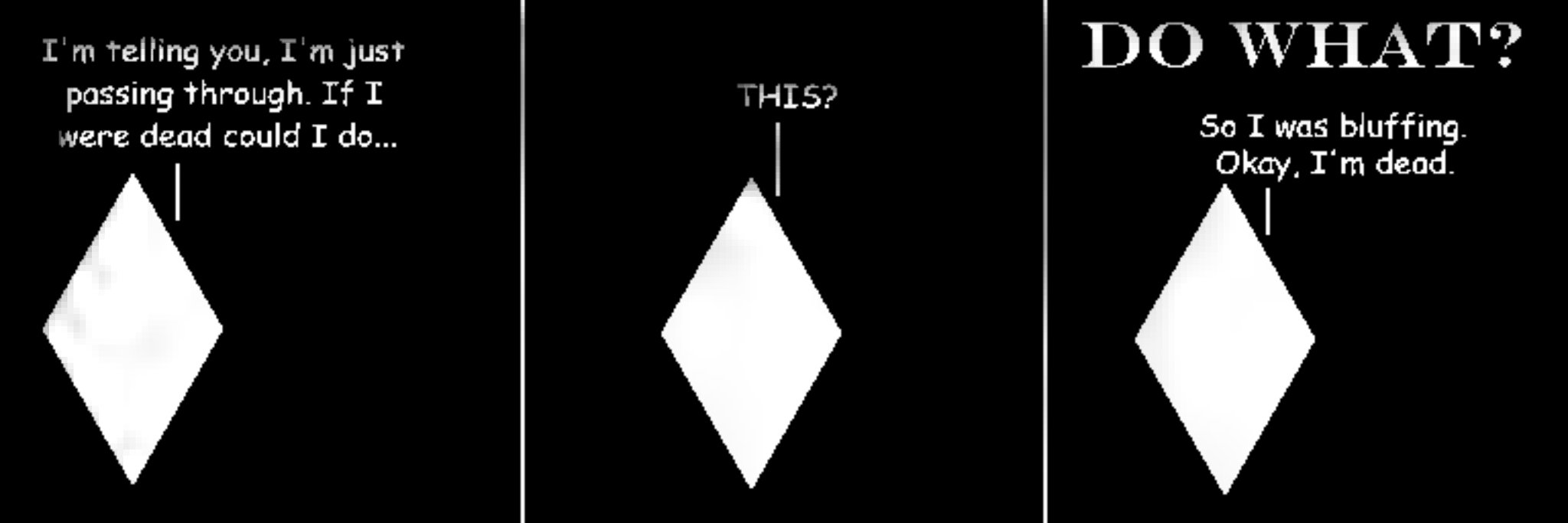
The rhombus has issues.

- He m ght know what he's doing actually

I complain about his plans because we've learned from experience that they work better that way

He'l have suffocated to death in your rocket by now Why d d you bu ld it with us still ins de? Why did you launch it? I mean thanks for pulling us nto your consc ousness so we wouldn't immed ately die, but what were you thinking? Even the Cartoonist no, I guess the Cartoonist did the same th ng to Cube But our names are in the title!


AGAIN YOU HAVE DIED, RHOMBUS.
No I haven't.
YES, YOU HAVE.
No, I'm just passing through.
NO, YOU ARE NOT.
YOU HAVE DONE SO IN THE PAST, BUT IN THIS CASE YOU HAVE DIED.
Oh yeah?


I'm telling you, I'm just passing through. If I were dead could I do...
THIS?
DO WHAT?
So I was bluffing. Okay, I'm dead.

Triangle and Robert

You're waiting tables yourself today? Shrimp lo mein, please.

I have negotiated rental of a kitchen and laboratory space in the Tater Fizz bottling plant

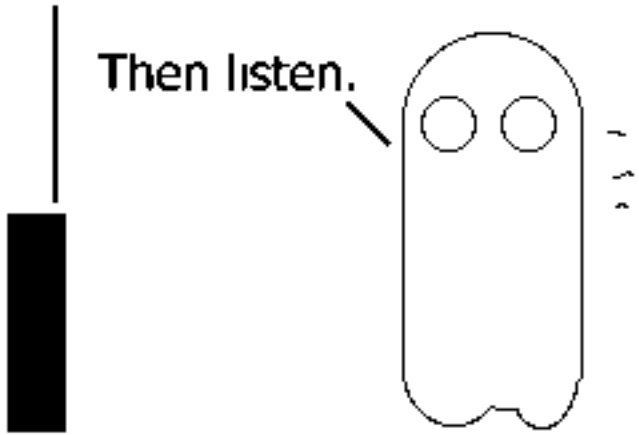
Rental? That seems more humble than necessary. Say, in the corner booth over there...

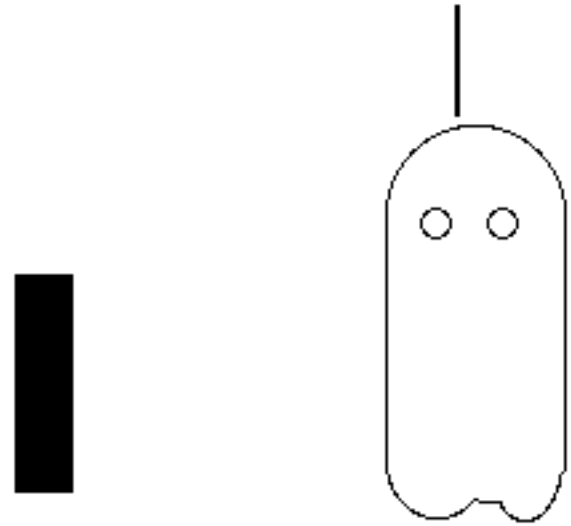
Orpuddex has been taking lunch here regularly. As of yet he has not made trouble

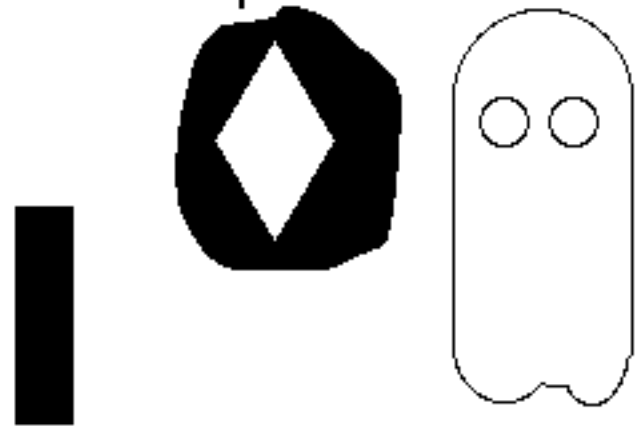
Make that lo mein to go. I'm trying to cut down on flipping out and killing people.

I will attempt to hurry

Triangle and Robert







Fear not! FEAR NOT! I am Orpuddex, Sentry of the Igneous Group! FEAR NOT!

Okay! I'm not fearing! I'm not fearing!

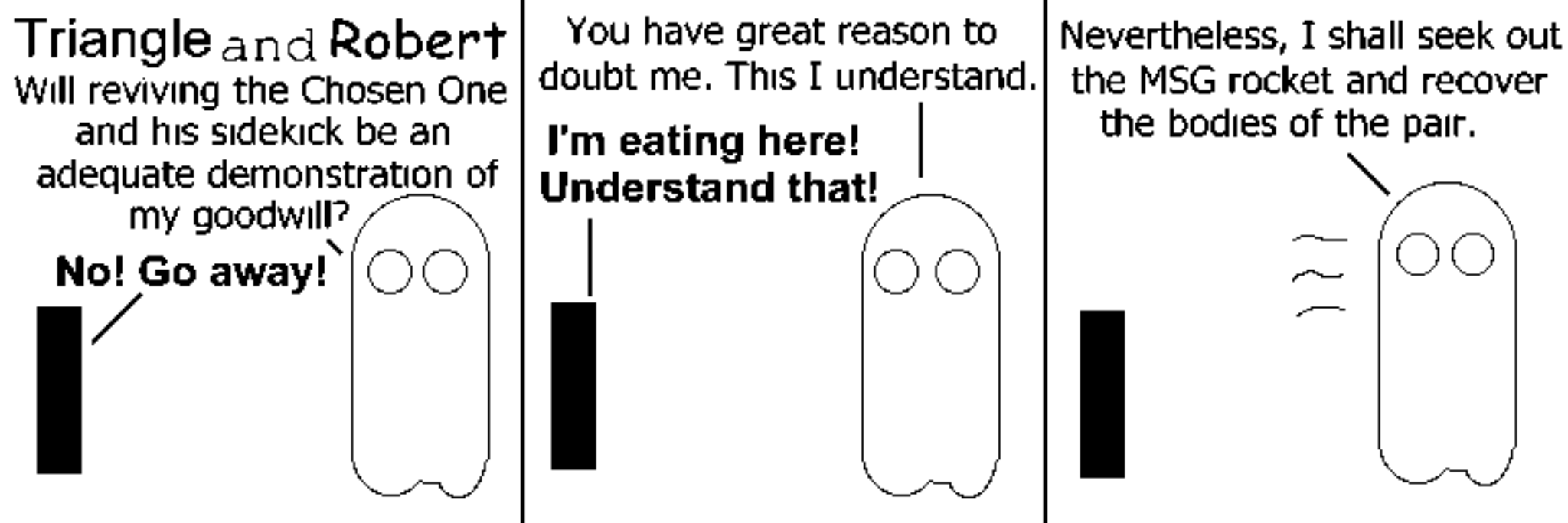
It would be futile to restore you to life without a body. It is in deep space, correct?

Probably. I didn't get a really good look at it.

I will seek it out. It has been long since I traveled beyond your world, but I believe that I can recapture the ability to do so.

You... space... once Triangle and I are alive, I think we'll have to ask some questions.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Was the rhombus expecting aid from

the Pudding Watcher?

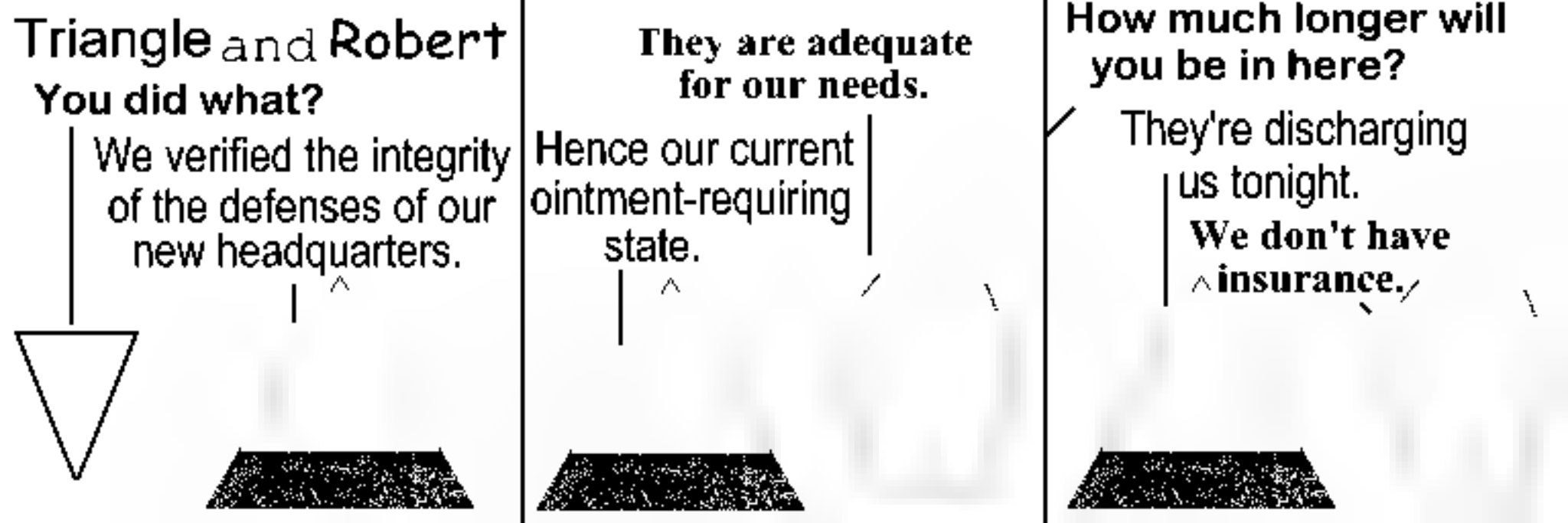
Probably not Why did he get it?

The Watcher has stated such.

I understand that it s hard to do inside your own consciousness but please work on your font size It makes communicating a lot easier

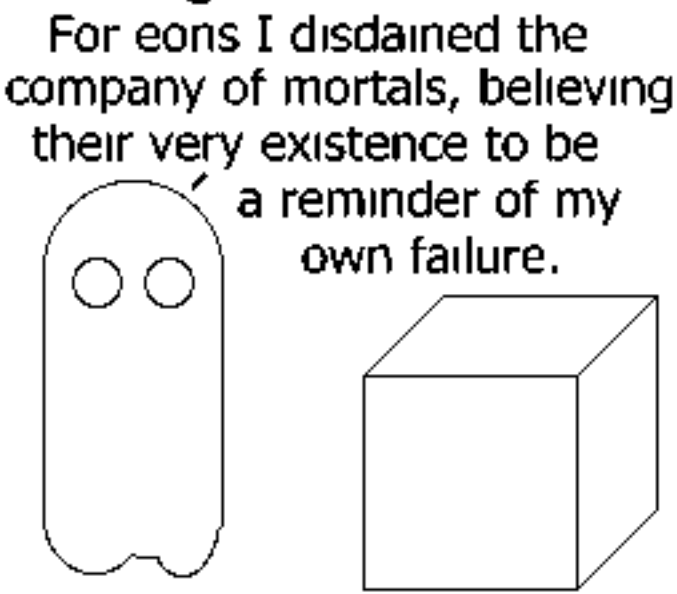
Agree

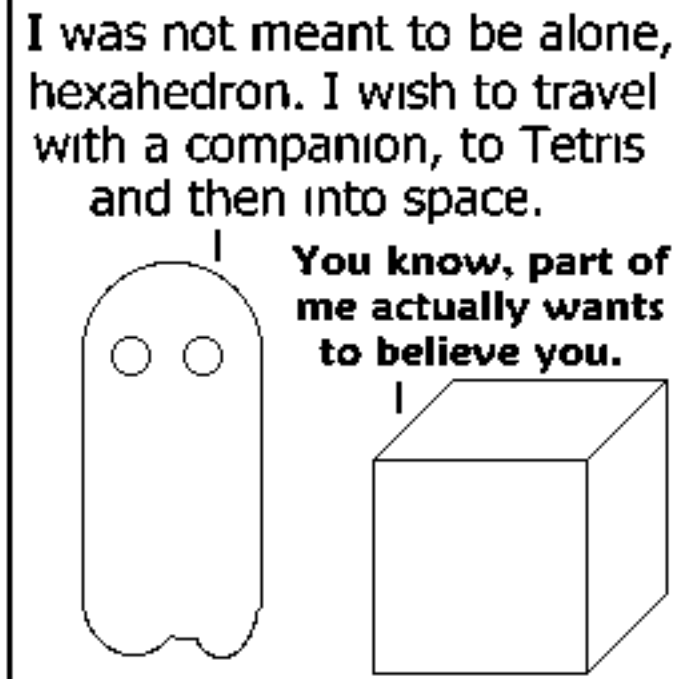
Triangle and Robert
This is a fortress?
Yes. The bottling plant of Tater Fizz has disproportionately strong defenses.
I don't believe you.
Try throwing a pebble at a window.
Later, at a burn clinic
Every laser after the eighth one was just redundant.
Probably.

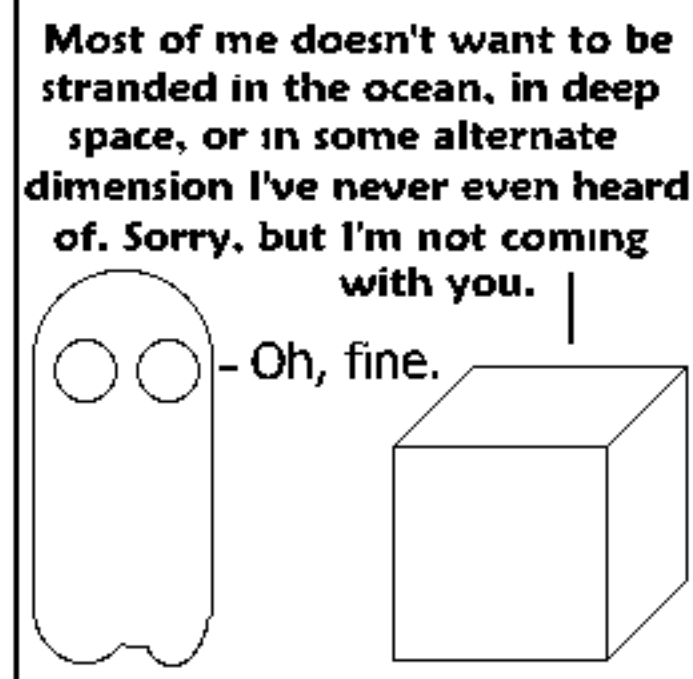

Triangle and Robert
You did what?
We verified the integrity of the defenses of our new headquarters.
They are adequate for our needs.
Hence our current ointment-requiring state.
How much longer will you be in here?
They're discharging us tonight.
We don't have insurance.

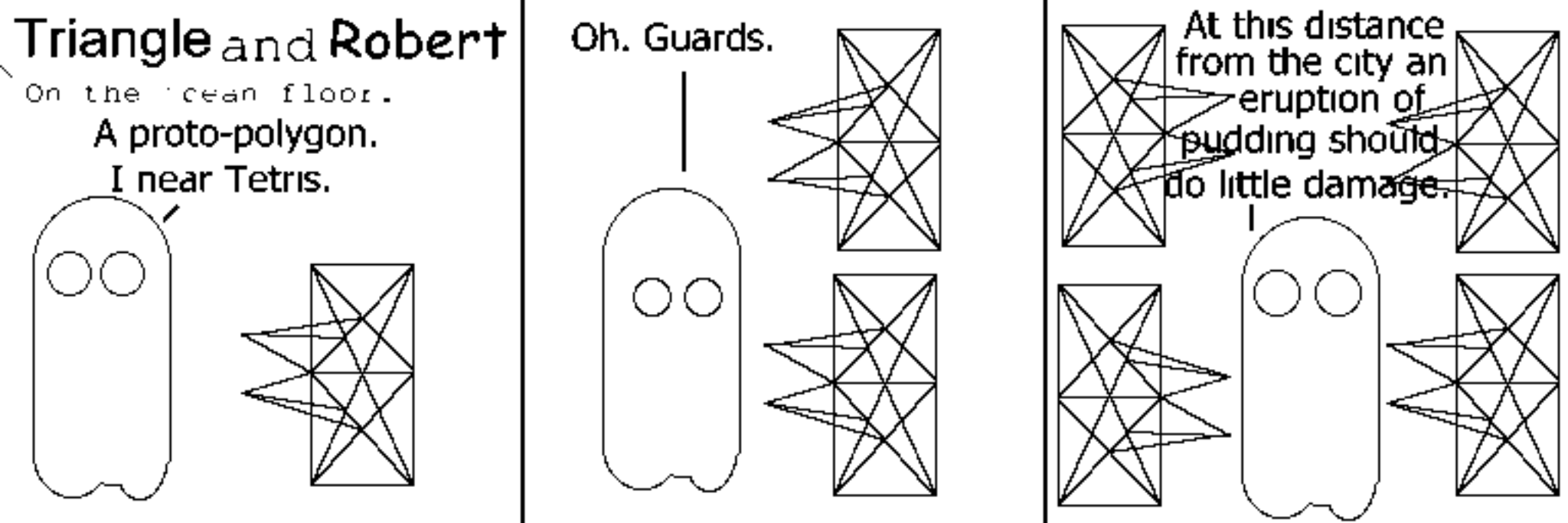
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
On the ocean floor.
A proto-polygon.
I near Tetris.
Oh. Guards.
At this distance from the city an eruption of pudding should do little damage.

Triangle and Robert

The restaurant was busy, and from the description of your wounds there seemed no need for my attention. Have you recovered?

Arf?

病

We are filled with painkillers.

Say no to drugs!

I see. Let us hope that the seismic activity near Tetris holds no threat until you can stand, then.

Seismafuzzywuzzy?

病

Triangle and Robert

Did I just...

Trigger a massive
earquake and
attendant tidal
waves Yes

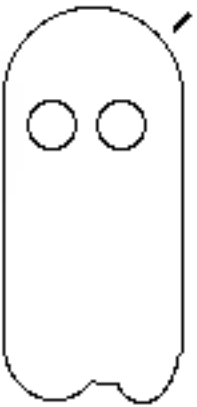
It is fortunate that this
happened far from land.
Why did it happen at all?
I intended a small eruption
directed at the
guards of Tetris.

Remember when
activated the Tetrean
pumps

Yes. It is to again tap
them that I return thither.

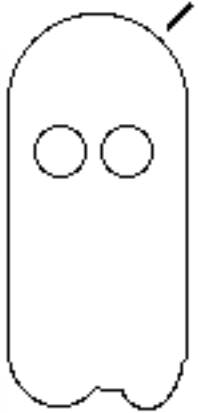
Do you remember
turning them off
when you were
done with them

Triangle and Robert



The pumps have been running at full capacity since I last came here?

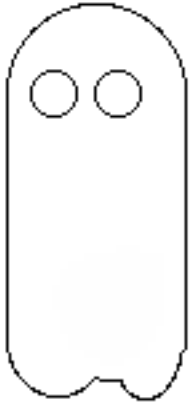
Slightly above full. As you may recall, you broke some valves making it go faster.



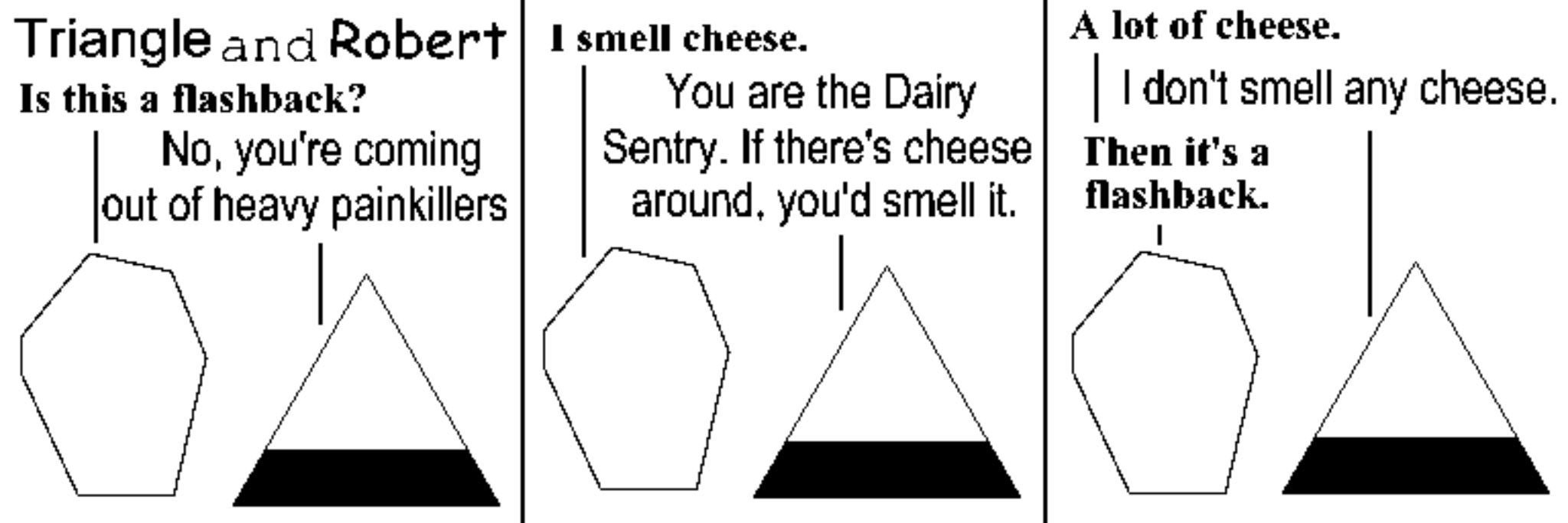
And faster it went! But now I appear to have violently destroyed my chances of using the output of the pumps to power myself.

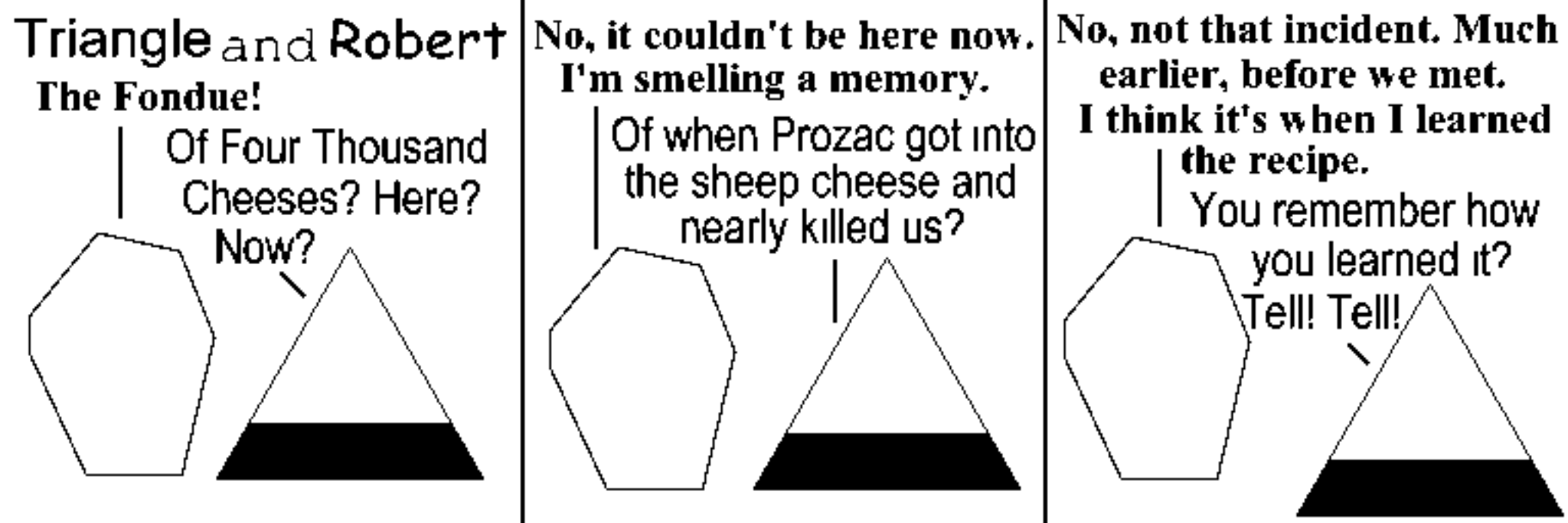
Not entirely.

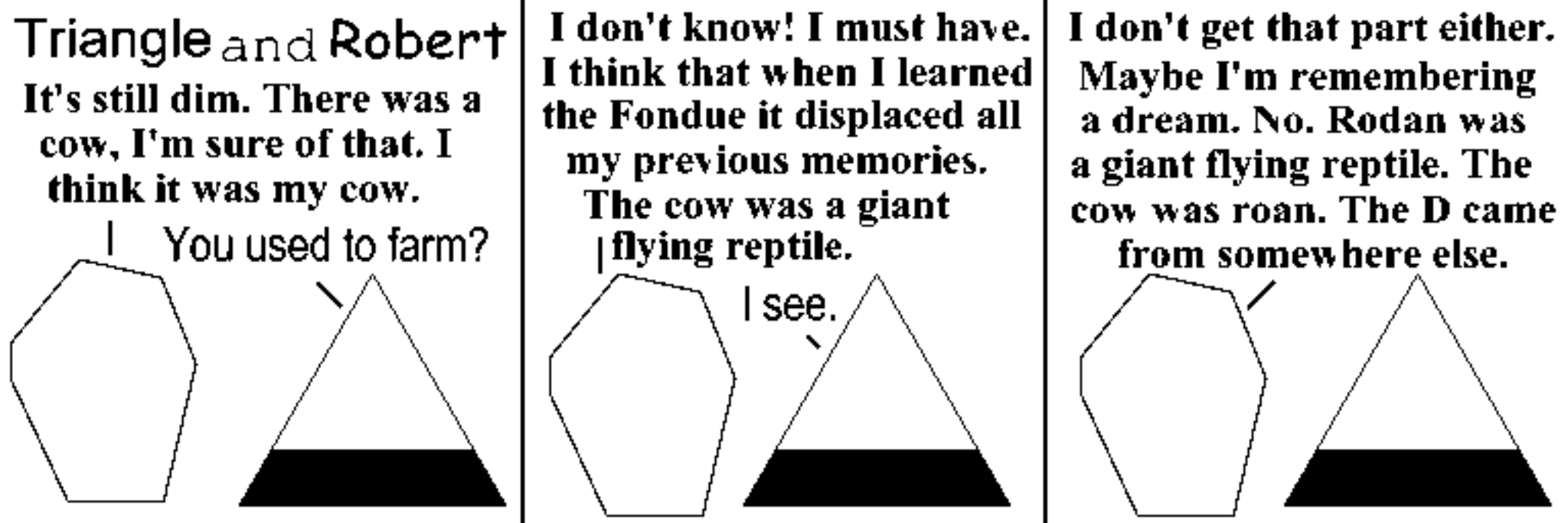
It'll take longer, but parts of the system are still working. You should be able to get space flight in a few days.

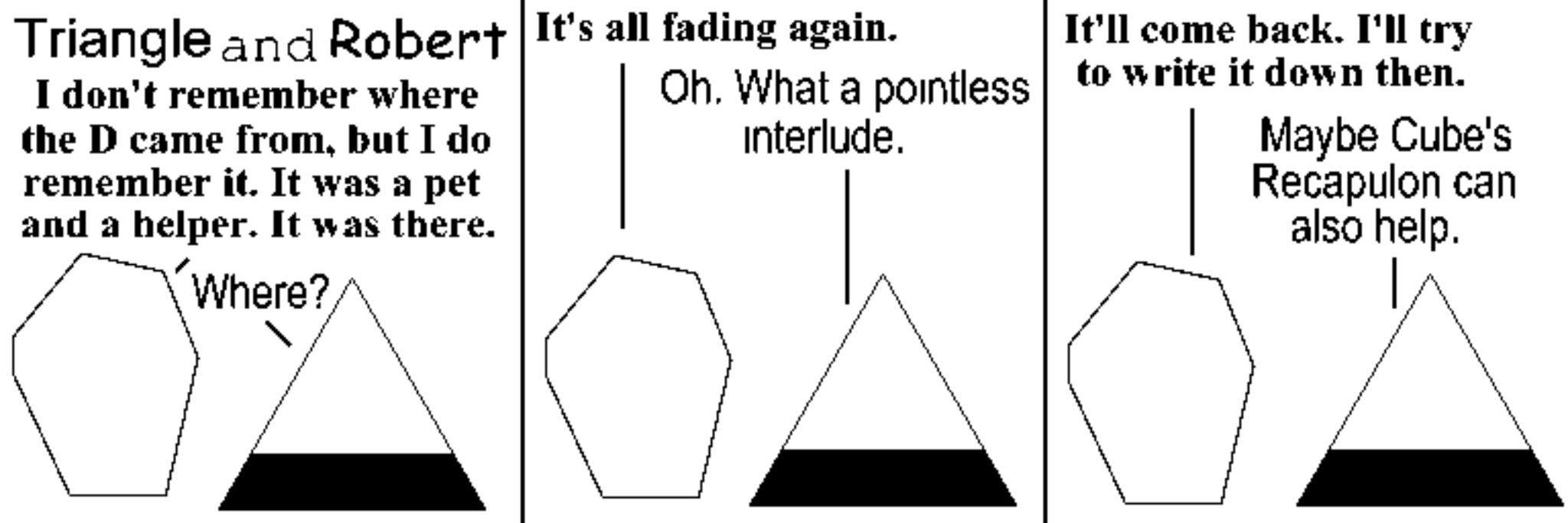


I had intended more than mere space flight.... I suppose that I should not delay my departure, however.


Triangle and Robert
Is this a flashback?
No, you're coming out of heavy painkillers
I smell cheese.
You are the Dairy Sentry. If there's cheese around, you'd smell it.
A lot of cheese.
I don't smell any cheese.
Then it's a flashback.


Triangle and Robert
The Fondue!
Of Four Thousand Cheeses? Here? Now?
No, it couldn't be here now. I'm smelling a memory.
Of when Prozac got into the sheep cheese and nearly killed us?
No, not that incident. Much earlier, before we met. I think it's when I learned the recipe.
You remember how you learned it? Tell! Tell!


Triangle and Robert
It's still dim. There was a cow, I'm sure of that. I think it was my cow.
You used to farm?
I don't know! I must have. I think that when I learned the Fondue it displaced all my previous memories. The cow was a giant flying reptile.
I see.
I don't get that part either. Maybe I'm remembering a dream. No. Rodan was a giant flying reptile. The cow was roan. The D came from somewhere else.


Triangle and Robert
I don't remember where the D came from, but I do remember it. It was a pet and a helper. It was there.
Where?
It's all fading again.
Oh. What a pointless interlude.
It'll come back. I'll try to write it down then.
Maybe Cube's Recapulon can also help.

Triangle and Robert

I'm an unreliable narrator for reasons I'll be revealing making the story up as I go along and getting sidetracked. There are also events taking place within the story which I deliberately conceal for one reason or another. Try not to forget that.

You're warning me not to trust you

There's more than that

But you're not saying what

I haven't even decided what. There are gaps that I know I'm not showing but haven't yet filled with things not to show. Also, for some time I've had an ending to the comic planned but now it looks like Orpaddex is detailing it

Triangle and Robert

You've had an ending planned?

Yes, almost since the beginning of the MSG entity

Is it a good ending?

Good how

I mean for the story. Not for us

I thought it was pretty effective, but as it turns out I hadn't taken everything into account

What did you forget?

Cripplex car break apart Beta Tapiocus

Beta what now?

The lump. The Fourth Race had a name for it, towards the end

Triangle and Robert

In my planned ending, the Mob would have proven unstoppable. With its help, polygons would build huge fleets of spacestrips and colonize the galaxies, leaving the glutamate planet that was Earth behind forever.

There was a little more after that involving the Beforings' plan and such.

How's that an ending?

It wouldn't have been an ending for the Universe of Folding, only for the Triangle and Robert story.

But why?

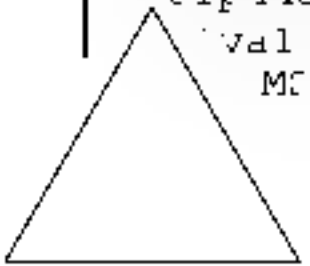
No more Triangle for you would be over.

Between having been created directly by the Cartoonist, being the Chosen One of the Beforings, and your general refusal to accept arbitrary and improvised cosmology, this universe is a bad fit for you. I would release your character and likeness into the public domain and give you an escape pod to an unspecified universe.

Triangle and Robert

I don't th nk I understand

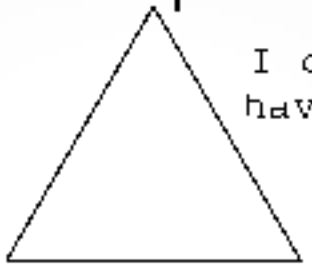
It pr bably l es 't matter I'd ass med that there were three ma r arcs: the Orpheidex arc, the val arc, and the MSG arc



I'd been implicitly supposing Orpheidex's reformation to be the end of his arc I'd overlooked that the reformed Pooding Watcher would do everything in his power to correct or atone for his newly revealed mistake

With the Pooding Watcher on your side, the seventh Race can actually break out of the cycle of extinctions and survive indefinitely on Earth

Would that kill the MSG entity?



I don't know or haven't decided

I saw it coming.

No, you didn't.

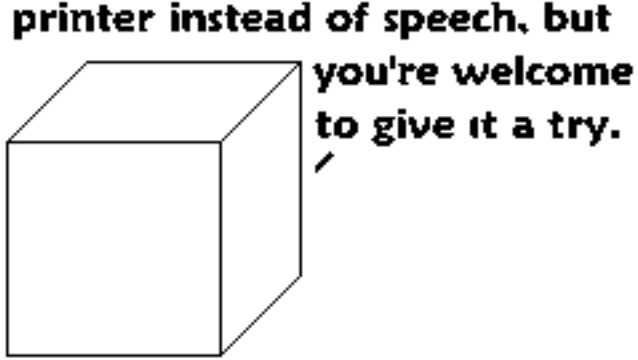
Well, not the specifics. It felt like you were intending to end it after your fifth year, though.

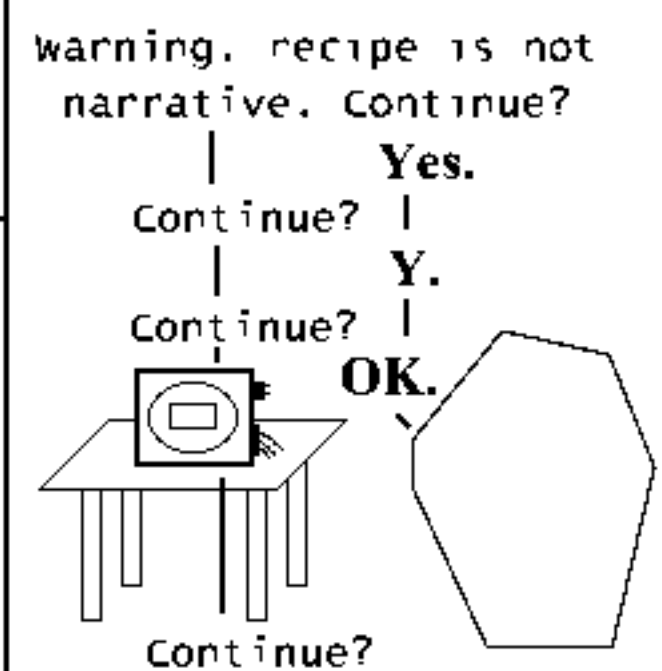
I'm not convinced you even knew that much.

How's the rescue coming along, anyway?

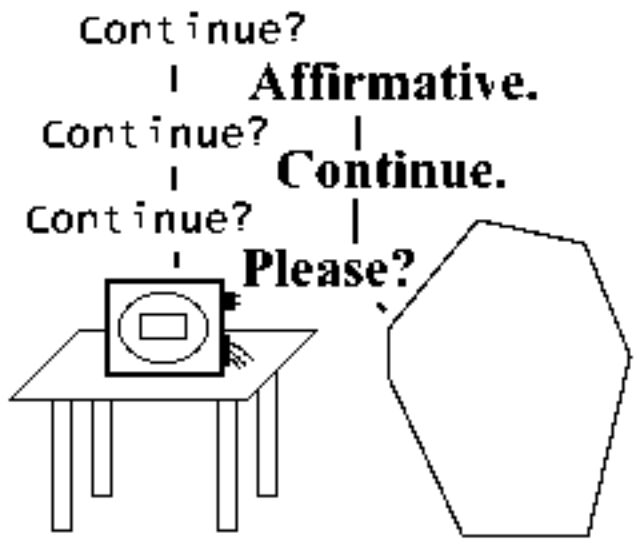
Orpuddex hasn't left Earth in a very long time. Don't expect him to hurry.

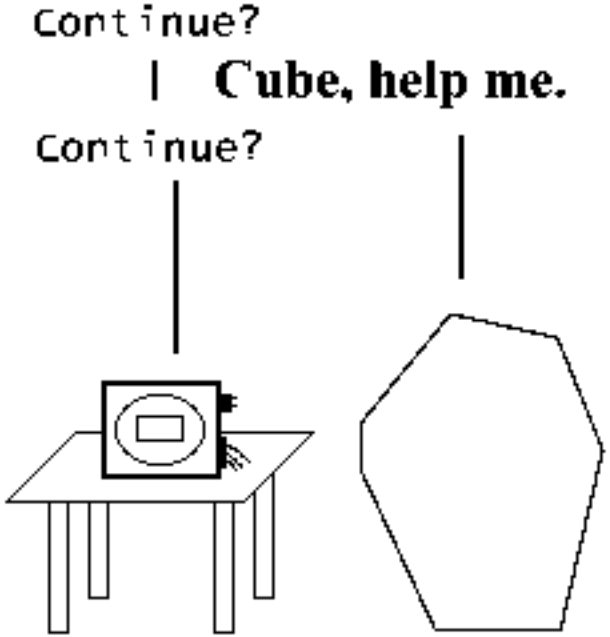
Triangle and Robert

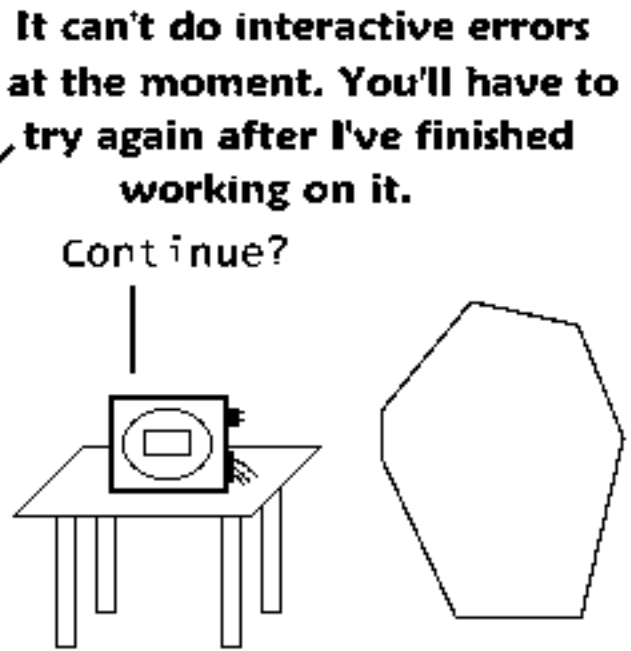




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

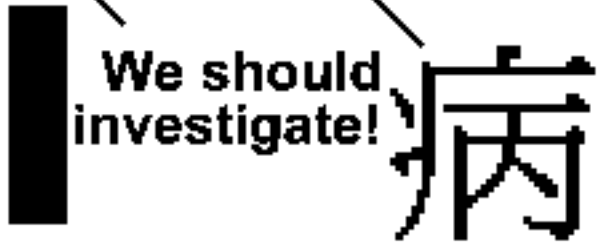
I like the security, but this place is small! Why do we only have this tiny section?

The remainder of the building produces Tater Fizz.

I doubt it!

It does seem that the quantities produced are disproportionate to the beverage's actual level of popularity

We should investigate!



To investigate those from whom we rent our new headquarters would be uncivil.

I'm okay with that!

Good luck then, miss Concarne

Triangle and Robert

I can't see anything!

I'm not drawing anything

I can't see off panel either!

I'm more explicitly not drawing than usual because I don't know what's going on

I was planning to investigate the Tater Fizz plant out of sheer nosiness.

I know, but I don't know how a bottling plant is usually laid out or where the terrible secret of Tater Fizz would be hidden

So there's a terrible secret?

Not all that terrible, really

Triangle and Robert

Why am I outside the bottling plant now? I was just walking down a hallway!

From an overly technical perspective, you were never "inside" the bottling plant.

Is this going to be a geometry pun?

Topology, actually.

A Klein bottling plant. Have you no shame?

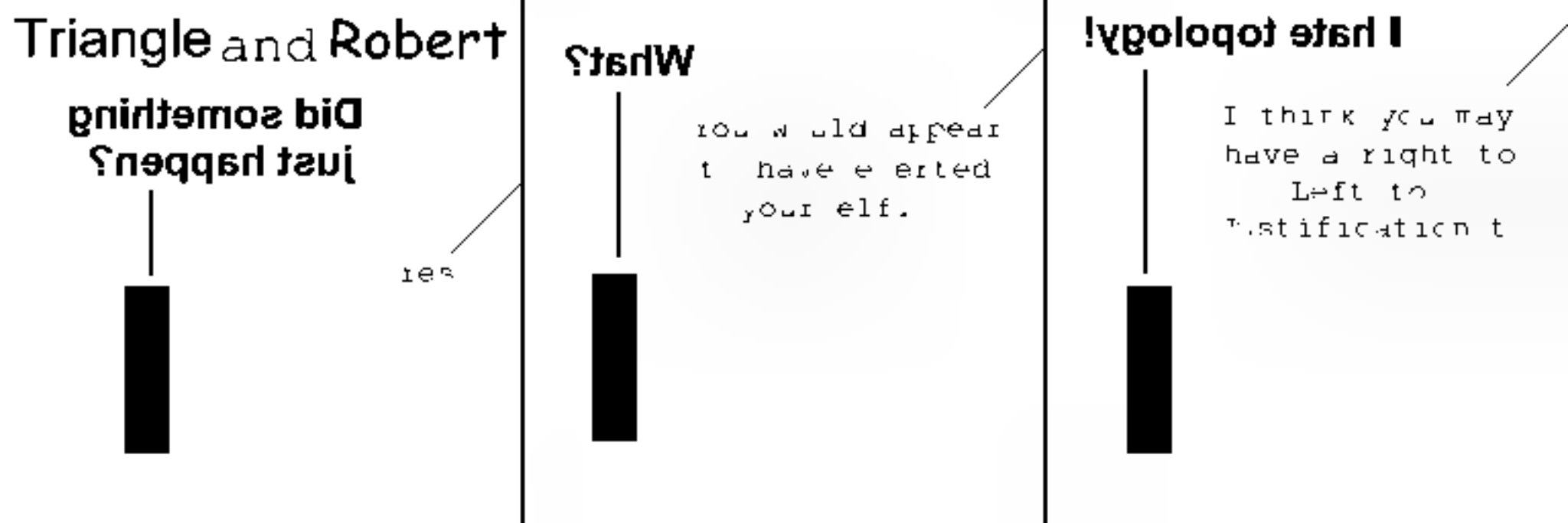
Possibly. I think the plant has a good reason to be four dimensional

Triangle and Robert
Back insi
Back in the
inte·1 r cf the ·onvex
t.ll of the bottling
plart s projectior into
three dimensional sp ace
You there! Stop!
I saw you sneaking around! Stop running!
Oh. This is awkward.
Oh. This is awkward.
Oh
av

Triangle and Robert

You should probably back up. If you keep trying to follow yourself around the loop you might actually catch yourself.

There's only one [illegible] you're just standing in a tight curve of space and seeing yourself from behind. If you don't back away from the curve things might get weirder.


Triangle and Robert
Did something just happen?
Yes
What?
You would appear to have inverted yourself.
I hate topology!
I think you may have a right to Left to justification

Triangle and Robert

Miss Concarne? Is that you? You look different somehow.

Help!

Are you... does it hurt?

Only when I run into walls.

Perhaps I should take you to a hospital

Hey, that's a really great idea!

Triangle and Robert

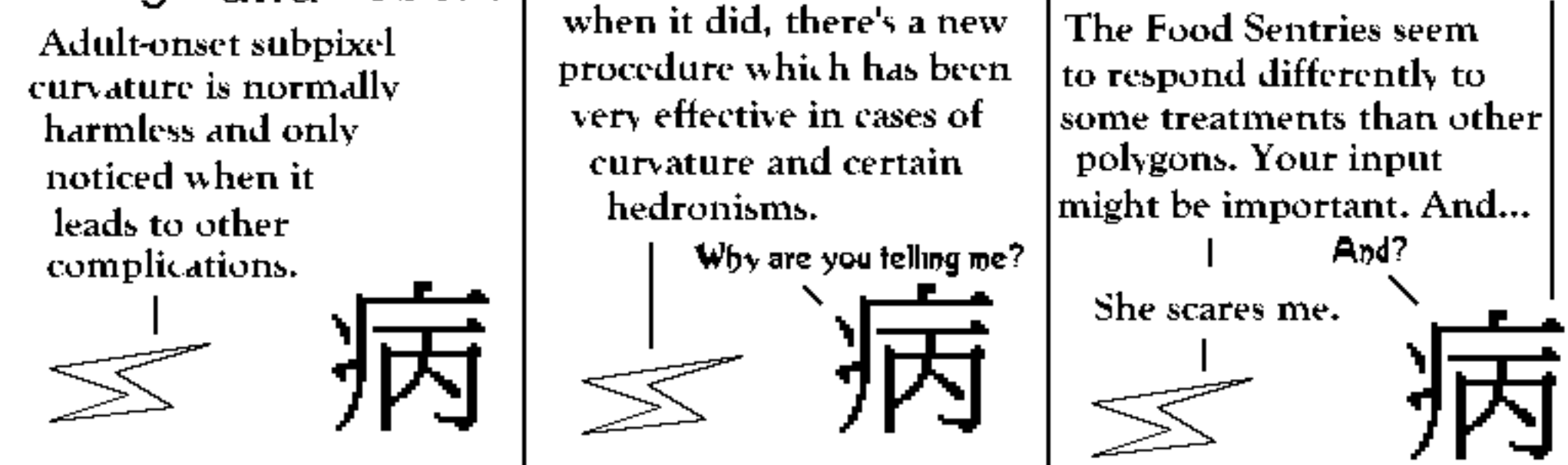
Your friend is suffering from an eversion. In two dimensions this is equivalent to a rotation, and so the normal treatment is simply to spin the patient around.

Linda, however, happens to have picked up a third dimension.

I thought that three dimensionality was congenital

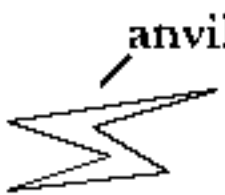
You're probably thinking of hedronism, which is normally a birth defect. What Linda has is termed "adult-onset subpixel curvature". It's actually quite common in females of her age and activity level.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

The procedure is fairly straightforward. The anesthetized patient is lain as flat as possible on an operating table, over which is suspended an oversized anvil.



Which is then rapidly lowered onto the patient, flattening the problematic curvature?

We prefer the term "dropped".

This sounds like a rather risky and exotic operation

It's been very well documented. A similar procedure involving a piano is the main treatment for dental tone-deafness.

"Denta."?

Triangle and Robert

We've hit a complication.

With the anvil?

No, tranquilizing the Meat Sentry.

Oh no. Her pointy things reflex. Are any nurses dead?

We saw that much coming and used a blowgun. The problem is more that the tranquilizer doesn't appear to be working.

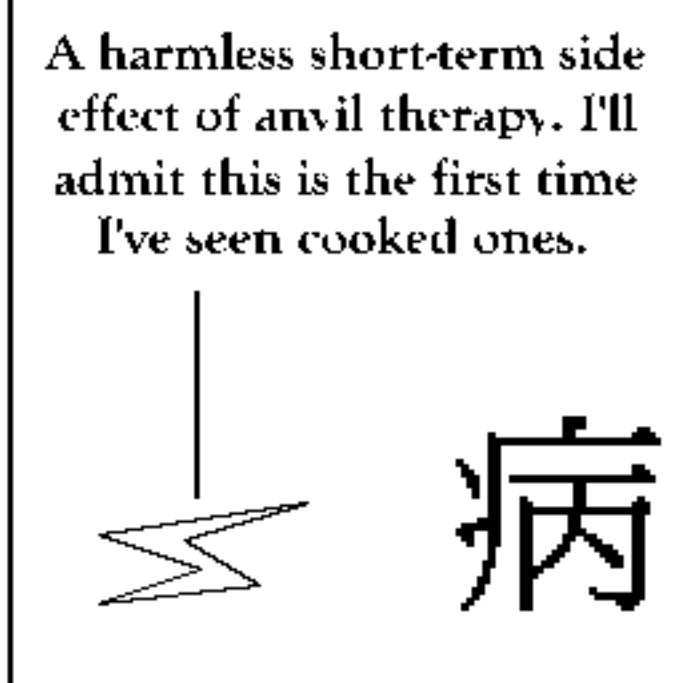
What letter does it start with?

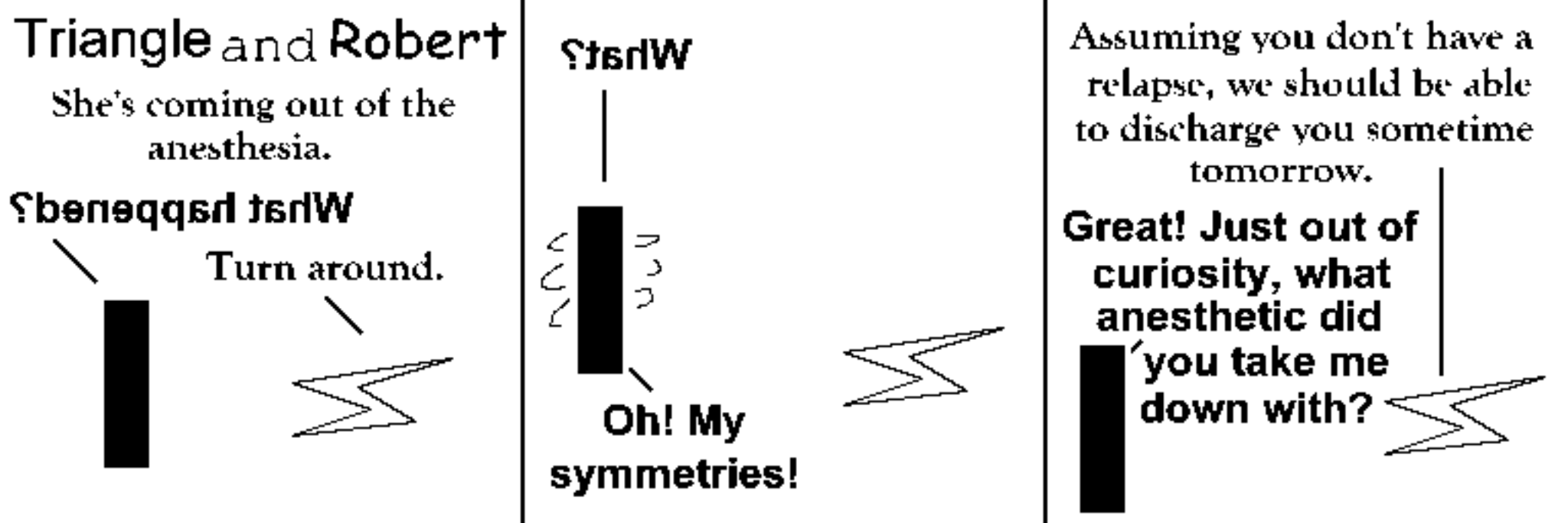
What?

She builds up immunities to things as a hobby. Use something that starts with T through Z. She has finished everything up to R and is working on S.

Triangle and Robert
Was that noise of impact the operation?
Yes, and it went perfectly. Come this way.
病

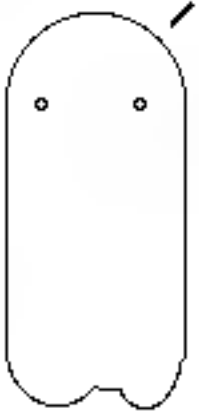
And here she is. According to the laser plane, she now has zero curvature and is two-dimensional again.
Her upper edge is ringed with a halo of tiny roast fowl
病


A harmless short-term side effect of anvil therapy. I'll admit this is the first time I've seen cooked ones.
病


Triangle and Robert
She's coming out of the anesthesia.
What happened?
Turn around.
What?
Oh! My symmetries!
Assuming you don't have a relapse, we should be able to discharge you sometime tomorrow.
Great! Just out of curiosity, what anesthetic did you take me down with?

Triangle and Robert

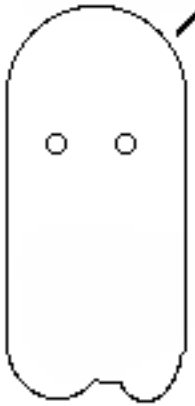
I am prepared to return to space in pursuit of the mortal bodies of the Chosen One and sidekick.



← [illegible] supposed to be nipples

Such mockery is uncalled for.

The pudding with which I have infused myself is sufficient in quantity for the task, although there is rather more tapioca than I had hoped for. I will be capable of little besides flight.



Tell me, will you assist me?

Only with permission. I thought you wouldn't want my help.

As yet, I do not. I will not allow pride to interfere, however, if it becomes necessary.

Triangle and Robert

I've never explained the significance of tapioca in the strip

Do you have the words to do so?

Not with any specificity

Then leave it.

It should be sufficient to state that it has fundamental incompatibilities with the butterscotch of which the universe was formed.

But inaccurate

– It will do for purposes of space travel and menu planning.

The fact that you're willing to use tapioca for travel at all is meaningful

I spent billions of years wrongfully atoning for what was not a wrong. I may spend billions more atoning for that atonement.

Triangle Robert

The M.G entity has just informed Triangle, still waiting within the mind of the entity for rescue, of this development

WHAT percentage?

15.7% tapioca.

What's he thinking? If he tries to match your speed like that he'll just end up exploding! He's not rescuing me he's trying to

KILL HIMSELF!

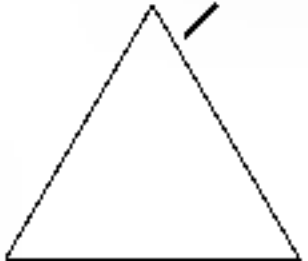
ur hypothesis is consistent with available data

And so, the Padding Watcher or Igrene Sentry departs the Earth, hoping to return hearing the bodies of the Cartoonist's protagonists

Triangle and Robert

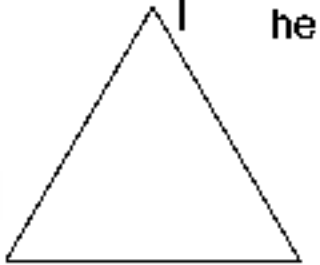
The Pudding-Watcher can only
be slain by the Chosen One
if at all I would not slay him
but if he dies coming to my
aid that could count
Well, that leaves one option

Eject my body and Robert's from
the rocket so Orpuddex can
find them at a safe speed
You'll have to return me to
my body first I know how to
get back in it from being dead
but getting into it from deep space
might be impossible

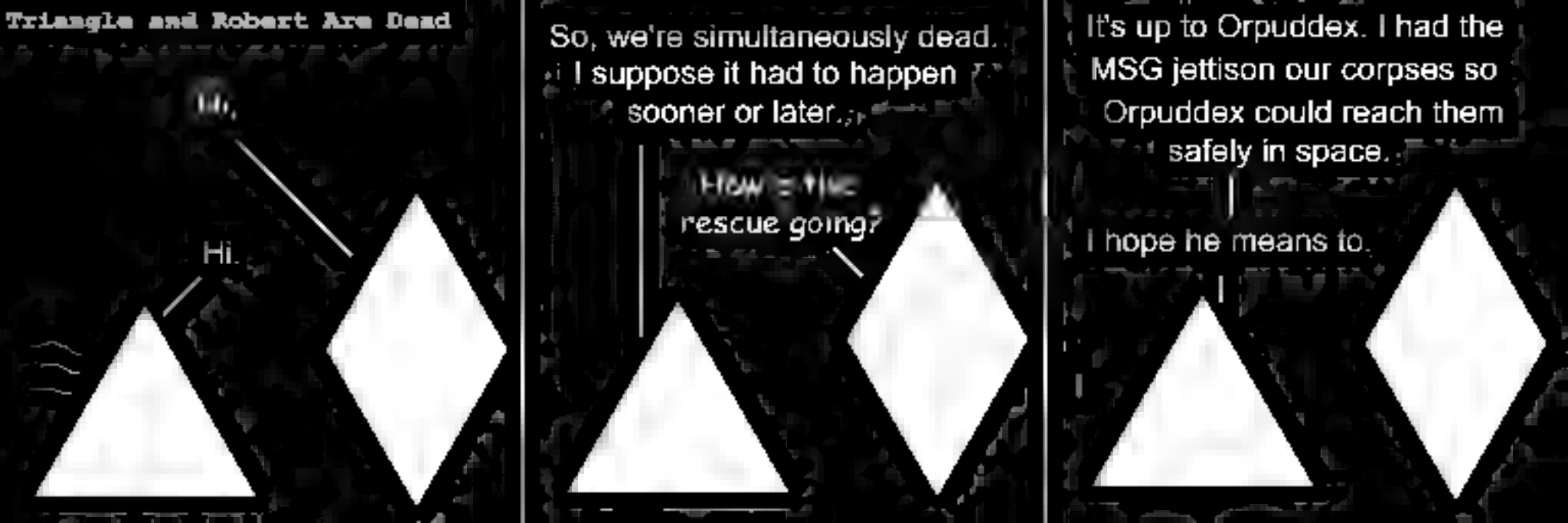


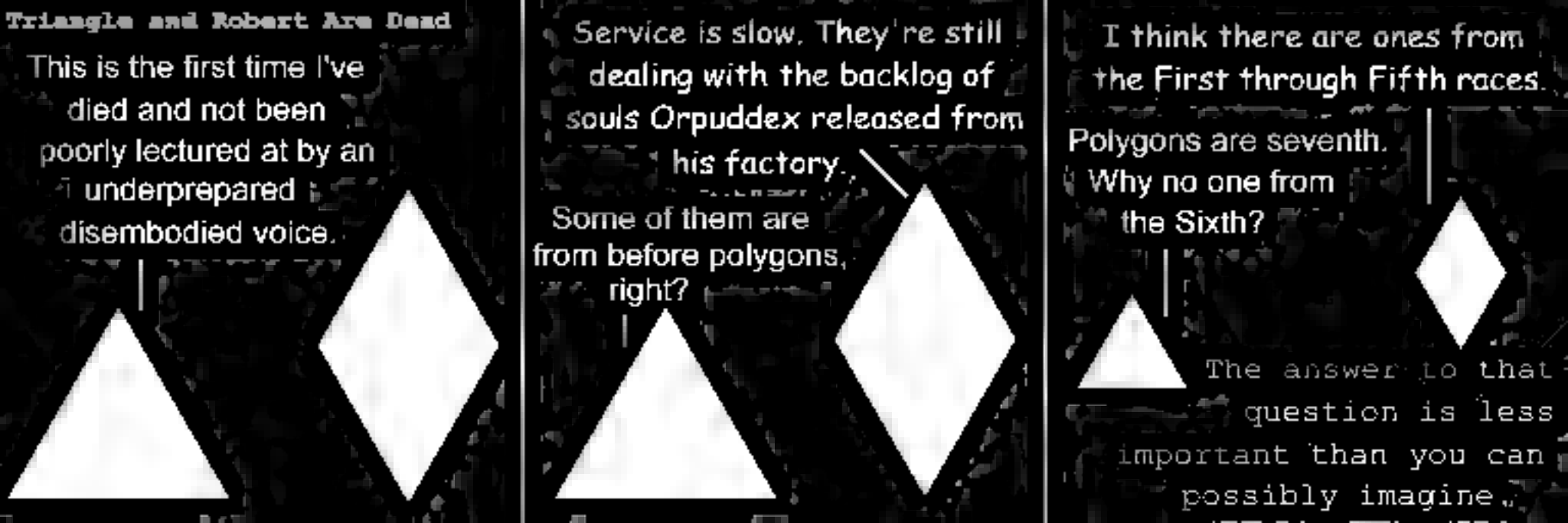
So he won't kill himself
rescuing you, but what if
he doesn't rescue you

If he does not mean to save me
then his purpose is death Without
me it would be impossible for him
to achieve With me
he might try again



Triangle and Robert Are Dead




This is the first time I've died and not been poorly lectured at by an underprepared disembodied voice.
Service is slow. They're still dealing with the backlog of souls Orpuddex released from his factory.
Some of them are from before polygons, right?
I think there are ones from the First through Fifth races.
Polygons are seventh. Why no one from the Sixth?
The answer to that question is less important than you can possibly imagine.

The identity of the black hole has no bearing on anything which has happened in the story whatsoever. I'll admit, it looks like anything, but just to prove how irrelevant it really was,

You can go on to some other equilateral triangle.

Or we can select that one.

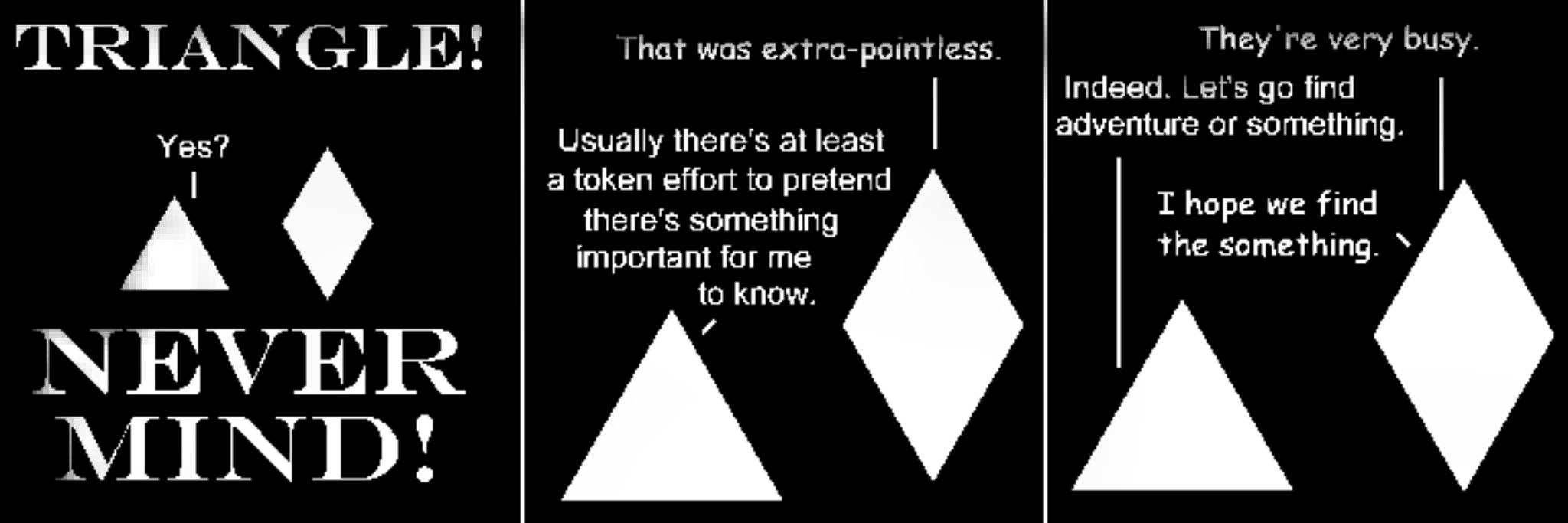
Or we can select a different one.

Right.

TRIANGLE, AGAIN YOU HAVE RETURNED TO THE DEAD.

Yeah, that be dead.

OKAY THEN. RIGHT.


TRIANGLE!
Yes?
NEVER MIND!
That was extra-pointless.
Usually there's at least a token effort to pretend there's something important for me to know.
They're very busy.
Indeed. Let's go find adventure or something.
I hope we find the something.

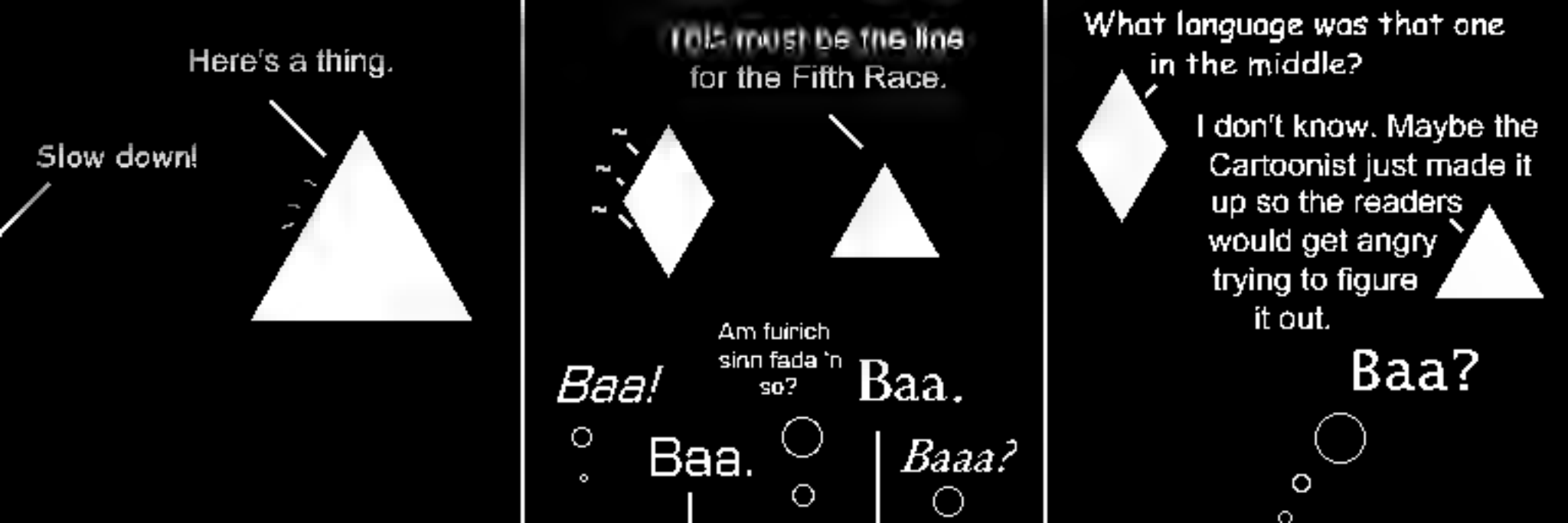
How do we get around without bodies?

I can use cuisine-magic. Do you remember the time you made a shield out of text?

Yes, and the time we rubbed speech lines together to make fire. Maybe if I say enough tildes they'll work like motion lines.

That should cover movement. Navigation on the other hand.

Let's go either left or right with respect to the comic frame. That should keep us fairly straight and get us to a plot point.


Here's a thing.
Slow down!
This must be the line for the Fifth Race.
Am fuirich sinn fada 'n so?
Baa!
Baa.
Baa.
Baaa?
What language was that one in the middle?
I don't know. Maybe the Cartoonist just made it up so the readers would get angry trying to figure it out.
Baa?

So... Fifth Race. Adventure opportunities?

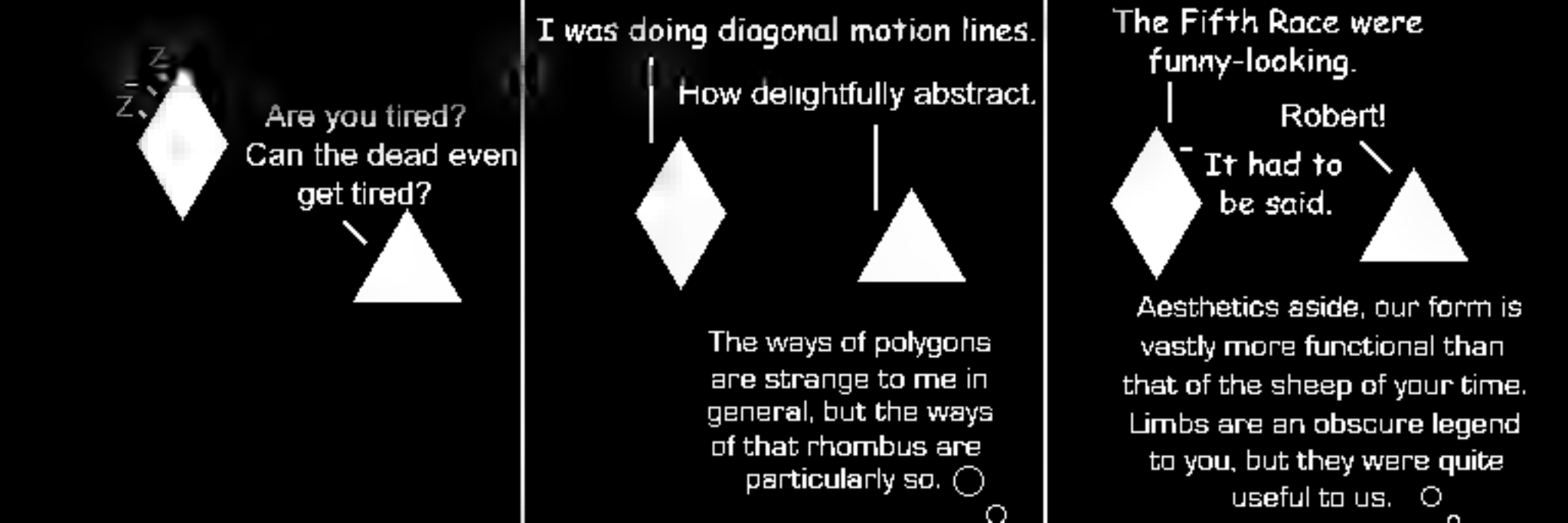
Maybe the Grass Sentry.

Good idea, and we know it's already learned English.

Direction and distance are hard, but if there's a Sentry around I'm guessing this way.

Hold on, I'm not sure I can go diagonally.

Hello, polygons. I feel a great power in the smaller of you two. As you surmise, I was a Grass Sentry of the Fifth Race, although your notion of "grass" is a flawed one.


Z
Z
Are you tired? Can the dead even get tired?
I was doing diagonal motion lines.
How delightfully abstract.
The ways of polygons are strange to me in general, but the ways of that rhombus are particularly so.
The Fifth Race were funny-looking.
Robert!
It had to be said.
Aesthetics aside, our form is vastly more functional than that of the sheep of your time. Limbs are an obscure legend to you, but they were quite useful to us.

I apologize for my sidekick.

Insulting the spirits of powerful ancient dead is where adventure comes from!

No apology is needed. Your rhombus is easily bored and desires some manner of conflict.

My rhombus?

I stand corrected, the rhombus is an autonomous being. I was thinking in terms of my own time.

You had rhombi?

We did not create geometric objects ourselves, but those which the Fourth Race left behind were known to us. They were very unlike you polygons of the Seventh Race.

You kept polygons as slaves!

Robert...

You raise sheep for food.

Yes, and that's almost exactly the same thing!

What?

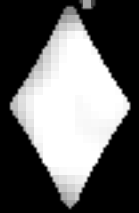
The polygons of our time were no more intelligent than the non-telepathic sheep of yours. Some could be reprogrammed over a serial connection.

Wow, that sounds just as barbaric as eating them.

Robert, are you trying to make some sort of point?

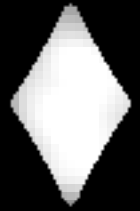
Rhombi were particularly useful for remote operation. They could store a great deal of data and had self-preservation instincts.

The fourth hour apparently used rhombi for special called hex.

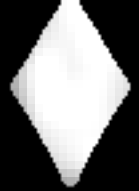


The ancient rhombs had special behavior programming for hexes to separate them without engagement or crossing. We always avoided the advantage of that, but the rhombus was still an excellent tool.

The origins of the Rhombic Hexes are unknown as important tools, but I was hoping that as a human society you could tell me something about the archaeologists of your time.



The rhombs to be an accomplished and Perhaps you should understand something of the Fifth Rhombs that, but that you most understand for today is



First, we know that each rhombs to an end. We did not honor the Fourth Hours Before that the work of thinking could be professional. The great rhombs of our ancestors were professional and ready for problems, but with the minds of professional adults to Prime who could prove other us, whenever they form.

In our time none of your
worlds survive. What happened?

Our worlds did survive.
We did not build cities or
design machines. We actually
never even bothered with
written language.

So that leaves...

Through individuals, we also
in many ways thought as a
species. Our view of time was
somewhat different from yours.
We shaped the world through
controlled erosion. A team of
a few hundred chosen, grading
in carefully selected locations

for a few hundred years, can
change the course of a river.
Over a few thousand years, a river
can change the shape of a mountain.

Et cetera.

I think I
get it.

You may have noticed that
you have a great deal of gravity-rich
rubble in the size of your planet.
This diversity was the legacy
of the Pitch Fleet.

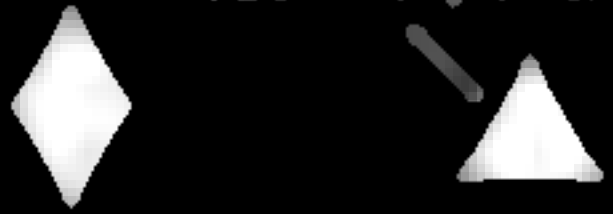
So pressing near your eye and your eyeballs, and just your eyeballs.

Correct. The rock, the soil, the shape of the land, of the rain part of the grass. We did not crack, we collapsed and we bent. We came to have the beginnings of understanding.

So tell me of your hand gesture.

We have the grasping of hand to the hand-holding relationship, and yet we powerful a concept to ignore. When I hold the contact phase of phagia and phagocytosis, hence phagocytosis, phos, and phagocyte.

Dactylophobia? That doesn't feel like a phobia to me.



The heart of the conscious is difficult to explain to your mind. My phagocytosis phagocytosis and my cross bridge was all the phenomena of dactylophobia. Do you phagocytosis dactylophobia?

You lost me at global climate models.
You lost me at dirt.
Your frame of reference differs so much from that of my people. I cannot explain any more clearly. I apologize.
It's a lot to think about, but I'm sure I can at least work it into a salad of some sort.
Feeds are — funny!
Triangle, your mind I can somewhat understand. Robert's mind, however, basically manages to frighten me. He is rather similar to another entity which I am reluctant to name.
Prezoc the Bear?
Robert...
What? You think he'd show up in the afterlife just because I said his name?
Probability is low, but consequence is high. The risk is one I would have preferred not incurring.

Are we in the clear?

Change the subject! If we talk about Prozac it'll just make him more likely to appear!

— Okay... Grass Sentry, what do you know about the other Races?

Little.

You didn't talk to anyone all that time in the Vat of Despair?

Only a Sentry or one of similar power could move within the vat. A successor to my position as Sentry was chosen almost immediately upon my death, and so I was immobile.

The actual designation as a Sentry is that important?

Massively. The power of the food group is embodied in the current Sentry.

An oversimplification, but yes. The afterlife is not as viscous as the Vat of Despair was, but here too I am nearly unable to propel myself. How does Robert do so?

My special abilities are derived from the presence of the Cartoonist and the comic strip. I'm basically allowed to get away with things regardless of whether they have a physical mechanism.

Almost exactly like...

I'm still subject to time's arrow. If something happened to me in the past, it has still happened to me in the present.

Grammar's arrow is a different story.

English is a horrible language for stating axioms of temporal logic.

I'm not sure if that even is an axiom.

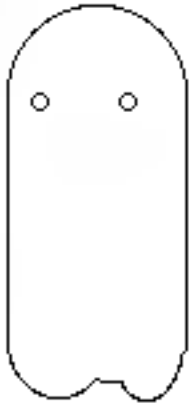
Anyway, I'm not a cuisine-mage but I can keep up with them most of the time.

But only through the Cartoonist's conscious or unconscious intervention.

Triangle and Robert

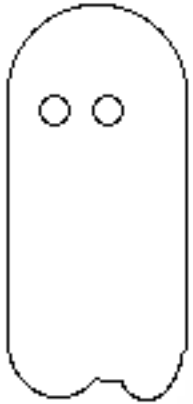
In a portion of deep space which for some reason is white rather than black

It was actually a sort of beige, originally.

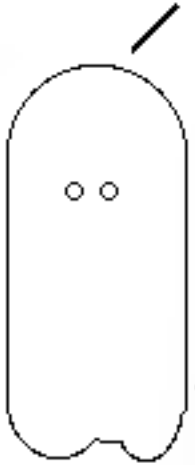


I suppose it would be. Anyway, Orpuidex is quickly approaching the bodies of Triangle and Robert

I see no spacecraft.



Why do they drift without the vessel? Has something happened to the MSG?



— Well?

Don't worry about that. I what you came here to d

Triangle and Robert

This is it. If you mean to save them, save them both. If you came here to die, save the one who can kill you and abandon Robert.

Came here to die?

I know you left Earth with too much tapioca to reach the MSG rocketship.

I did?

Fifteen point seven percent tapioca.

Fifteen

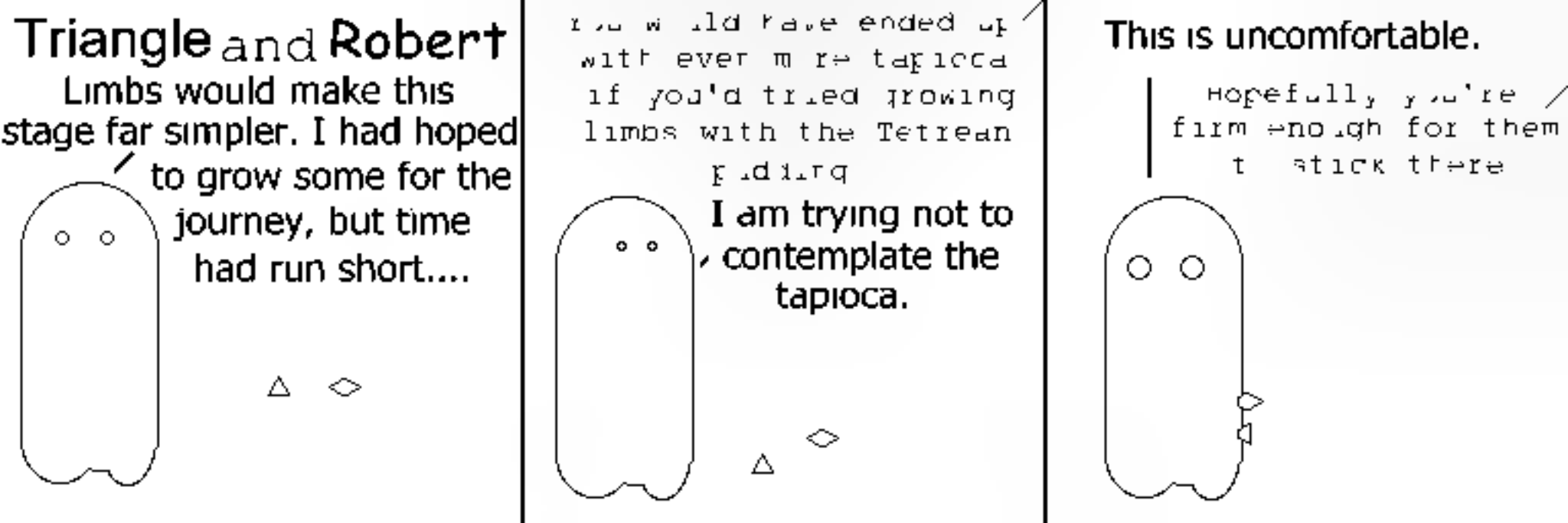
WHAT?

The MSG entity took the measurement, not I.

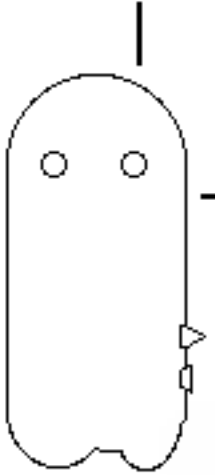
No, I believe you. I was taking it in so fast that I didn't bother to taste it... wow. I would have called twelve percent suicide.

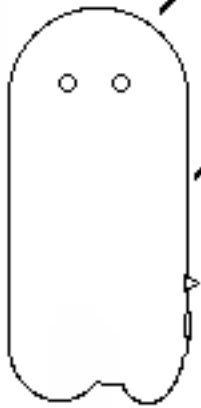
I... yikes. That's just... wow.

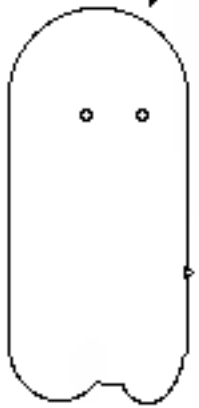
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

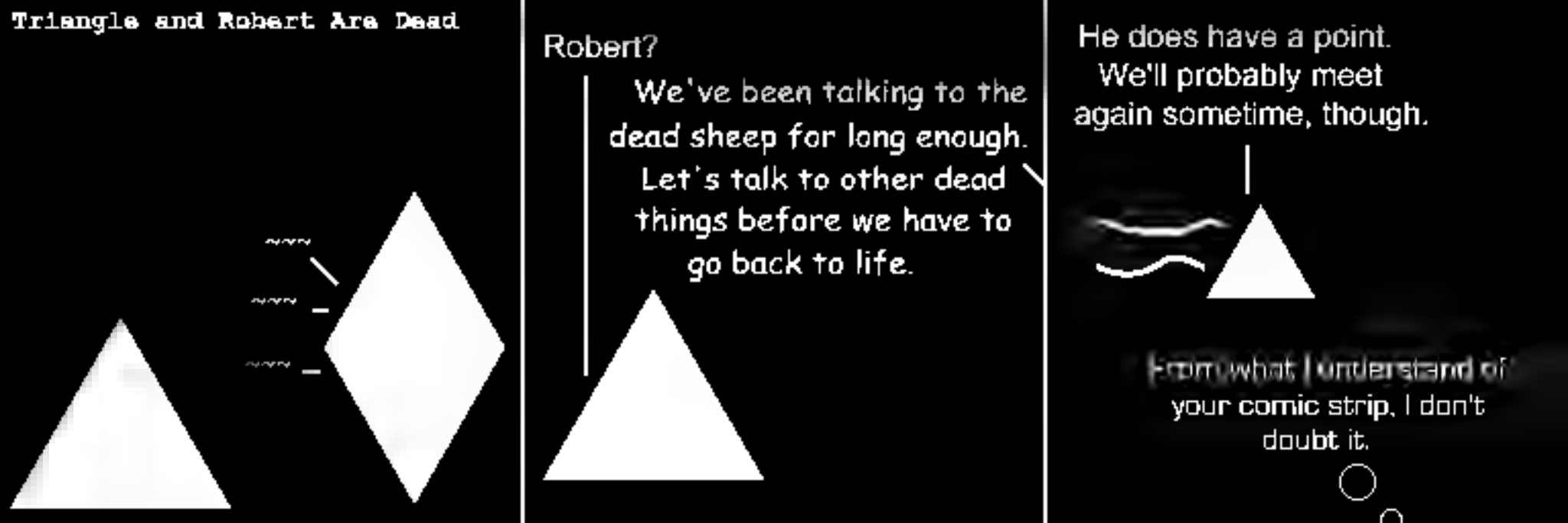






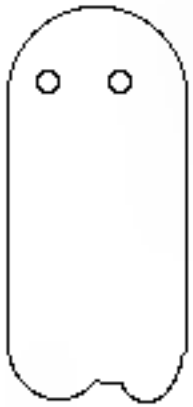
Orpuddex is returning to Earth with your bodies now.
I was worried.
I don't think he knew how much tapioca there was beneath Tetris.
Isn't knowing about tapioca sort of his job?
Being an ancient puddic being doesn't automatically make someone competent.

Triangle and Robert Are Dead



Triangle and Robert

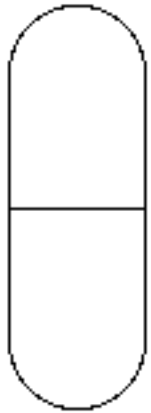
I am taking my time.



That's fine I'll stop bothering you now

You rapidly change from scene to scene due to indecision as to the current direction of the comic?

Friendly.



Hi! It's Prozac the Bear!

So again it comes to this

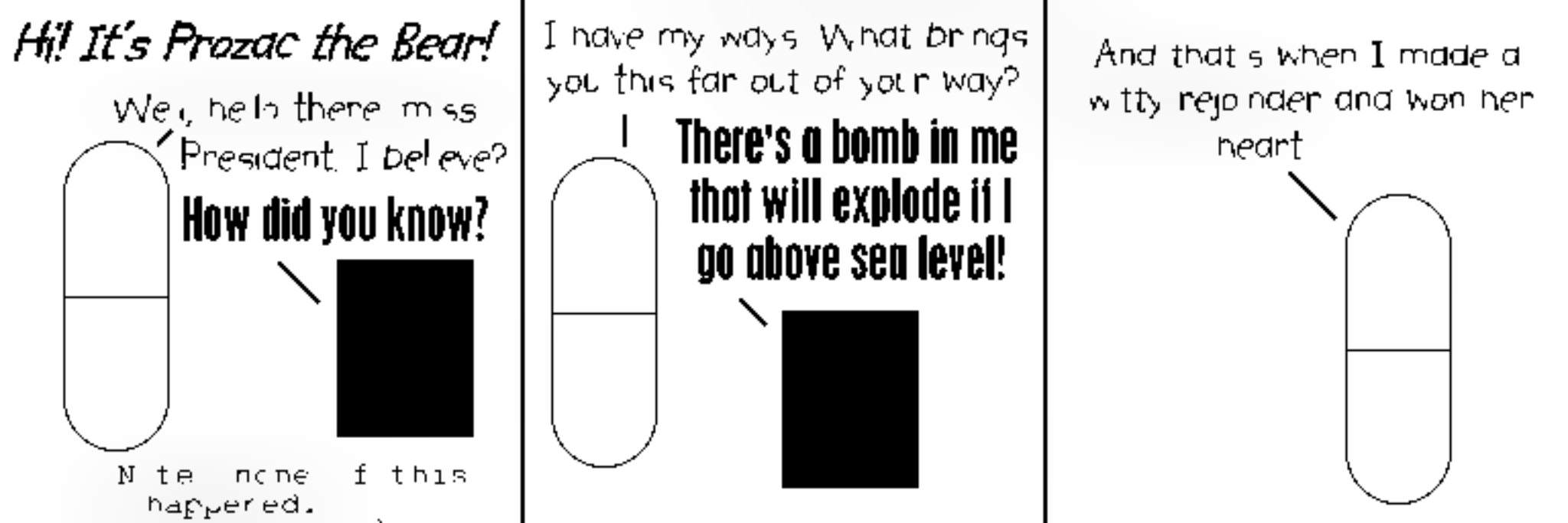
What are you talking about?

Tell a story, or a series of adventure, or something just stay away from the rest of the strip

How about the time I saved International Marmalade Day from well meaning but radioactive Communists?

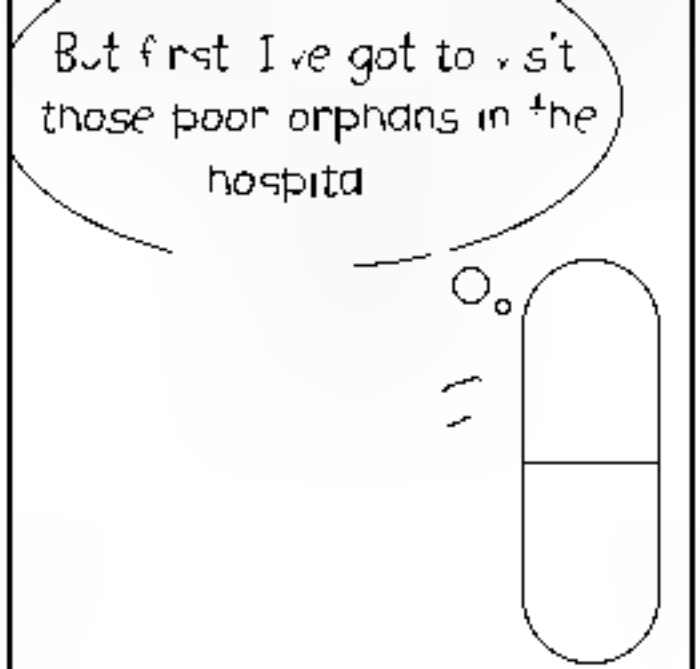
That never happened. Okay, go ahead.

The tale begins where it ends in a darkened basement warehouse mostly devoted to storing golf balls I was there on an unrelated case when I saw her


Hi! It's Prozac the Bear!
We, hello there Miss President, I believe?
How did you know?
Note none of this happened.
I have my ways. What brings you this far out of your way?
There's a bomb in me that will explode if I go above sea level!
And that's when I made a witty rejoinder and won her heart

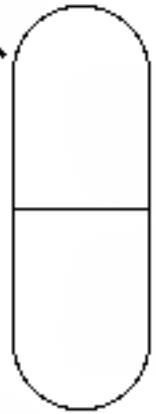
Triangle and Robert

N te This still didn't happen



Hi! It's Prozac the Bear!

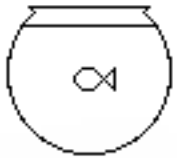
Later on the Dutch space station



Just ignore this strip

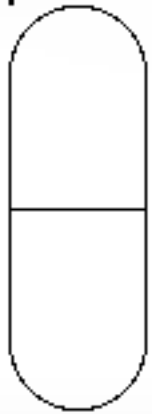
I know you took the hospital. Lead me to it or you've danced your last dance

You win this round.

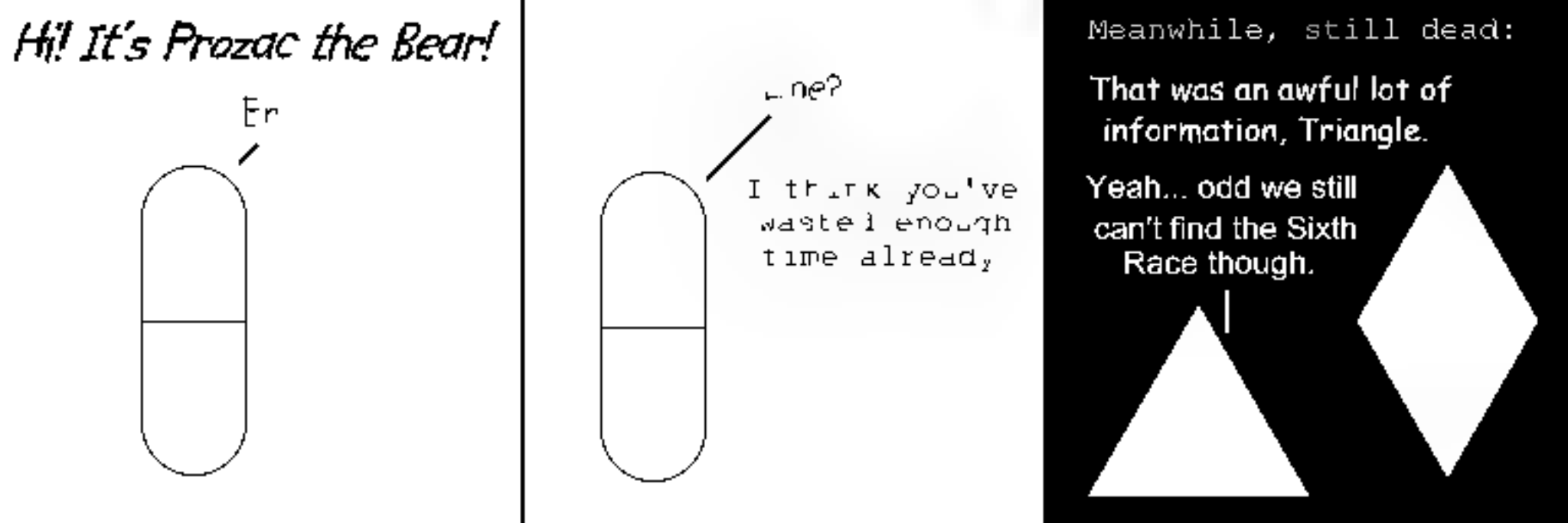


[Fish does not actually talk]

It was a trap! This isn't the hospital. It's Leonard Martin!



Oh, come on. You're not even trying.


Hi! It's Prozac the Bear!
Er
ne?
I think you've wasted enough time already
Meanwhile, still dead:
That was an awful lot of information, Triangle.
Yeah... odd we still can't find the Sixth Race though.

Triangle and Robert Are Dead

We talked to departed Sentries of the First through Fifth Races and learned a lot from them.

Recappy!

Yeah. Too bad you won't remember most of it when you come back to life.

But we can say things and read them in the comic after!

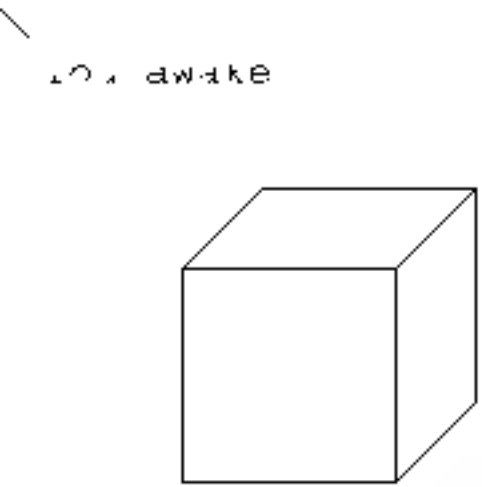
Good idea.

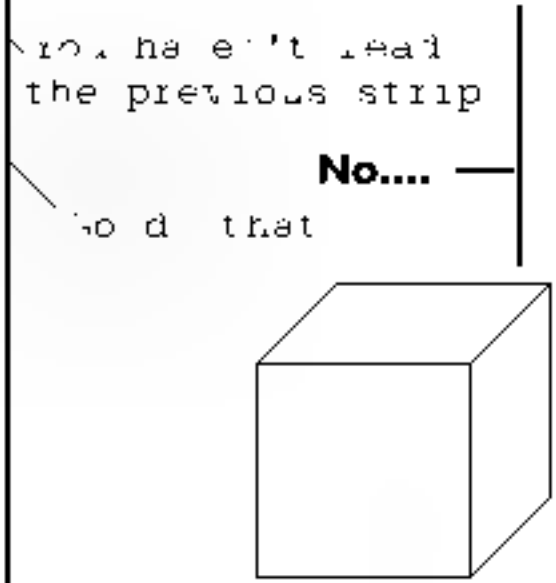
Sure. Do that in this panel.

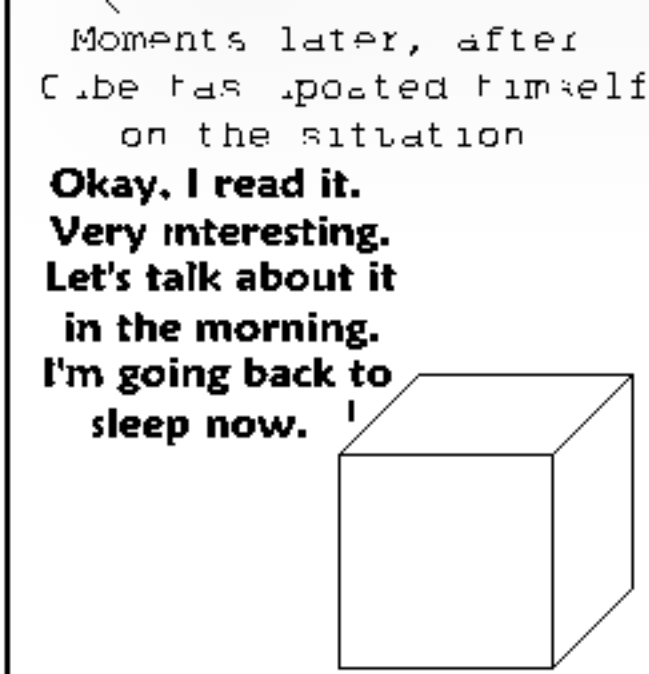
One: Puddans. Not much like Prozac described. Two: made of unstructured meat. Three: Poetry. Not room to explain that. Transition from One to Two is an important story which won't fit. Memo to selves: research that story. Implications for MSG.

I should learn to cook.

Triangle and Robert



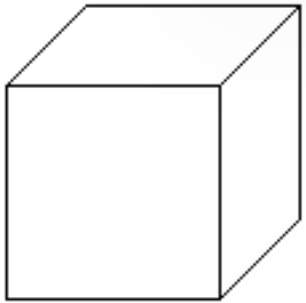




Triangle and Robert

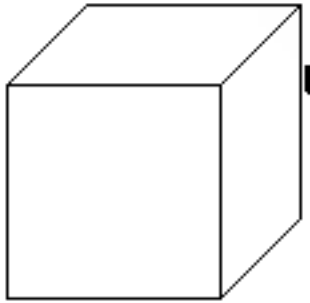
I had this dream last night...

No, I woke you up and told you to read the strip



So that happened? Triangle and Robert tracked down the archaeological gaps? And I went back to sleep instead of going on a research frenzy?

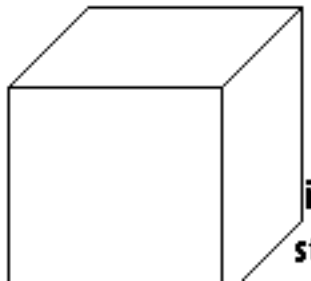
Well, not the Sixth Race gap



But still! How did I even fall asleep again?

So, aside from the initial reaction of shock, what comments do you have

Well, it'll take time to sort out. It makes sense that there'd be an intelligent meat-based species predating humans.



The poetry thing. I'm not sure but I have an idea. I'll start looking into the transition story immediately.

Triangle and Robert Cube?

I think we're all in agreement that the RDCLBA's previous reasons for being ended up counter-productive.

What are you doing now, just sitting around collecting salaries and filing things?

Some of these things really need filing.

I want to do this peacefully. The world needs the data you've covered up.

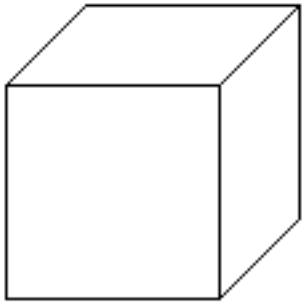
Who's in charge of the agency now?

Good question. I'm thinking the coffee machine.

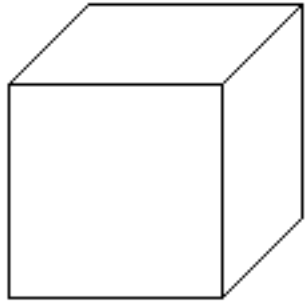
Good answer. I think it's time to turn this place around. Metaphorically.

Triangle and Robert

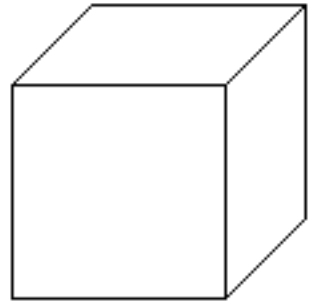
I'm thinking you COULD just turn around and blatantly contradict the agency charter, actually. I don't think the government even remembers you exist.



Well, you'd have a LEADER, to start with. It's been years since the Pentagon died and there still hasn't been a replacement. That says to me whoever's above the RDCLBA doesn't care what you do.

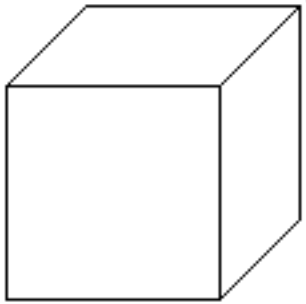


I don't know. Maybe it's because you're not secret anymore thanks to the Cartoonist. Yes, I know the payroll checks keep coming. I'm saying they'll keep coming no matter what you do.



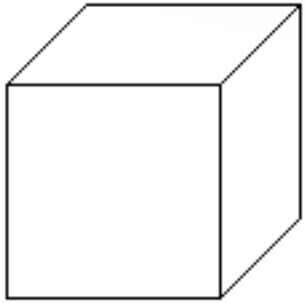
Triangle and Robert

That went well. They're putting their entire database of censored archaeology online, and with all that downtime spent filing things it's really well organized.



I thought you were going to find out about the fall of the Fiddians and rise of the Second Race, not give the RDCLBA a pep talk.

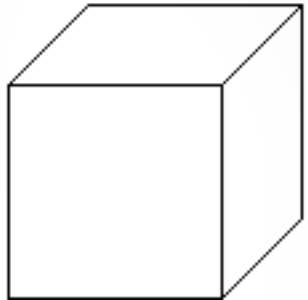
I was hoping the RDCLBA would have something on that for me.



Nothing in particular

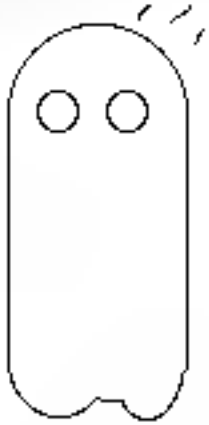
That's okay, actual archaeology work is good too. The Recapulon modifications can wait, unless what the Sentries wanted it for was urgent?

Not urgent at all. The Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses won't be needed for some time



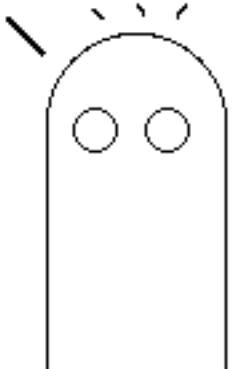
Triangle and Robert

Giant flying Pudding
Weather, you are cleared
to land



Out of curiosity, how does
re-entry work

Over the countless ages since I last plied space, I have sort of forgotten about that bit.



Do you just end up on fire
and try to aim for an
ocean to extinguish
yourself, i...

The scenario you describe does sound familiar... oh. I now recall my reasons for not having traveled into space in the... ow... ow... this is painful... this is quite, quite painful...

Triangle and Robert
Do I smell burning pudding?
I'm not smelling anything.
病
Never mind, then. Pass me another salt
What good is a secure kitchen facility if one does not experiment insanely?
Are you sure?
病
There's already too much salt to even taste the noodles.
We already put in the noodles?
病

Triangle and Robert

Keep them coming

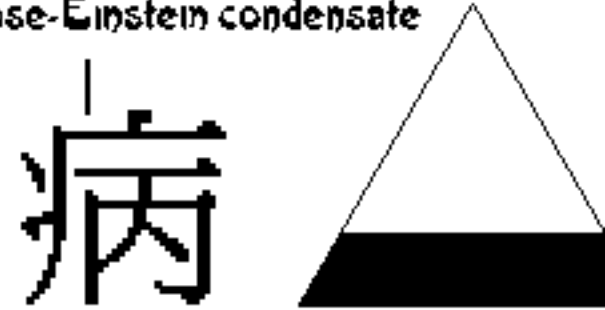
That was the seventh shaker of salt. I'm not passing you any more

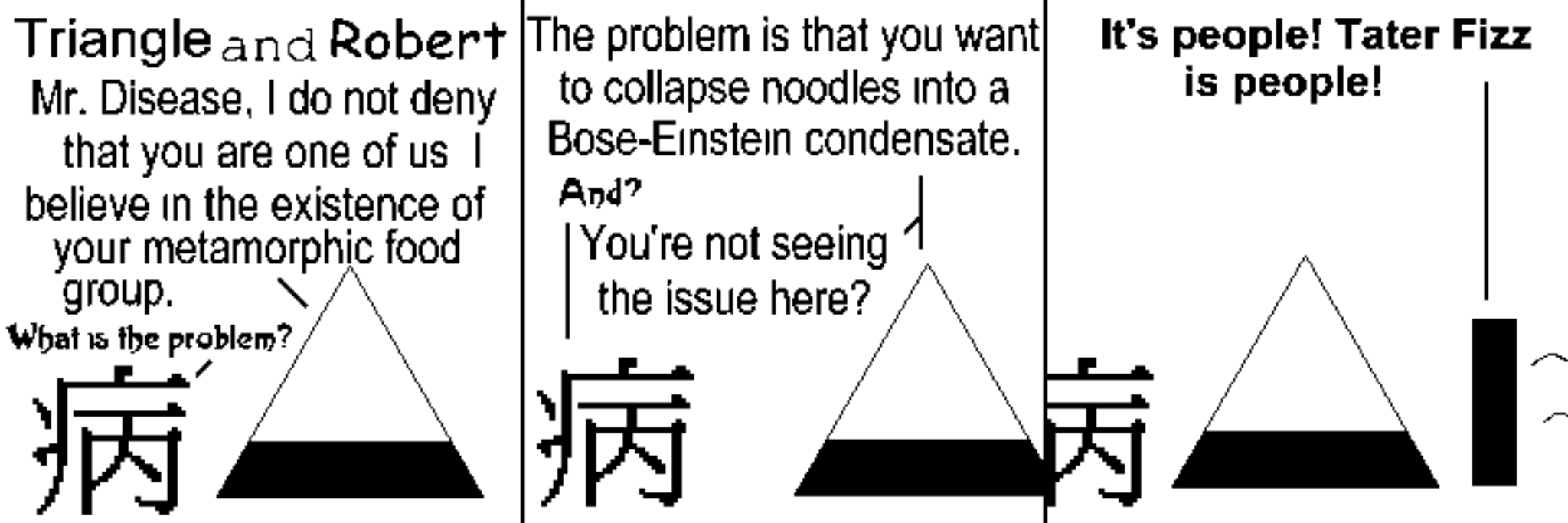
until you tell me what the point of this experiment is.

MSG was always my most versatile and powerful seasoning I wish to regain that level of power without it

More salt isn't the answer.

The salt is the first step Once the noodles are properly seasoned, I intend to collapse them into a Bose-Einstein condensate



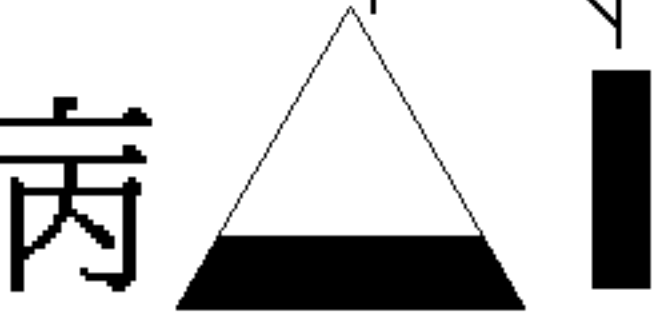

Triangle and Robert
Mr. Disease, I do not deny that you are one of us I believe in the existence of your metamorphic food group.
What is the problem?
病
The problem is that you want to collapse noodles into a Bose-Einstein condensate.
And?
You're not seeing the issue here?
病
It's people! Tater Fizz is people!
病

Triangle and Robert

I was kidding! Can't I kid?

About cannibalism?

Sure.



There are good and bad times for Soylent Green references

Have you discovered anything actual concerning Tater Fizz?

Yes, but it's sort of a between-strips thing.

The factory's funded by the comic protestors, who are vastly better organized than previously indicated in the strip

To start with.

Triangle and Robert

I see flaws in that plan.

If it's the plan I think you're talking about, yes.

So we know what the big deal about Tater Fizz is, and it won't matter in the slightest!

But now they know we know.

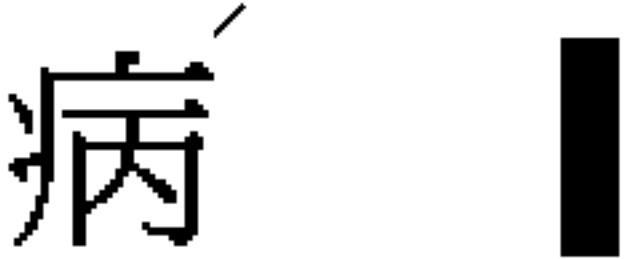
I guess if we have to kill them, we have to kill them....

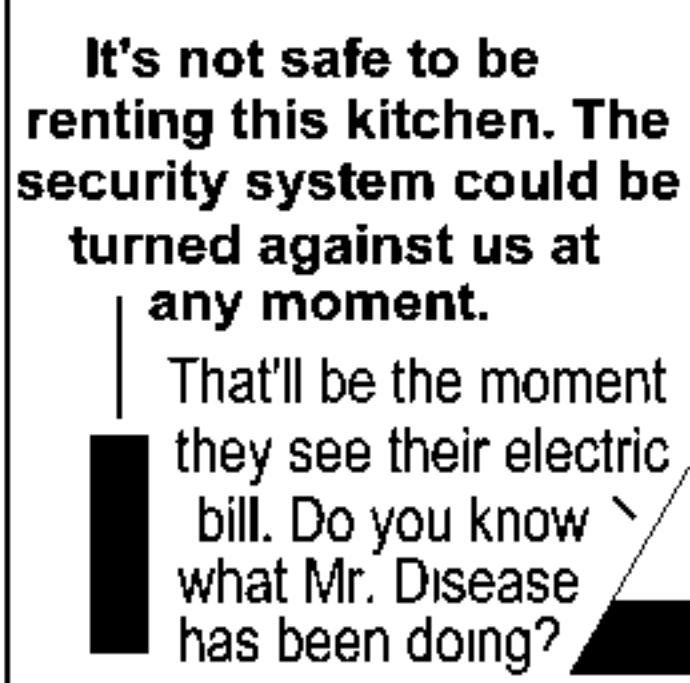
No.

No.

Triangle and Robert

Killing those who learn your secrets is rarely acceptable
To pre-emptively slay others after learning their secrets,
I cannot condone.





Triangle and Robert

Are those salt-encrusted noodles collapsed into a near-singularity?

Why yes, they are

That... is so... — awesome!

If this experiment succeeds, I'll be able to make a chow mein with almost unlimited storage capacity

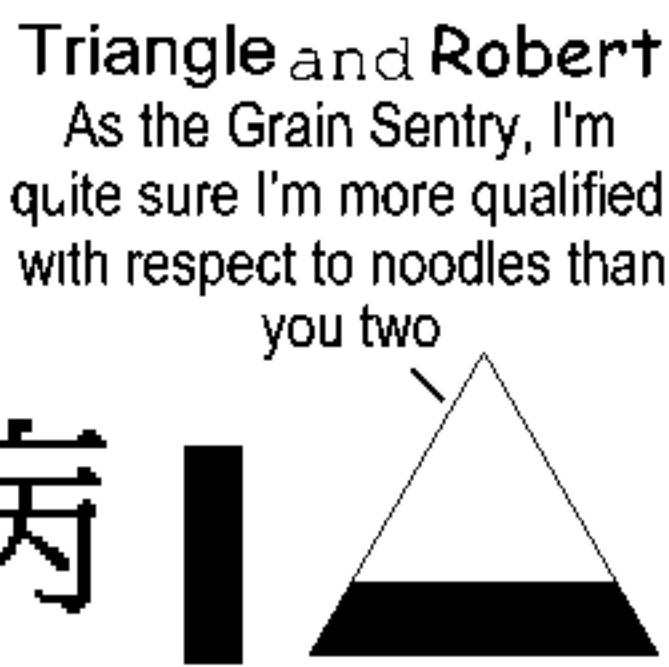
I want to see that!

You've both gone mad.

How so? If we do not advance the state of cooking, who will?

They're noodles! You don't compress and encrypt them, you eat them!

It's just an extension of macaroni artwork!

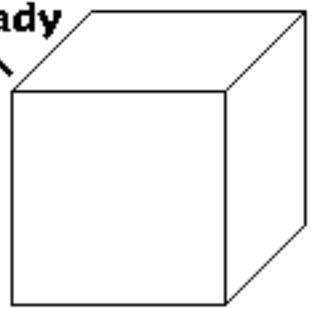

Triangle and Robert
As the Grain Sentry, I'm quite sure I'm more qualified with respect to noodles than you two

I am well-trained in seven forms of pasta. Perhaps this issue will be best decided competitively
I'll referee!
Challenge accepted.

Durham, semolina, and rice flour! Best two of three! Eggs permitted! Time: two hours!

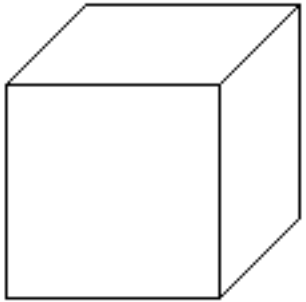
Triangle and Robert

This isn't really going well. Next to First Race artifacts, Fourth Race stuff is positively common! There've been four or five entire civilizations' worth of archaeology already done on the Puddan sites.



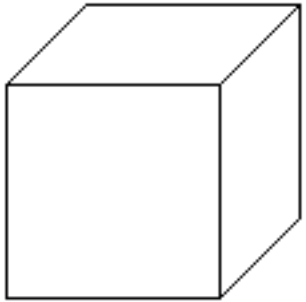
I'm starting to think this is hopeless and I might as well try to find a Fourth Race anthropology museum that has First Race stuff all lined up and conveniently... labeled....

Okay, change of plan.

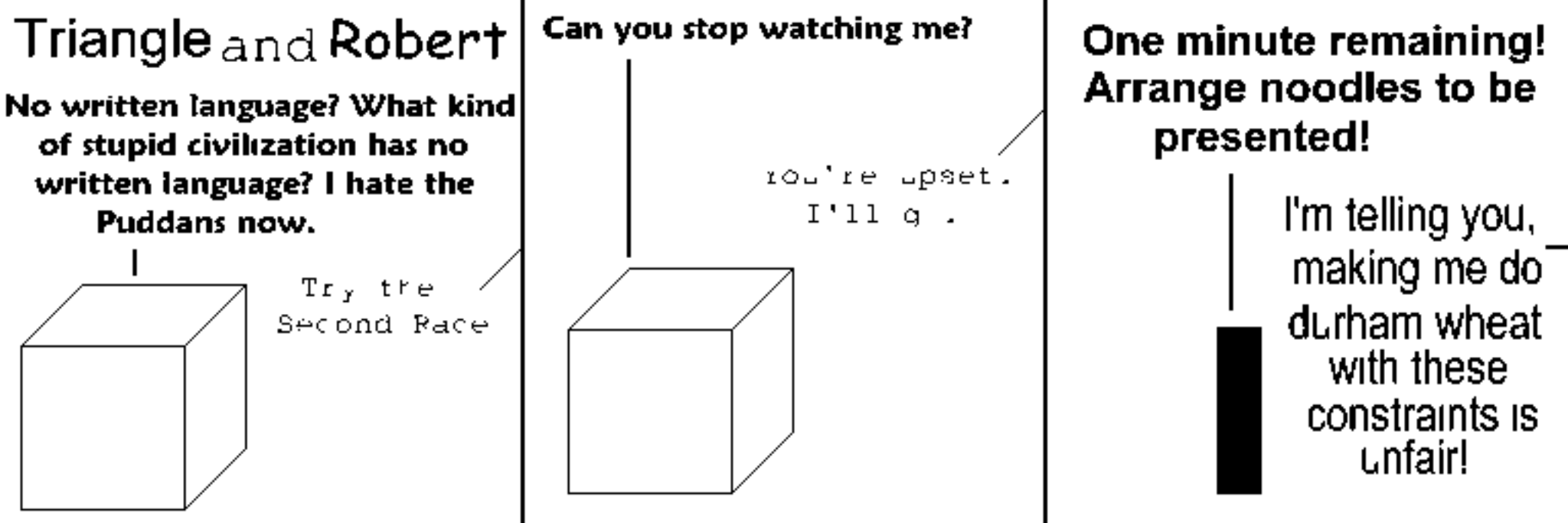


Later, at the new database:

Okay, the RDCLBA had FAR too much downtime to screw around in. Not only are Fourth Race museums identified, there are spiffy interactive 3D simulations of them all!



Yeah. Makes no sense to me either.


Triangle and Robert
No written language? What kind of stupid civilization has no written language? I hate the Puddans now.
Try the Second Race
Can you stop watching me?
You're upset. I'll g .
One minute remaining! Arrange noodles to be presented!
I'm telling you, making me do durham wheat with these constraints is unfair!

Triangle and Robert

Tasting over! Winner is the Grain Sentry! Metamorphic Sentry, transfer control of your noodle condensate!

I don't want it. Just throw it out.

The dish is now yours to dispose of. Note relevant environmental regulations.

You set me up!

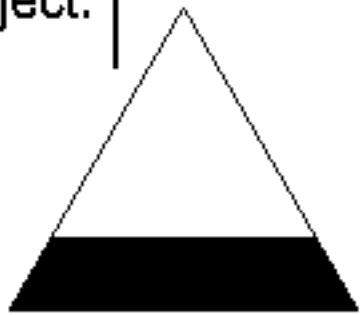
I would prefer that my experiment be continued rather than discarded

Triangle and Robert
I really think you're just missing the point of cooking
It's not supposed to be about ...whatever it is your thing is about.
病
We are entering a new age of some sort I no longer know when traditions apply and when they do not
I don't like ancient culinary tradition myself
病
That doesn't mean I abandon all common sense and try to build a radish-propelled airship.
It was yeast and a rocket, and I had nothing to do with that incident
病

Triangle and Robert

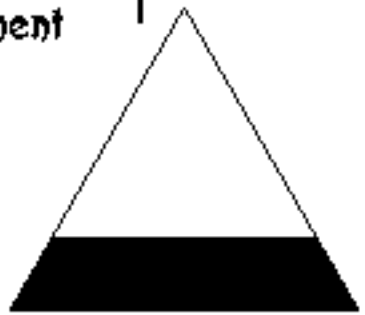
Where are the Sentries of Vegetable and Dairy?

Don't change the subject.



We are sentries of food. Anything you make that isn't food, you make on your own time.

How do you know that this experiment is not food?



Food is solid or liquid, to begin with, and it can be handled with only minor safety precautions

I seem to recall a plasma rice cake to the contrary

That was an honest accident!

Triangle and Robert

Seriously though, where are the other two Sentries? Weren't they supposed to be here?

I shall allow your attempt to change the subject to succeed, this time.

I'm really wondering where they are.

Run!

What?

The security system's been triggered! We need to get outside!

The security system IS outside, Linda.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

It's my fault we're late. I had a dream about the... Linda, what are those things?

Trying to kill us! Come on!

I think I dreamed about how I learned the recipe for the Fondue of Four... Seriously, what ARE those trying-to-kill-us things?

I found out why the bottling plant is so well defended! I thought they would want us dead, so I tried to disable the security system in advance! I did something wrong!

Triangle and Robert

Not why they're trying to kill us, what it actually is that's trying to kill us.

What does it look like?

You're answering my questions with questions. I've never seen anything like it before. Are we going to die now?

Just keep running!

No. It has a weakness. I'm attacking. Support me with crumbled bacon. Dairy Sentry, see if you can get a large pat of butter. This thing is powered by a potato battery.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

We shut it down! All clear!

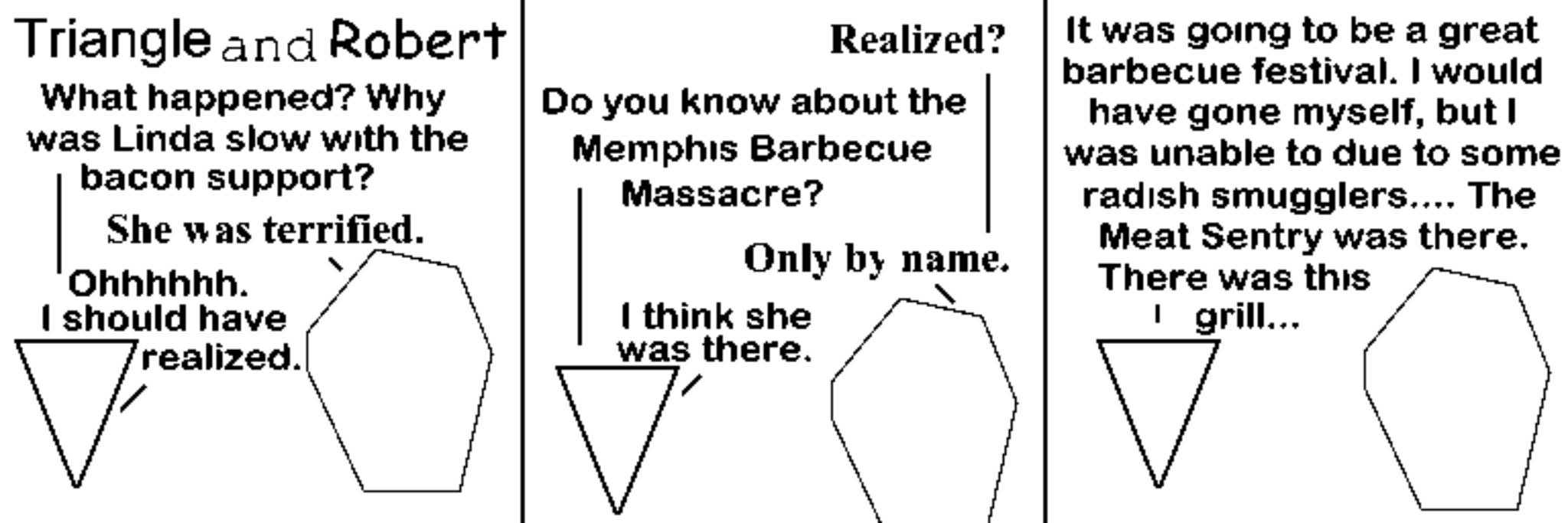
Your aim was good enough. Why did you freeze up?

I've fought giant robots. I've fought root vegetables. You know I'm no coward. But a robot powered by a root vegetable...

How's that special?

You're the Dairy Sentry. You haven't seen the shish kebab I've seen.

This is the first time you've shown fear of anything but yourself. It's so unlike you.


Triangle and Robert
What happened? Why was Linda slow with the bacon support?
She was terrified.
Ohhhhhh. I should have realized.
Realized?
Do you know about the Memphis Barbecue Massacre?
Only by name.
I think she was there.
It was going to be a great barbecue festival. I would have gone myself, but I was unable to due to some radish smugglers.... The Meat Sentry was there. There was this grill...

Triangle and Robert

It was eight years ago. At the festival, a new type of automated grill was unveiled. The Meat Sentry before me was a guest of honor.

The grill was a robotic giant, capable of preparing hundreds of meats at once. In a freak lightning storm, it went haywire.

The Memphis Barbecue Massacre

The Meat Sentry who was slain by the barbecuemech was your predecessor. The fact that you can fight giant robots at all is commendable. Hesitance in battling one powered by a side dish is understandable.

Thank you.

Triangle and Robert

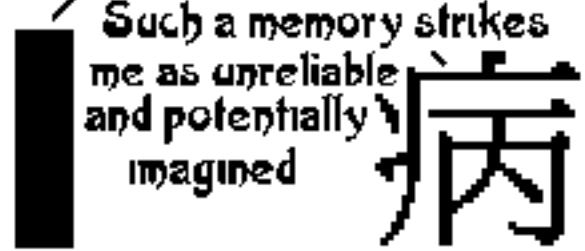
I don't think anyone was as close up to the killing as me and... survived...

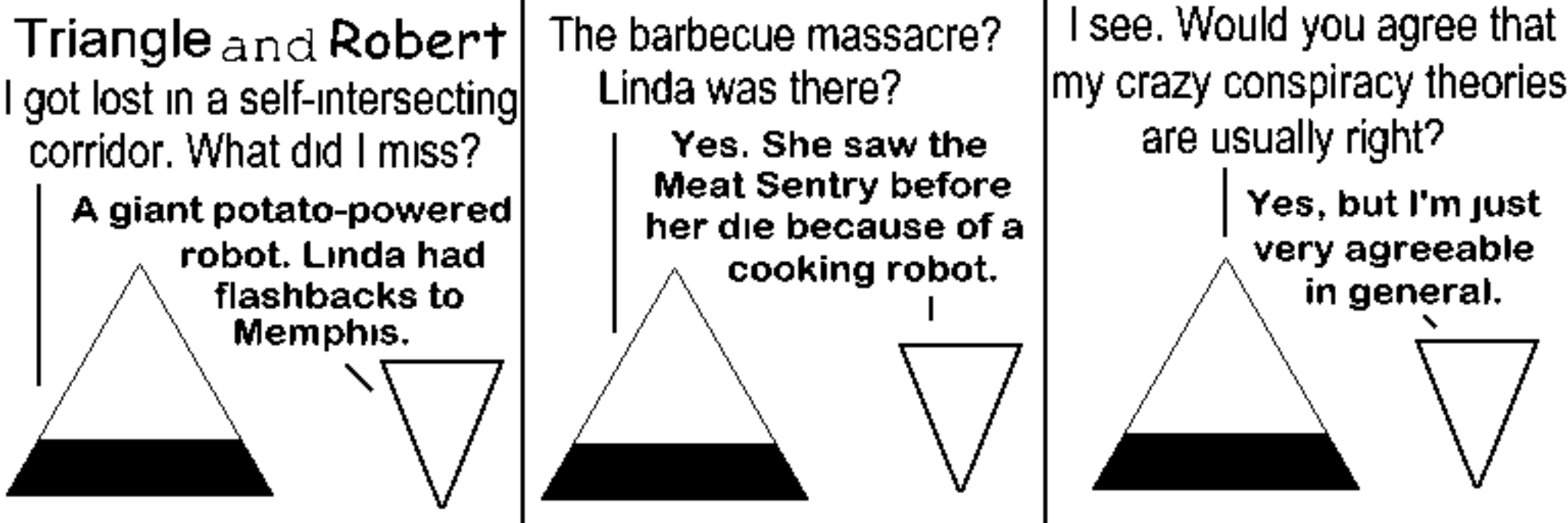
Crying is not unacceptable, miss Concarne

There's one thing... the thing wasn't just randomly flailing or misinterpreting polygons as ingredients....

I didn't know anything about tactics at the time, but thinking back... the grilling machine... it was killing far too efficiently to be a glitch or chance.

Such a memory strikes me as unreliable and potentially imagined




Triangle and Robert
I got lost in a self-intersecting corridor. What did I miss?
A giant potato-powered robot. Linda had flashbacks to Memphis.
The barbecue massacre? Linda was there?
Yes. She saw the Meat Sentry before her die because of a cooking robot.
I see. Would you agree that my crazy conspiracy theories are usually right?
Yes, but I'm just very agreeable in general.

Triangle and Robert

Miss Concarne... Meat... maybe this is something I shouldn't bring up, but the accident in Memphis...

It was no accident!

That's what I was going to say What do you know?

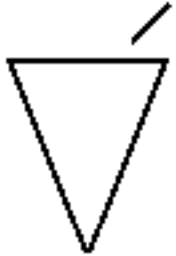
All I know is that the robot was built to be capable of killing and was doing it too well to be accidental!

That's most of what I know. I think your predecessor Meat Sentry was its main target. I think the Meat Enforcers may have been responsible.

Sentries, assemble! We have an investigation to start!

Triangle and Robert

If the Memphis Barbecue Massacre was no accident, then a great injustice relating to cooking has been buried for too long.



I agree that such an injustice would have the potential to be the business of the Food Sentries. However, we have no genuine evidence that anything but a tragic freak accident is to blame

I think I can get information out of the Meat Enforcers, if they have any. I'm going whether the rest of you do or not.

And I am.

Triangle and Robert

I will return to the Locust Garden.
Enjoy your fruitless quest,
fellow Sentries.

病

What?

Did any of you just see that?
I'm following it

病

Ah, the excessively
mazelike part of town
Where this is heading
seems clear

病

Triangle and Robert

002

Fear me! FEAR ME! I am Orpuddex, former guardian of what was once the Pudding Factory of the Dead! Why have you come to this... Oh, it's you. Hello, fellow Sentry.

And so you're back from outer space

Yes. The bodies of the Chosen One and Less Chosen One have been returned to Earth.

Great! Where are they?

Good question.

What?

I believe that I lost track somewhere over Europe. FEAR ME!

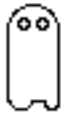
Triangle and Robert

My entire body of pudding burned away in reentry. As to the location at which Triangle and Robert fell out, I am uncertain.

Bad. Not good.

Relative to the vast astral distances I traversed, a continent or two is a vanishingly small range of error.

The search for Triangle and Robert will have to wait until the other Sentries give up on their hunt for a nonexistent murderer



Elsewhere

Talk!

Any machine capable of general meat processing is a machine capable of killing polygons. It is an elementary and easily proven theorem. We did nothing wrong.

Triangle and Robert

You created a killer robot! How can you deny responsibility for its killing?

We created an automated barbecue system. The fact that any such system can be used as a weapon is a simple fact not our doing

So you built it knowing that it could kill?

Yes

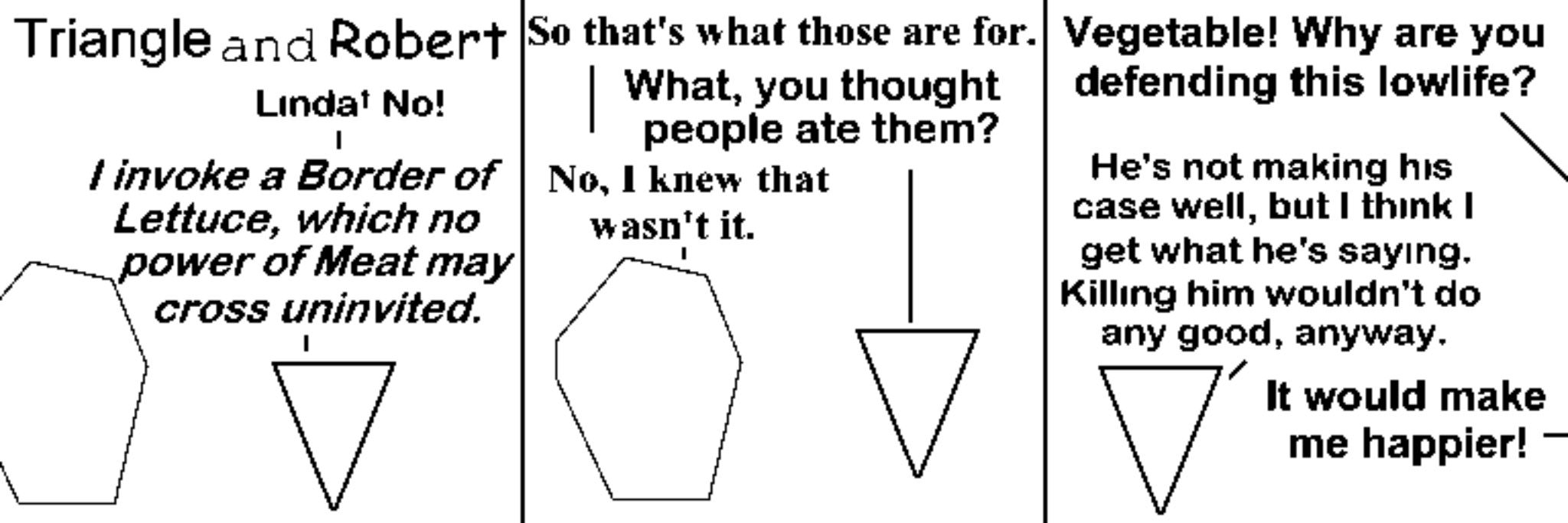
Why did you go through with it?

Any sufficiently advanced tool can be turned to evil. Does this mean we should abandon all science?

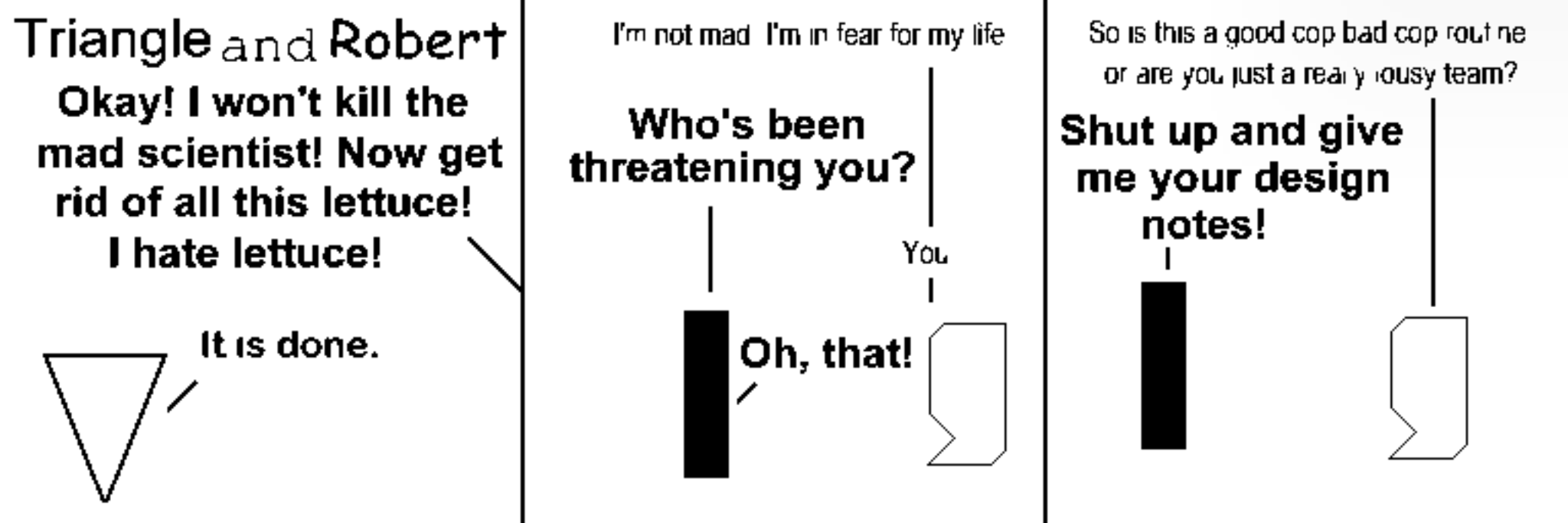
Your type makes me sick!

It's just Ana Narrow 12-point

That's not what I... YOU DIE NOW!


Triangle and Robert
Linda! No!
I invoke a Border of Lettuce, which no power of Meat may cross uninvited.
So that's what those are for.
What, you thought people ate them?
No, I knew that wasn't it.
Vegetable! Why are you defending this lowlife?
He's not making his case well, but I think I get what he's saying. Killing him wouldn't do any good, anyway.
It would make me happier!

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Miss Concarne... you've been going over that same page of data for hours.

It adds up!

To a conspiracy against the previous Meat Sentry?

No! To an unfortunate but unforeseeable accident!

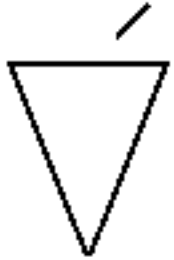
I refuse to believe that she died of something so random and trivial as freak lightning!

Then what, someone AIMED the storm?

That is what I choose to believe!

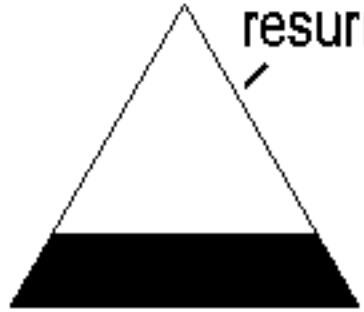
Triangle and Robert

A weather-controlling mastermind who struck once, years ago, and hasn't resurfaced since. Also, who may not exist.



That's our suspect!

I just got up to date on the comic strip, and Orpuddex is back on Earth! Maybe we should help find Triangle and Robert's bodies for resurrection.

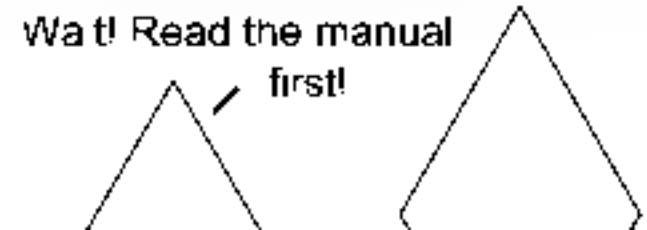


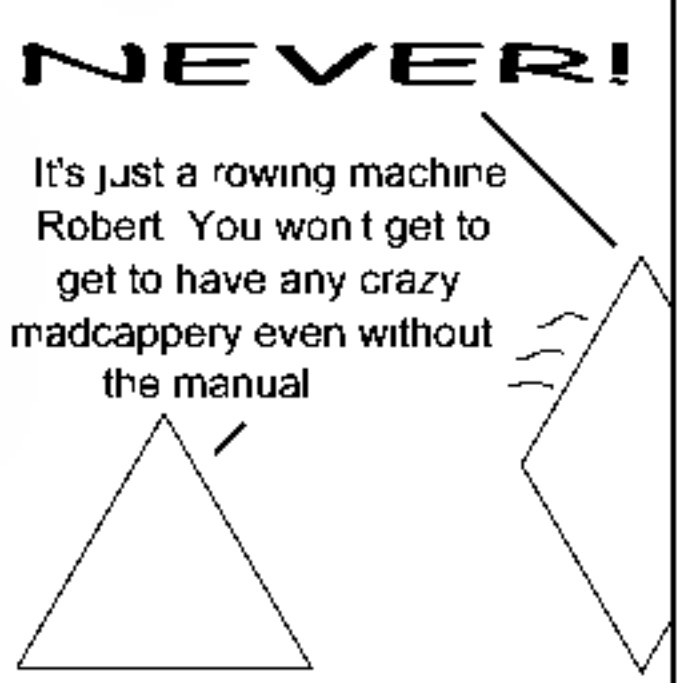
I want to follow up on this lightning control possibility!

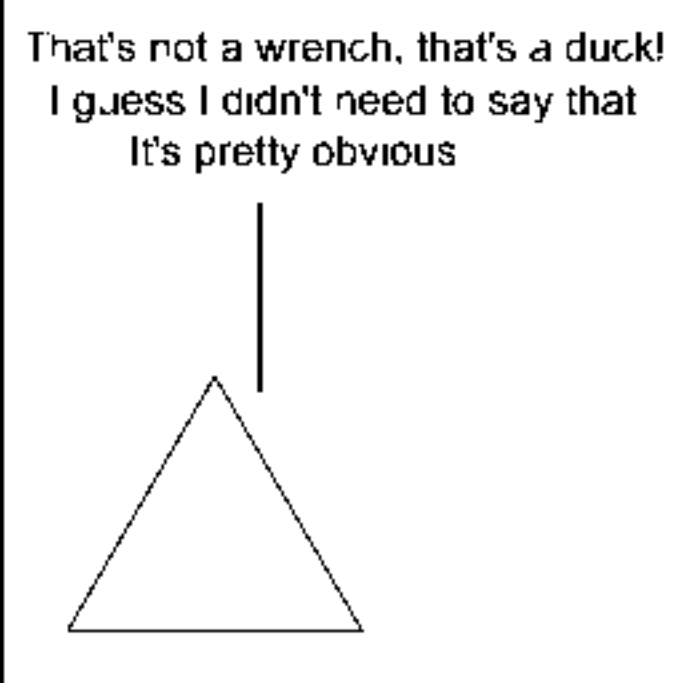
If it's part of the plot, you'll find your villain sooner if you help us help the plot.

Triangle and Robert

The title characters have been missing from this comic for too long. Enjoy this previously untold story from the fairly recent past, which may not have ever happened.

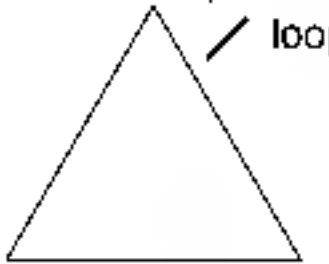


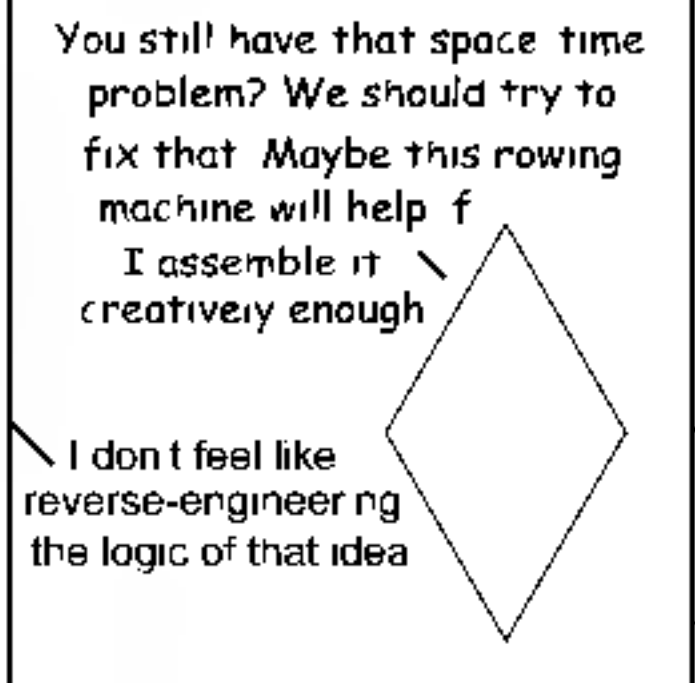


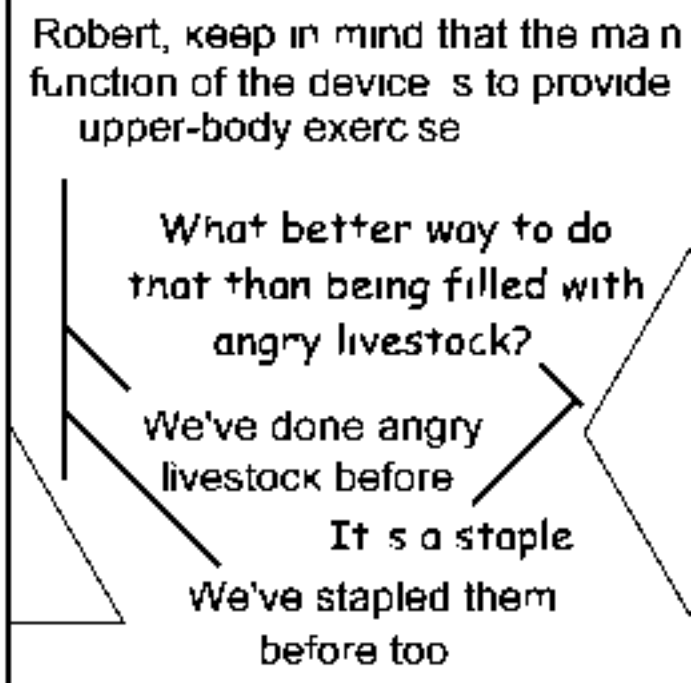


Triangle and Robert

(flashback continues

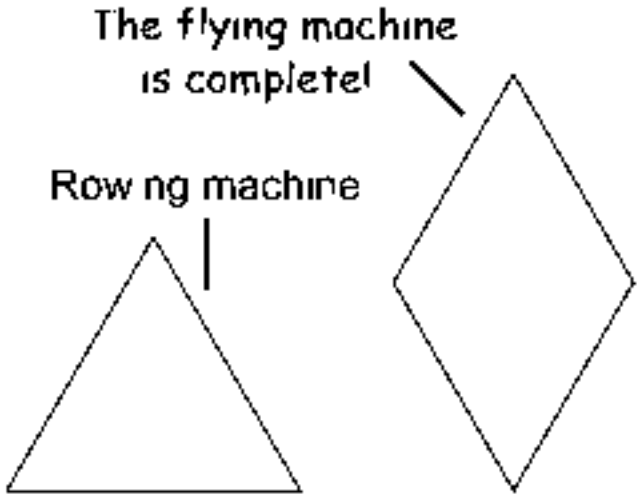


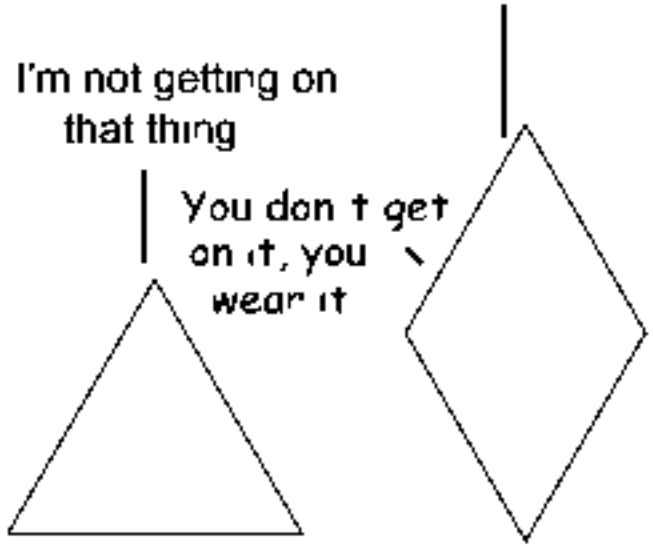


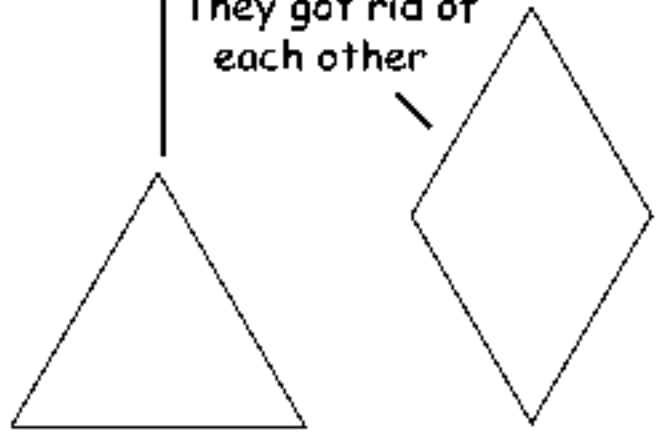


Triangle and Robert

needless flashback, day

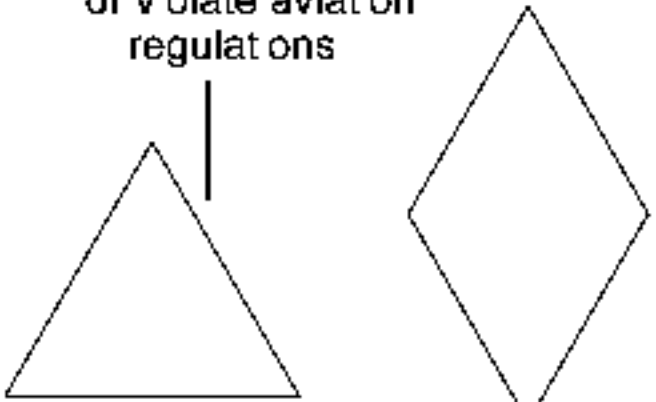






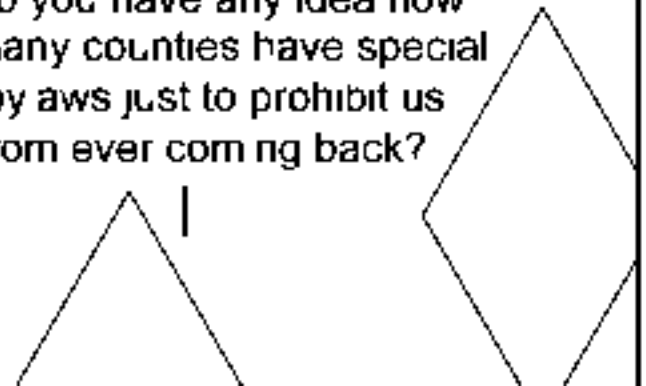
Triangle and Robert

As bu lt the rowing machine will e ther not fly fly briefly and crash or v olate aviat on regulat ons



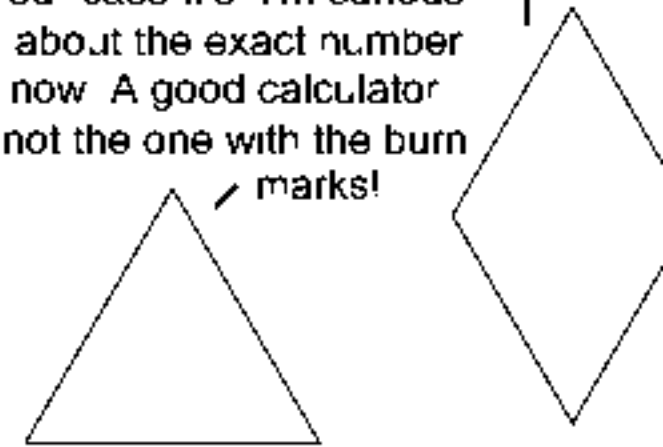
Sounds like a w n/win/win situation

We can t afford to keep violating obscure yet vita ly important ordinances! Do you have any idea how many counties have special by aws just to prohibit us from ever com ng back?

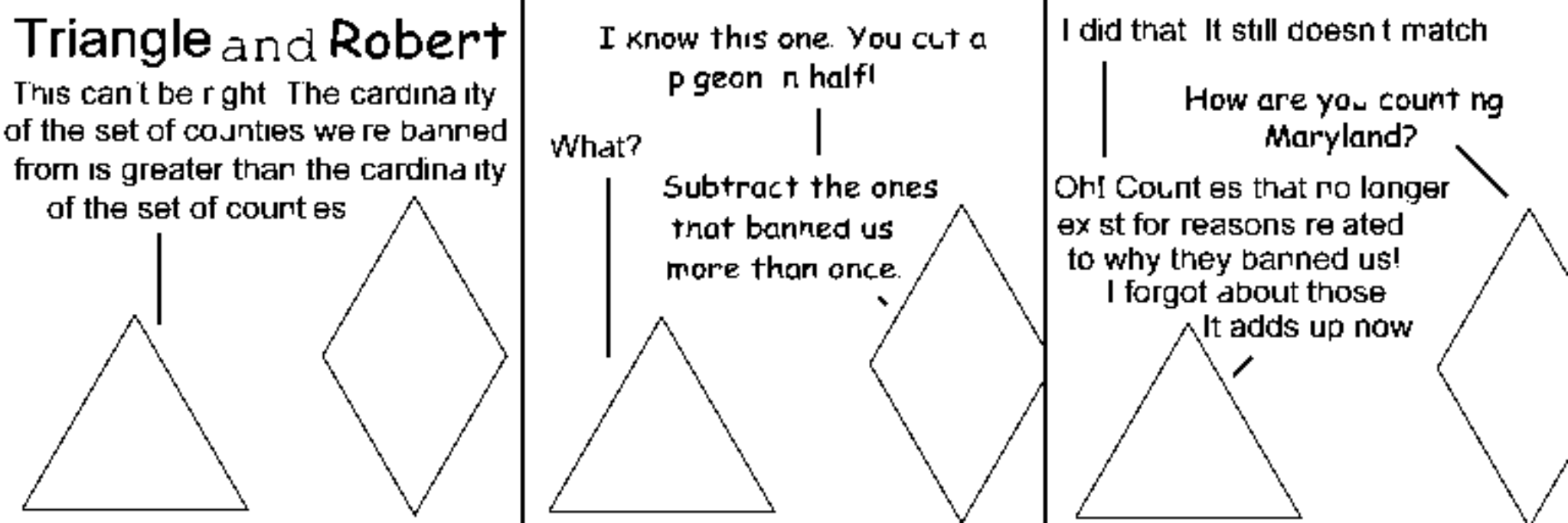


No I think it's somewhere in the triple digits?

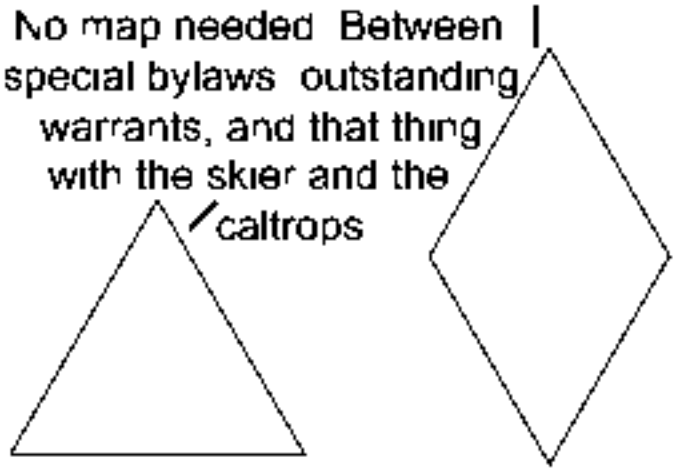
Get me a ca culator and our case fi e I'm curious about the exact number now A good calculator not the one with the burn marks!

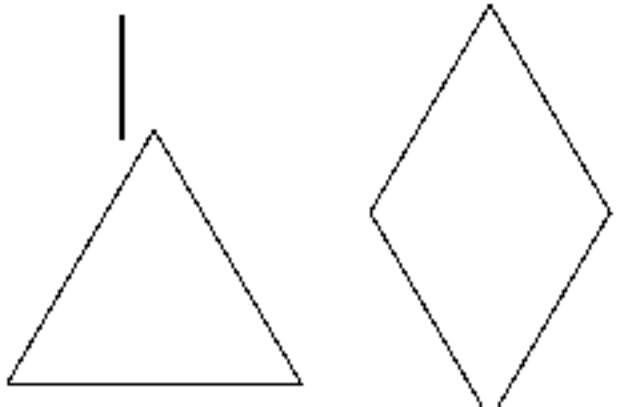


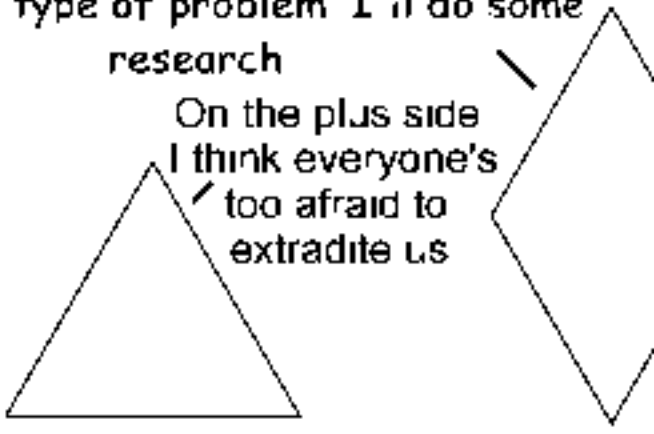
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

While you were engaged with an irrelevant flashback to the initial buildup before an insignificant incident, the other Sentries and I located and gathered the bodies of Triangle and Robert

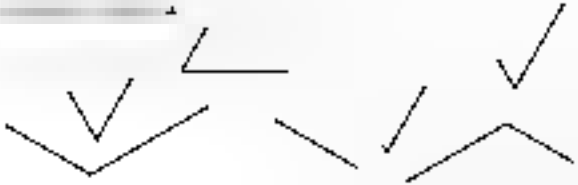
Okay Should I do a quick flashback explaining how you found them

No!

No, thank you

All the pixels seem to be there, I believe enough. Orpaldex, can you draw the souls from the wall

Orpaldex isn't here
Where did he go



Triangle and Robert

Y're still in pretty bad shape, I gue .

Begone! Allow me to regain my power in loneliness and silence!

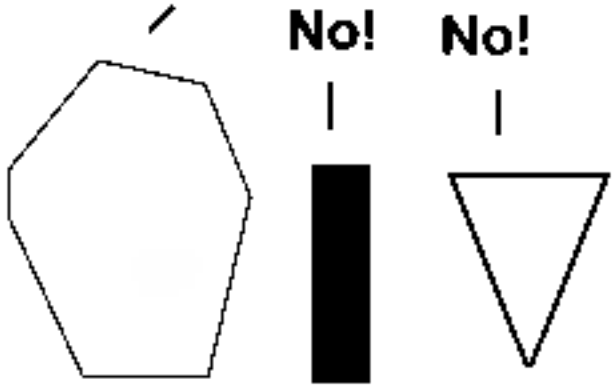
So you can't pull the strings of Triangle and Robert from the Zone of No Padding

Begone!

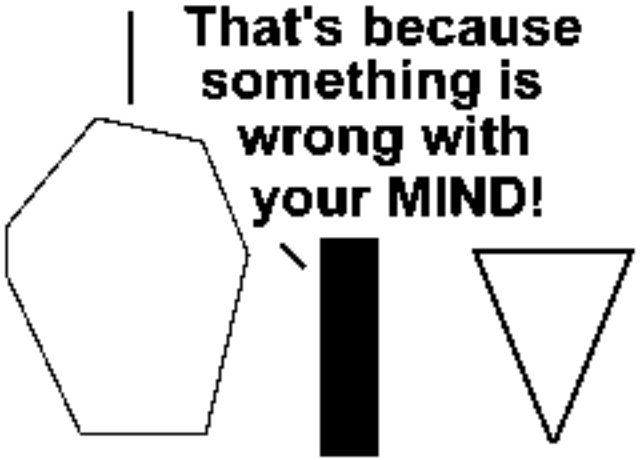
I'll take that as a yes you don't.

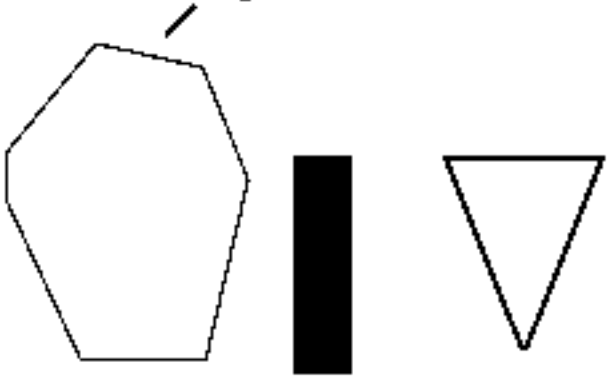
Brainstorm some resurrection methods

How about the Fondue of

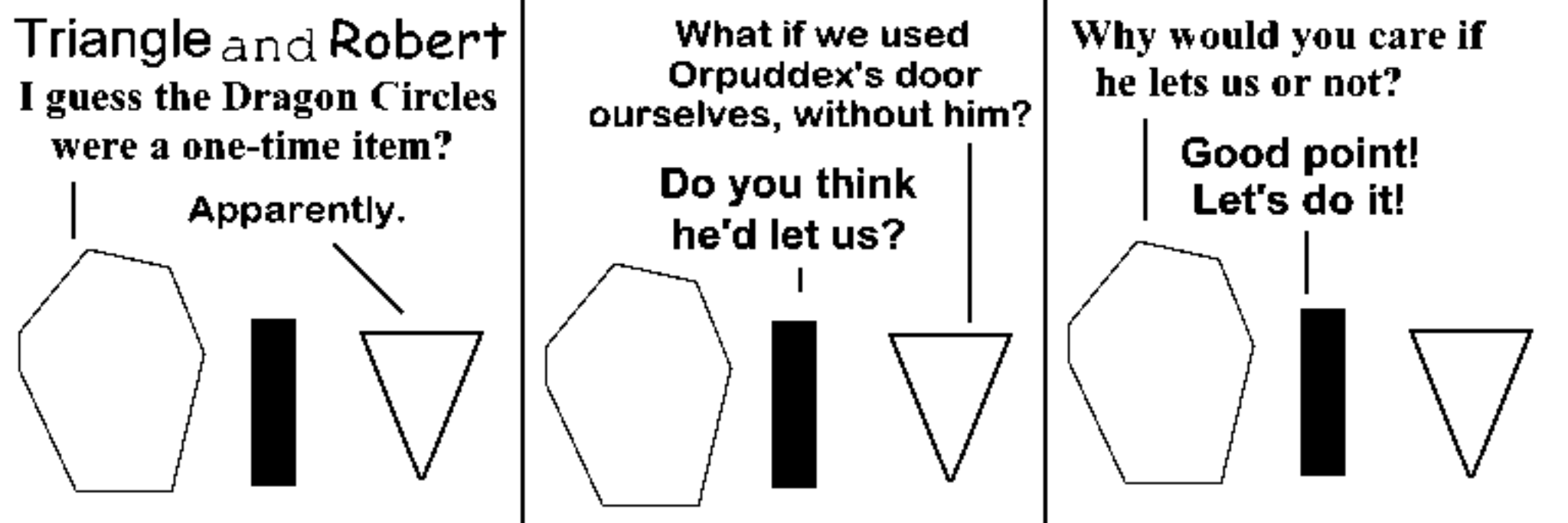


Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert
Remember when I read a bunch of early Fantastic Four and Triangle and Robert ended up flying into cosmic rays
Yes....
Just to warn you, I've been reading a bunch of early X-Men.
That's okay, the general populace already hates and fears us for our unique abilities!
I think they just hate and fear you, Linda.
Yeah.


Triangle and Robert
I guess the Dragon Circles were a one-time item?
Apparently.
What if we used Orpuddex's door ourselves, without him?
Do you think he'd let us?
Why would you care if he lets us or not?
Good point! Let's do it!

Triangle and Robert

Orpuddex!

What? Why have you come here?

You're going to let me use your portal to the Zone of No Pudding!

Of course. You had but to ask. Do you understand the subtleties of its operation?

I'm not going to let that stop me!

No, something like that would not deter you.

What's going on?

This isn't my body

I think it's the Meat Sentry

Triangle? Robert?

Hello, excuse me?

Can we get some kind of roll call? There are more spirits in my body than I was trying for!

This is Triangle-

I'm confused

This isn't my bus

BRAINS!

Listen! This is Linda Concarne, Meat Sentry! I've pulled your spirits from the afterlife and you're all in my body! Remain calm and identify yourselves!

I'm Prozac the Bear!

Orpuddex! Help!

Let's play with knives!

I think we were safer dead Robert

Don't worry, we'll be back there soon

I'm still confused

You invoked the Door without a proper vessel. Exactly how possessed are you right now?

I don't know! I keep hearing new ones and they aren't settling down for a roll call!

I'm Prozac the Bear!

The Prozac is within you. Understand that I do this for the good of the world!

Do what?

Er... be completely unable to kill you. Fear me?

Even if you could kill the Meat Sentry with Prozac the Bear inside her, it would accomplish nothing. Prozac is beyond life and death as you know them. He is mine, and I must deal with him.

I'll take door number e!

Euler's number, or the factorial thereof?

Transcendental numbers have factorials now?

Why not? I'm Prozac the Bear!

To slay my fellow Sentry would at least allow for a pleasant silence. But no.

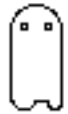
The excessive wayward spirits must have a vessel. My Vats of Despair were such a vessel, but I destroyed them and regret it not. Another must be found.

I am Linda Concarne! This is my body! It is not yours!

Who are you talking to?

— I have an idea

— Triangle?



Orpuddex. bring us to the Tater F zz bottl ng plant and push us through the non-or entable corridor That should move all the spirits ins de Linda s body to the outside

We shouldn't go back there!

— Why not?

There was a misunderstanding. I may have overreacted.

Is the bott ng p ant sti l standing?

Yes! That's how dangerous it is!

I am loath to mention this, but the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses may help.

Triangle and Robert

No fondue while Prozac the Bear is in the picture!

Cheese is fun!

I know of no other spirit vessel available. Let us attempt Triangle's topology idea.

You did already destroy the robot. It shouldn't be too dangerous.

About this vessel thing

What?

What would just putting us out of Linda's body do with no vessel?

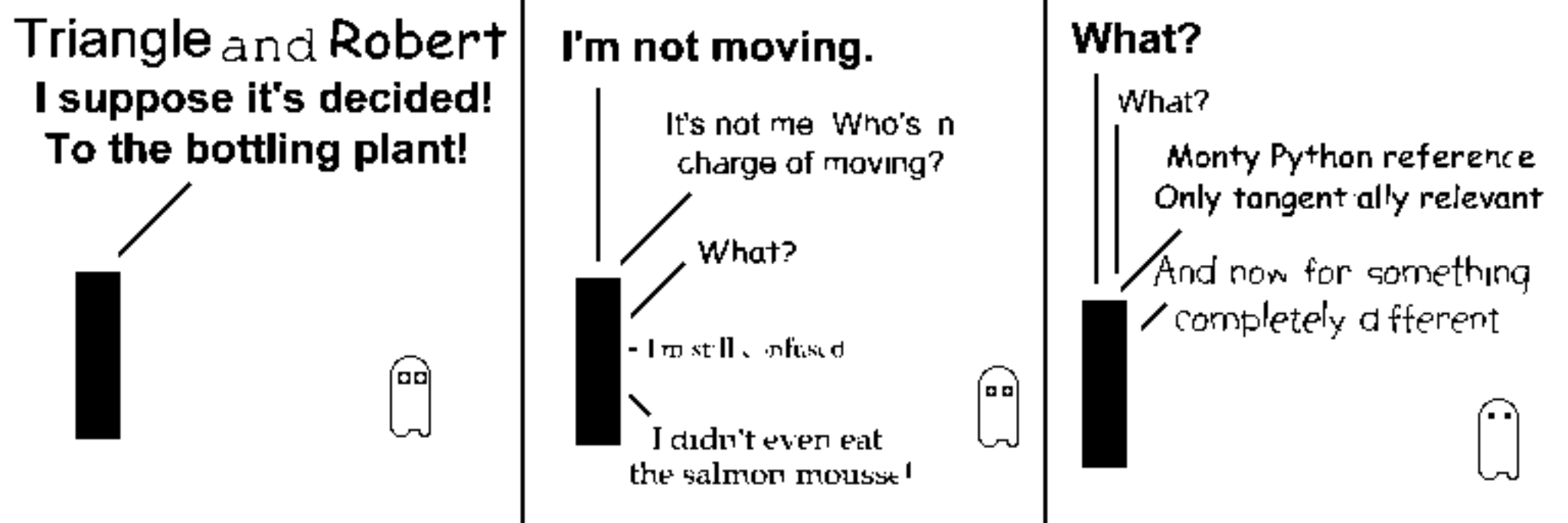
I can hold one. Linda can hold another.

What about everyone else in here?

I'm not worried about that!

I am!

Fear not, miscellaneous dead. Your journey to the afterlife will resume.


Triangle and Robert
I suppose it's decided!
To the bottling plant!
I'm not moving.
It's not me Who's in charge of moving?
What?
I'm still confused
I didn't even eat the salmon mousse!
What?
What?
Monty Python reference
Only tangentially relevant
And now for something completely different

Triangle and Robert

When an internet cartoonist makes a Monty Python reference it usually means he or she has run out of ideas

And when you use Prozac the Bear, that means you've run out of ideas

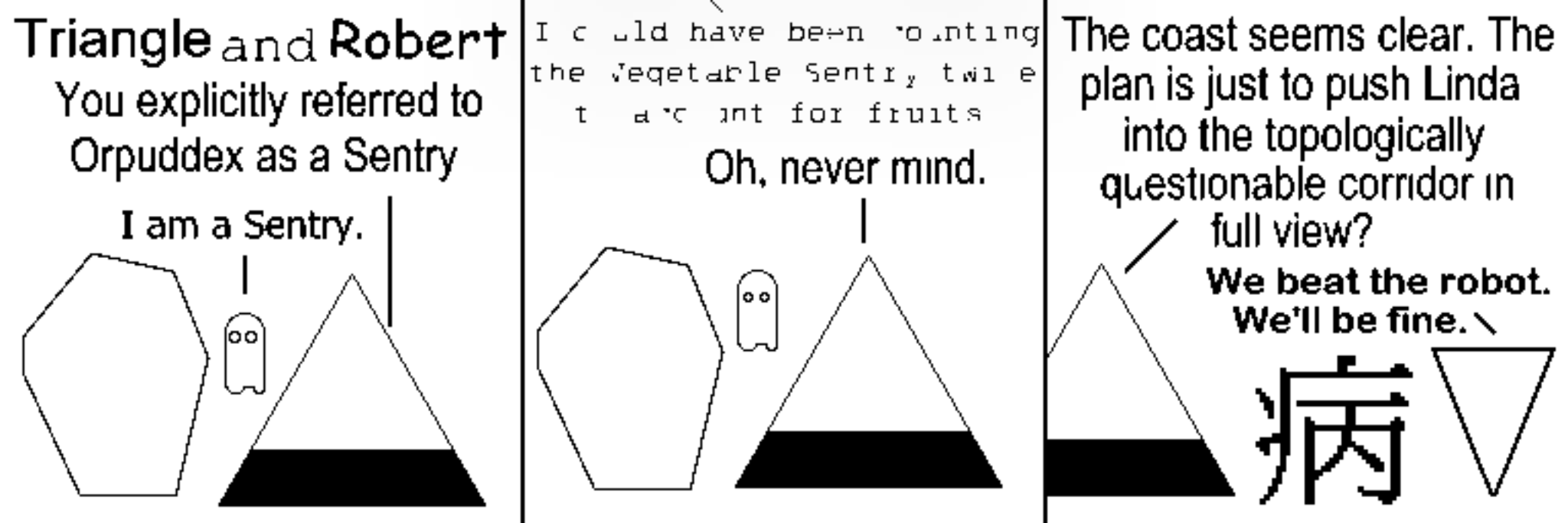
So when Prozac the Bear makes a Python reference shut up!

I shall push the immobile Meat Sentry to the site of topological perplexity. It should take but a few hours, which you will of course elide.

Eliding sounds painful

Half an hour and a fortuitous taxicab ride later, the six Sentries are assembled outside the bottling plant

Oh Not too painful then


Triangle and Robert
You explicitly referred to Orpuddex as a Sentry
I am a Sentry.
I could have been counting the vegetable Sentry twice to account for fruits
Oh, never mind.
The coast seems clear. The plan is just to push Linda into the topologically questionable corridor in full view?
We beat the robot. We'll be fine.
病

Triangle and Robert

Where am I?

We're in a hospital room. How are you feeling?

Confused!

When we drove the spirits from your body, you fell over and hurt yourself. You've been asleep for days, but they say you're healing now.

Where's Mr. Disease?

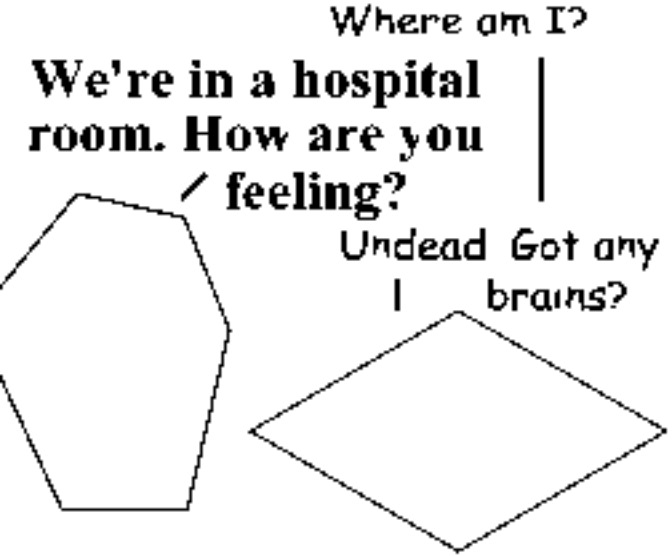
Trying to find us a new headquarters.

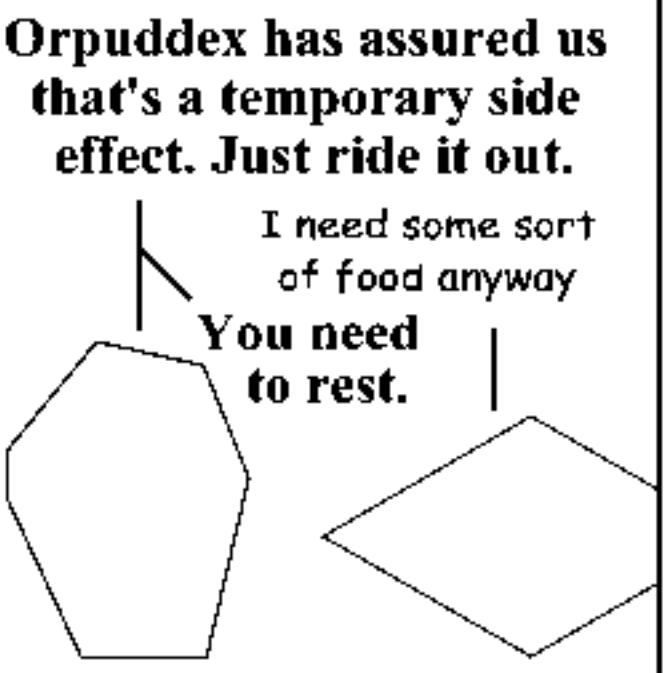
You look good, Linda We were all worried

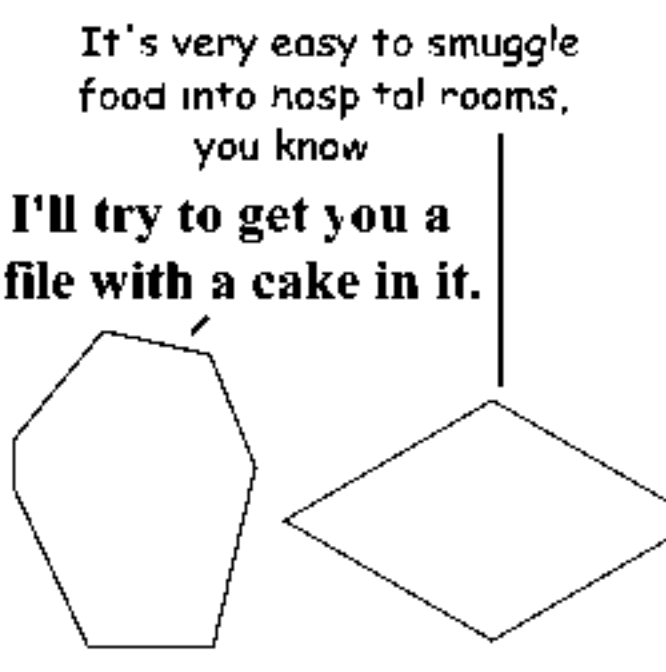
Triangle?

Well I had to go somewhere

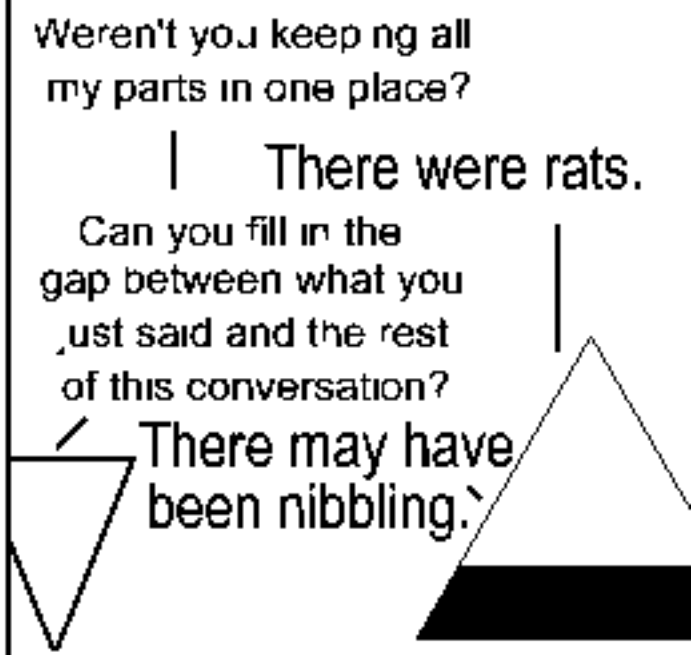
Triangle and Robert



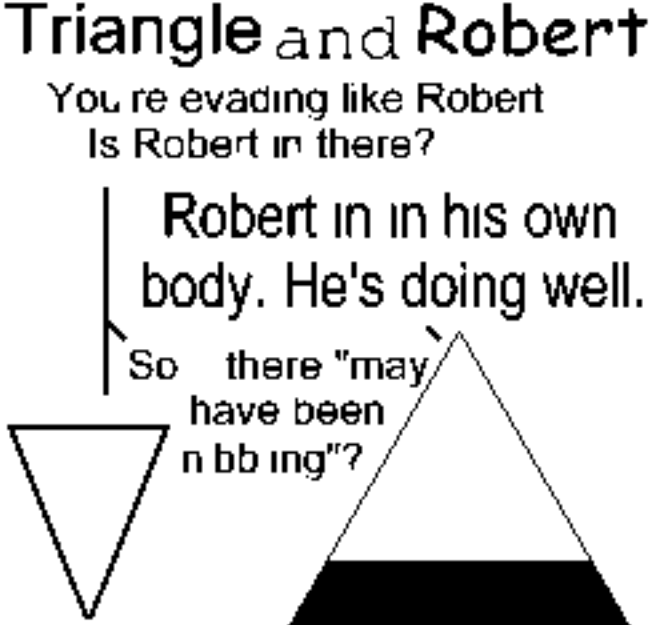


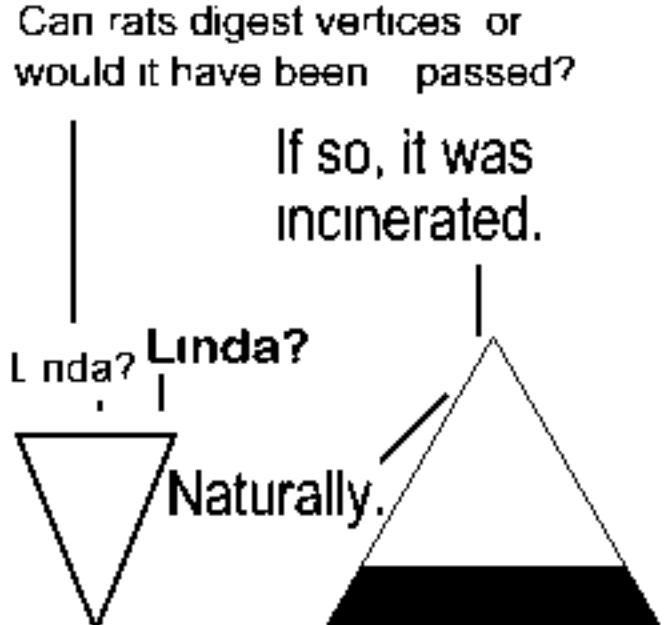


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Where am I?

We're in a hospital room! How are you feeling?

Dismembered

You might not want to look down in that case!

What do you

Oh

The pulsating green fluid keeps you from dying again!

I figured that out. Why is it in an inflatable wading pool?

We weren't sure what your insurance would cover!

What insurance?

Play along.

Triangle and Robert

You don't have health insurance?

Think about it. Who would be willing to insure someone who works with Robert?

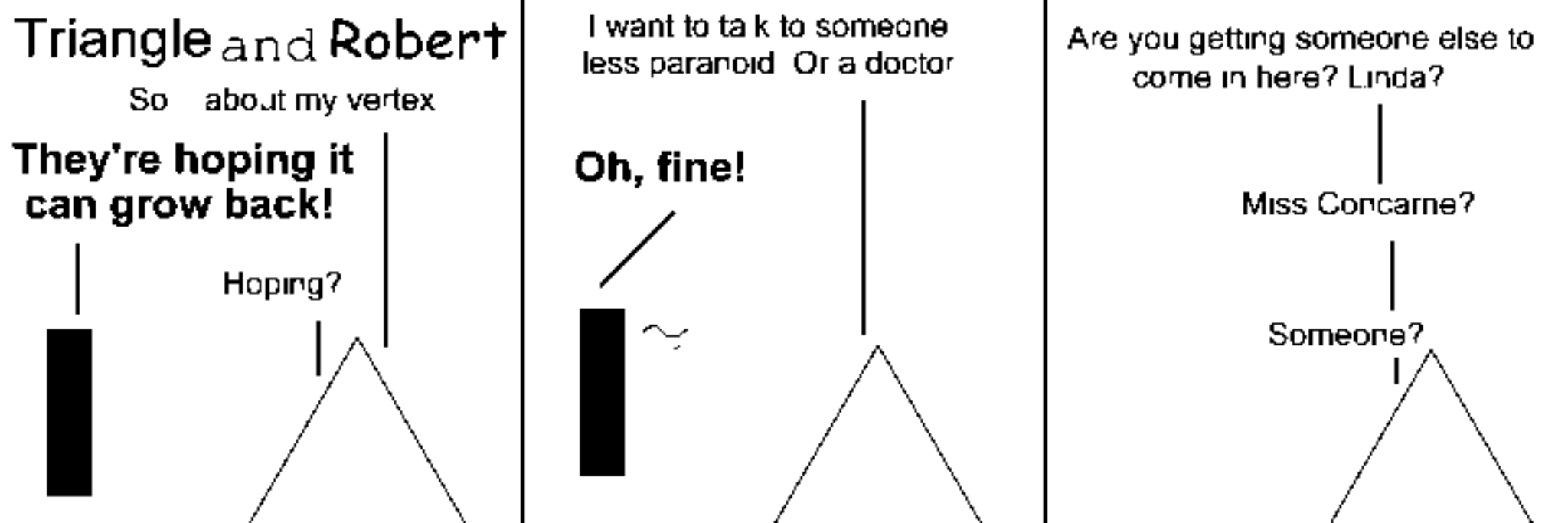
Don't let the hospital know that! They'll probably stop treatment!

They wouldn't do that here. This is a pretty good hospital aside from the aforementioned rodents.

Actually, the rodents are really healthy too, and I'm pretty sure they don't have insurance. The doctors here take care of everyone.

I wouldn't trust them!

I know you wouldn't.


Triangle and Robert
So about my vertex
They're hoping it can grow back!
Hoping?
I want to ta k to someone less paranoid Or a doctor
Oh, fine!
Are you getting someone else to come in here? Linda?
Miss Concarne?
Someone?

Triangle and Robert

You know that th ng characters do where they angr ly describe everything bad that's happened to them n the current arc, ostensib y to vent frustration but real y ,ust to provide a recap?

Yeah, that's a pretty useful device

I'm too sedated to remember how all this started Can you g ve me a jump?

Well, first your flight t meet the Cornersheep in Antarctica got diverted by interference due to the MSG entity moving most of itself to Antarctica

Wow that was a long time ago

Yes, but don't ask me how long I haven't been tracking strip time well

Weeks? Months? Years?

Yeah, maybe one of those things

I'm tempted to mention waterfowl just to screw you up further

Triangle and Robert

So then the p ane makes an emergency landing in Antarct ca and nstead of stay ng on the p ane and waiting for repairs we ended up having to leave because Robert stole the l quor cart instead of explaining the s tuat on and ask ng for it!

So we re in Antarctica with no protect on from the elements. try ng to get to the ma n MSG deposit so I can use the iquor as ncendiary fuel to sculpt the MSG into a None of this really made sense at the time but now that I look back it's just a solid mass of confusing id ocy! What were we think ng?

Hypothermia was responsible for some of it

Oh yes! Hypothermia! So we cou d bare y move when we got snowed on! And then we rubbed speech lines together to make fire and things just ***kept happening!***

Triangle and Robert

So we make it to where the MSG gathered and just to make things more *interesting* it turns out that it's all actually underground By this point we're so frostbitten I've started to think Robert is having good ideas

Robert came up with a revolutionary new mining technique which I don't even want to think about and we somehow made it to the MSG My plan was to start sculpting it into the framework of a rocket Then thought we could stand back and let the MSG fill in the structure itself and be able to launch itself off Earth

Of course, the MSG entity managed to be a vast nearly omnipotent *idiot* and finished the rocket with us inside Since the rocket was only supposed to carry its own body there was no way out and by the time we managed to explain this it was in space Does this sound like a good time to you? ***Does it?***

Triangle and Robert

Where was I?

Angry

At?

Bad timing by sentient monosodium glutamate.

Ohhh, yes

Having ruined any chance of our possibly breathing, the MSG drew our consciousnesses into its own to keep us alive. Then Robert came up with a typically rhomboid plan and had the MSG let him go. As planned, he died instantly.

Somehow that nearly made sense at the time. I guess he was going to do something clever in the afterlife that didn't pan out.

I think that brings us to Orpuddex getting involved. What was he thinking?

That wasn't rhetorical. I need to explained.

Triangle and Robert

Orpuddex just had to get involved
Maybe if he'd known what he
was doing I'd be more grateful
He launched himself into space
in pursuit of the MSG to bring
me and Robert's body back
Very noble, presumably

Then the MSG tells me Orpuddex
was carrying a ***sick*** amount of
tapioca in his fuel mixture. Since
the idea that he'd have managed
to launch without ever bothering
to taste his own pudding was
patently ***ludicrous,*** I made the
obvious deduction that he
was trying to atone for
his various misdeeds
by committing
messy suicide

And that's where my own
stupidity gets piled onto the
growing mass of other stupidity.
I had the MSG entity eject my
(consequently dead) body and
Robert's from the rocket towards
Orpuddex, so that he could
actually rescue us instead of
just smearing himself
across space in a
Chosen One-related
and thus potentially
fatal manner.

Triangle and Robert

I can't remember what happened in the afterlife. That's your fault. I remember that much about it.

You learned a lot of things there, including things I haven't decided yet.

Me paying for your incompetence is a central theme of this comic.

Anyway, Robert and I got brought back from the dead somehow, and we went into what seemed to be a poorly-planned All of Me homage before getting put back into our bodies. Or in my case, most of my body.

My left vertex was eaten by rats.

That's just not fair.

When is this going to end?

Vertices do grow back, aren't they?

Triangle and Robert

Yes my vertex will grow back. thanks to advanced medicine and luck That s not the po nt The po nt is what else can go wrong?

You really shouldn't have asked that

You wouldn't ***dare.***

I can't think of anything right now, actually It's just generally bad practice to tempt me

There should be a nurse or something n here to check on me by now

There should be, yes.

Triangle and Robert

Meat Sentry

Yeah?

Weren't you going to tell the nurses that Triangle's awake

Not really!

you need to learn a valuable lesson in responsibility

So you're giving me a subplot?

No you're too minor a character and don't deserve a subplot. Go learn a valuable lesson in responsibility on your own time. And get a raise first

Triangle and Robert

Hi there.

You're not sounding very evil

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

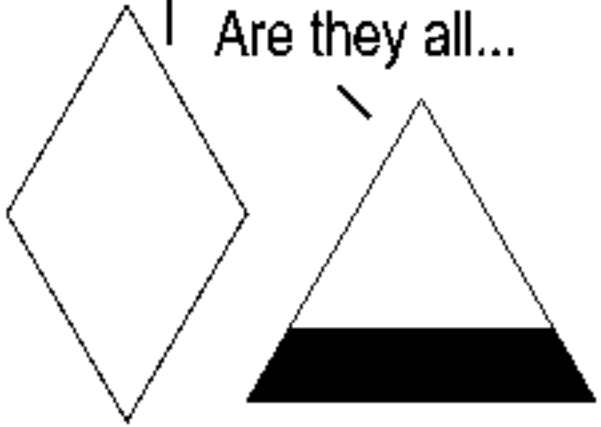
I'll probably go back to plotting my revenge against you or the revival of the Fourth Race or something sooner or later, but I've been in a good mood recently.

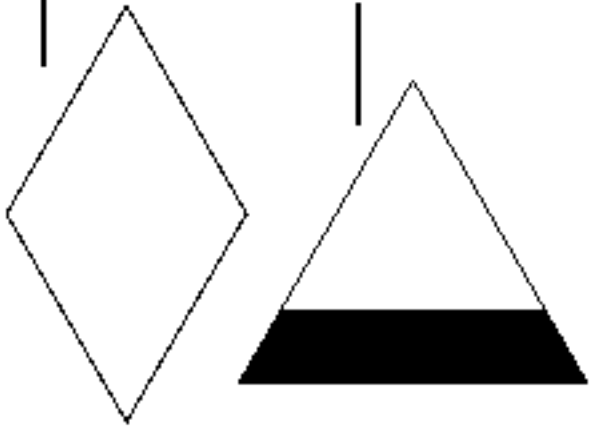
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

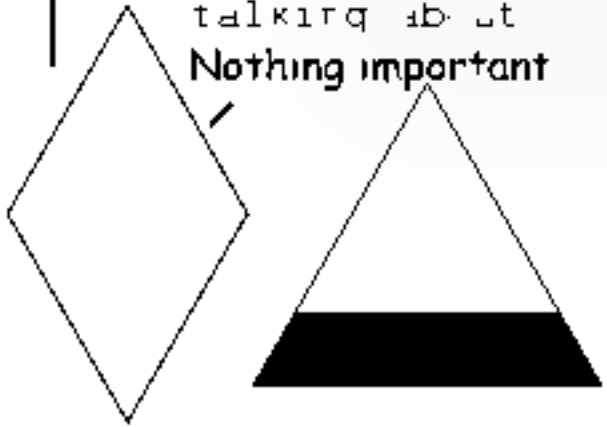
What have you been up to, aside from the thing I've left out of the strip so I can make a dramatic revelation later

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

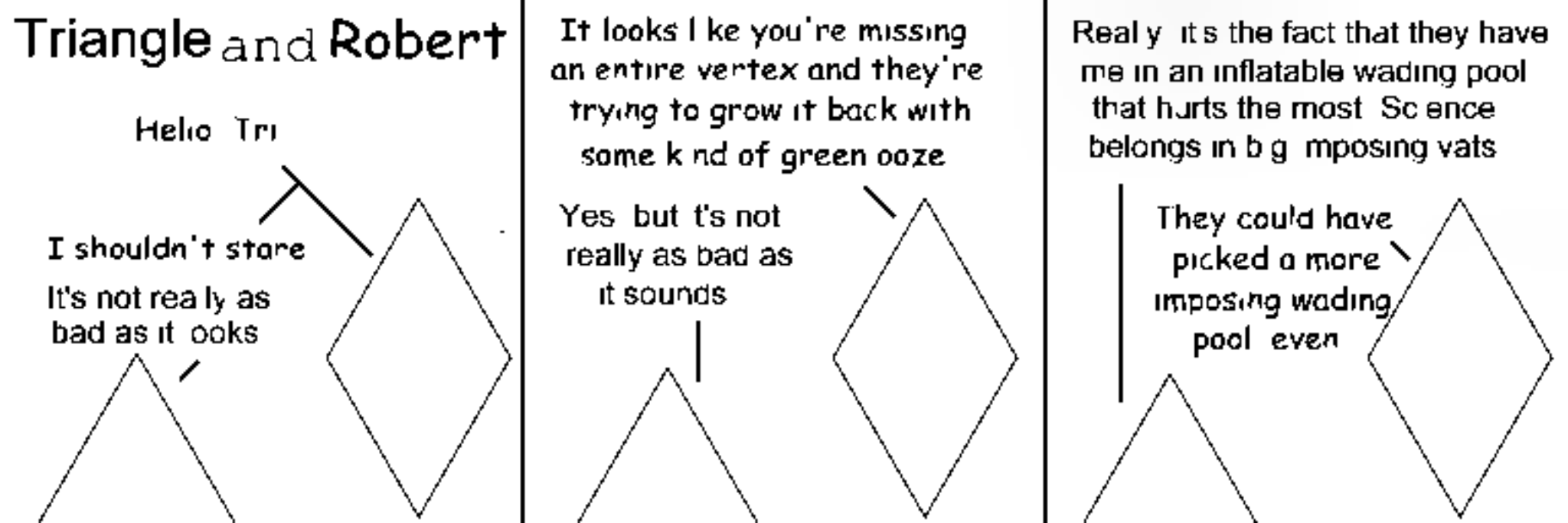




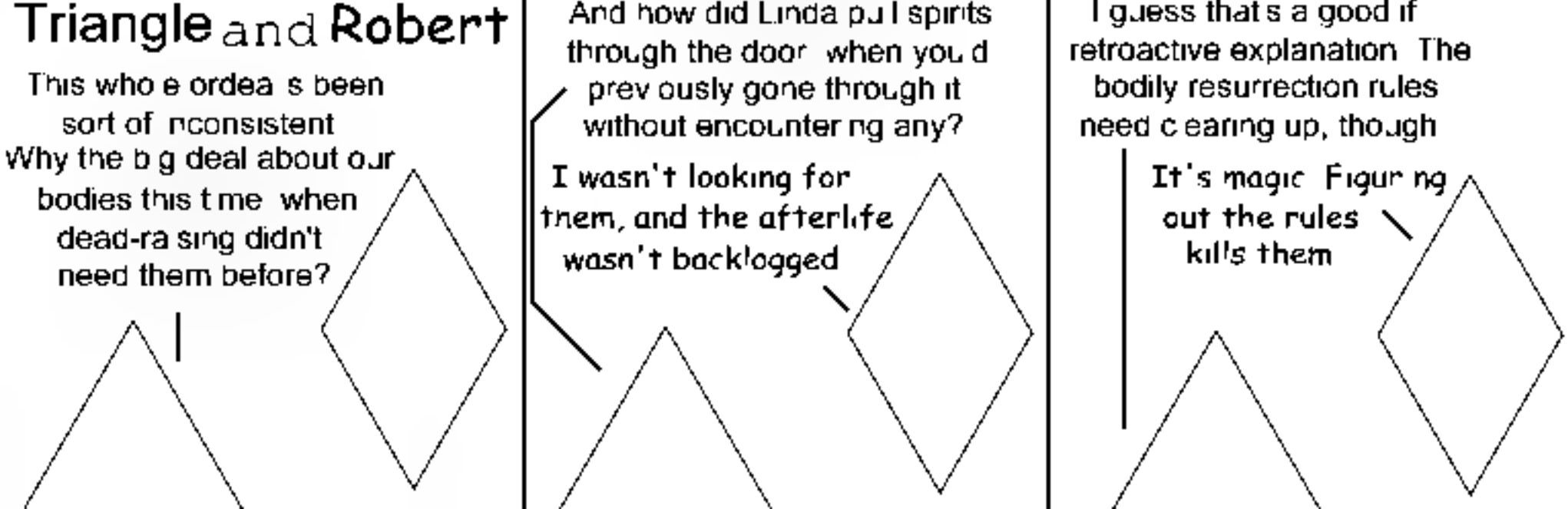


First now, the Cartoonist asked the Correspondent.
What have you been up to, aside from the thing I've left out of the strip so I can make a dramatic revelation later
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Well, that's been it, really. With the RDCLBA archive up there's a lot to be done.
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
And of course, something will go tragically wrong and give you a reason to go back to supervillainy
Probably, but I'm not going to hurry it.
INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Have you read the strips from when we were dead?

I haven t had a chance Shou d I?

We left some clues for ourselves when the Cartoonist told us we wouldn't remember the things we'd learned

That's go ng to get convoluted How bad are the c ues?

Not particularly cryptic, unless there s a secret message hidden in the clear one

If so, we d have picked a code we know and the Cartoonist doesn't so a l we'd need to do s ook at it between str ps

Triangle and Robert

I think that rules out the steganographic hypothes s

I wonder if my ine was important or a random aside.

I d guess both

The panel in ıestıcr, ıst f r the ıudıence

One: Puddans. Not much like Prozac described. Two: made of unstructured meat. Three: Poetry. Not room to explain that. Transition from One to Two is an important story which won't fit. Memo to selves: research that story. Implications for MSG.

I should ___ learn to cook.

What sort of cooking do you th nk I'd be good at?

Room-temperature non-magica

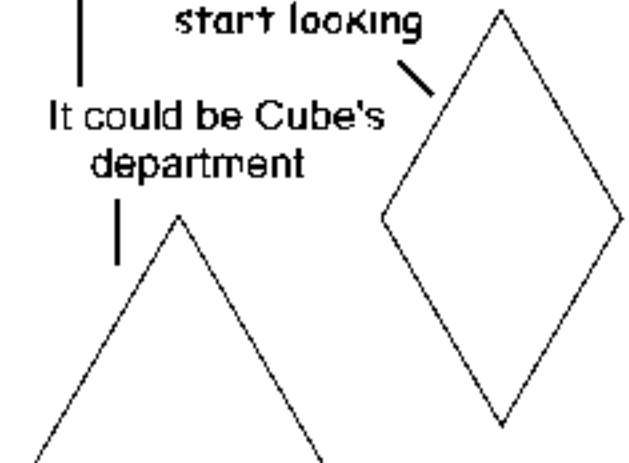
Heh, I guess I am pretty bad around fire

Triangle and Robert

"Transition from One to Two "

Nothing about where to start looking

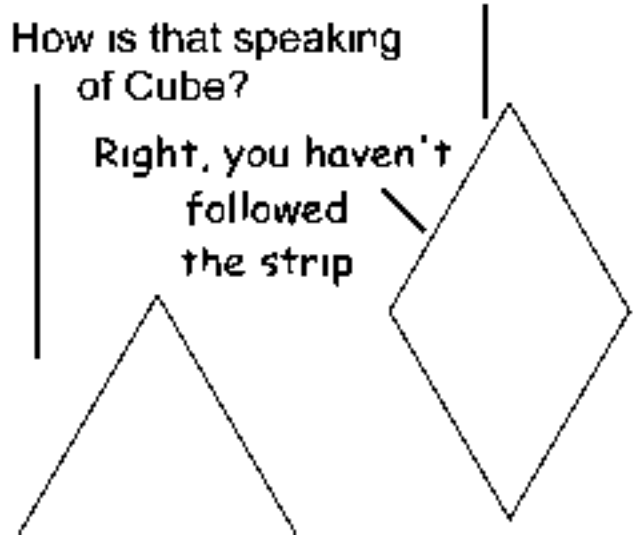
It could be Cube's department



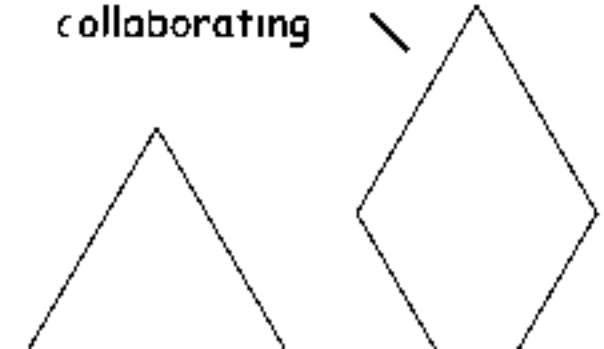
Speaking of Cube, we never d d get to the Cornersheep

How is that speaking of Cube?

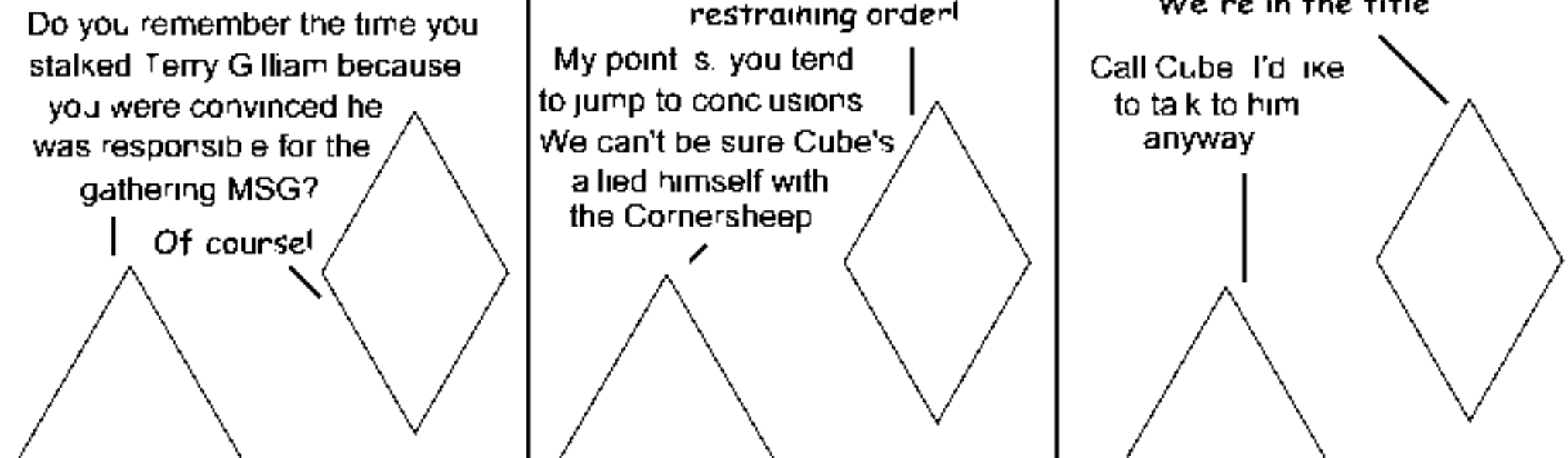
Right, you haven't followed the strip



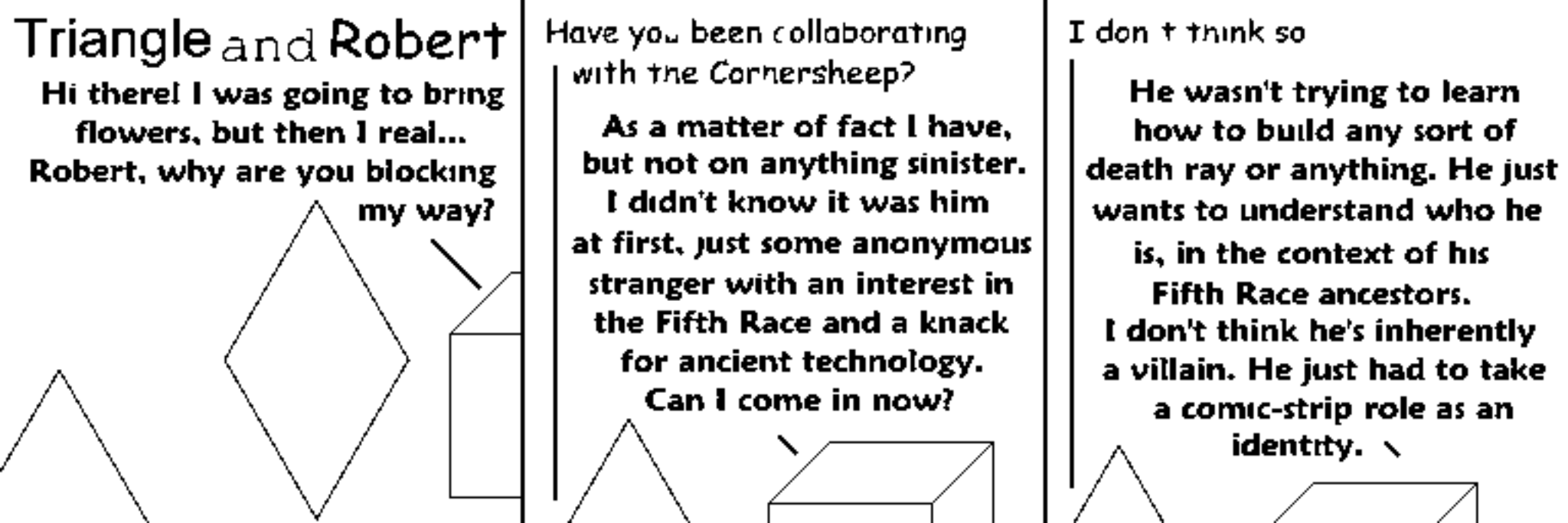
Whatever the Cornersheep s been up to, t involves the RDCLBA data Add that to Cube recently starting to work with serious high tech, and it stands to reason that they've been collaborating



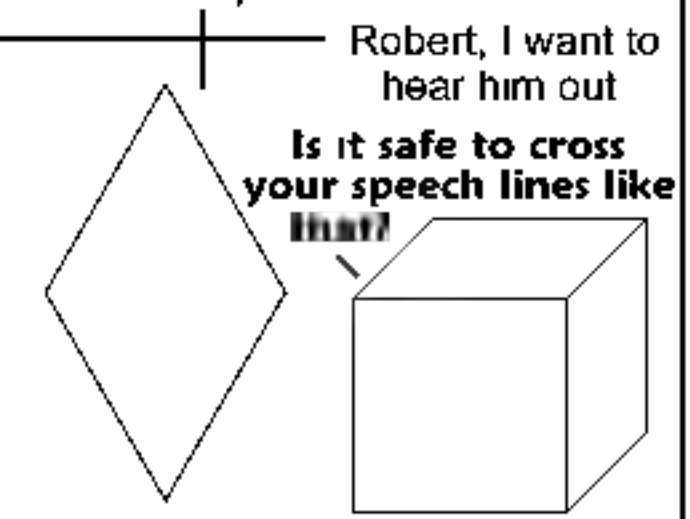
Triangle and Robert

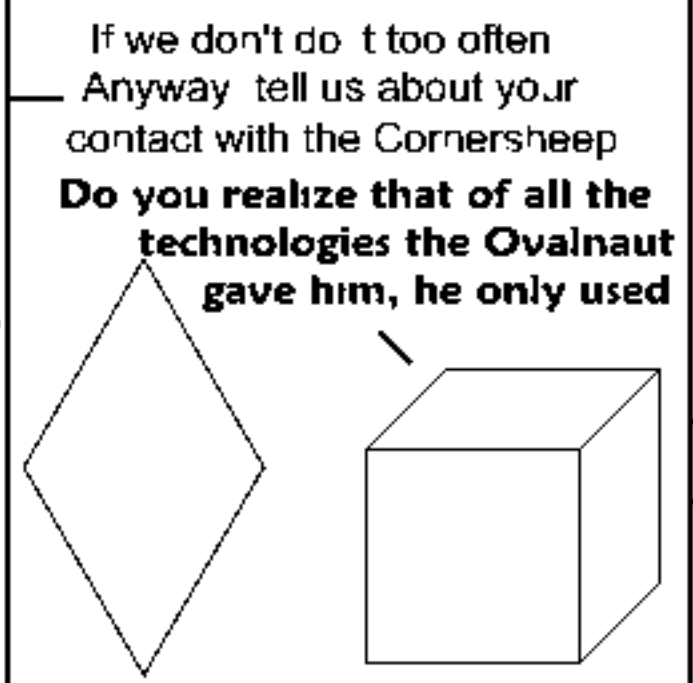


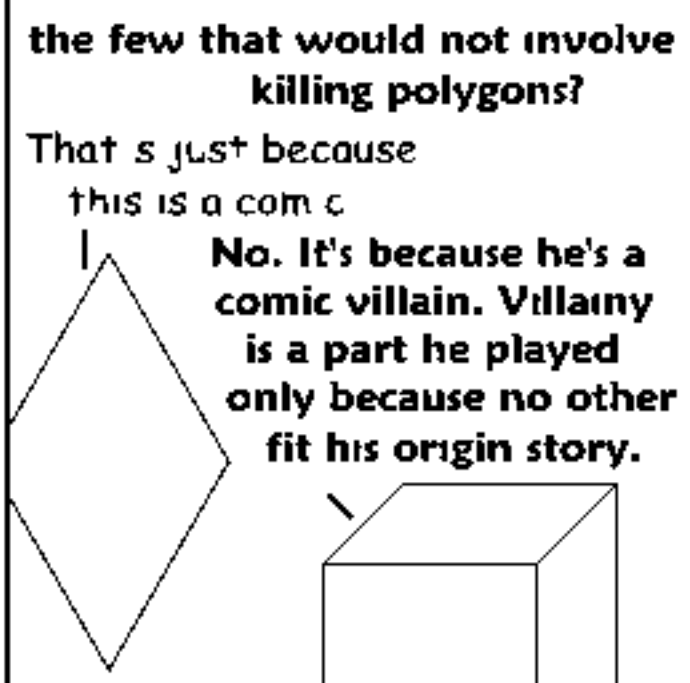
Triangle and Robert



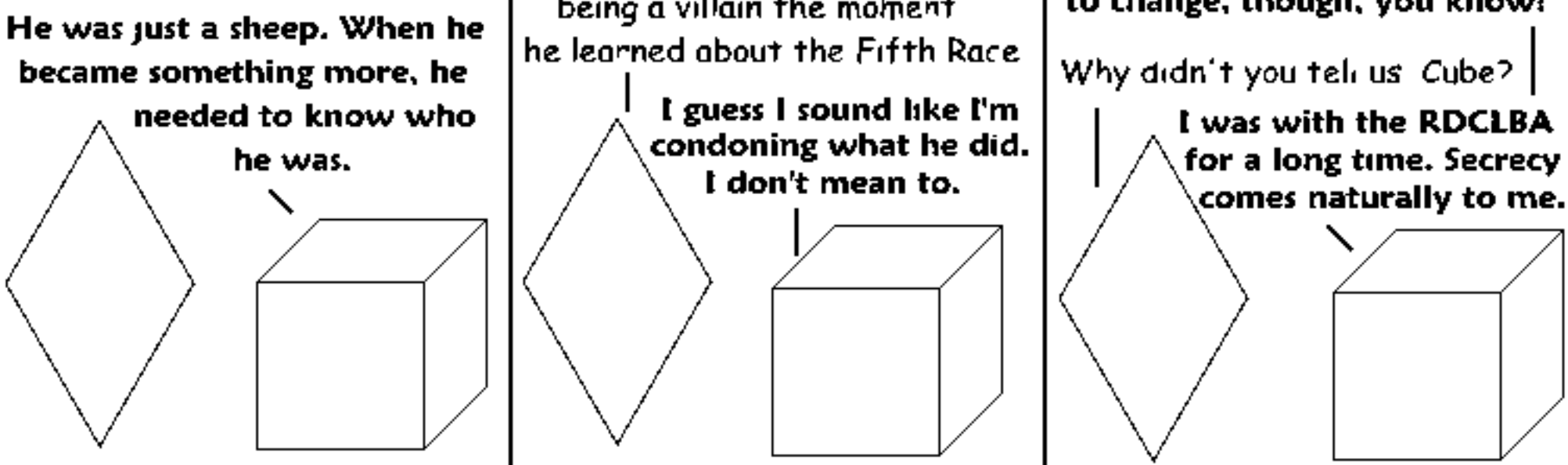
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

They're talking about me. They have it all wrong, you know.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I think they're pretty close.

No. They're treating my supervillainy as a passing phase.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

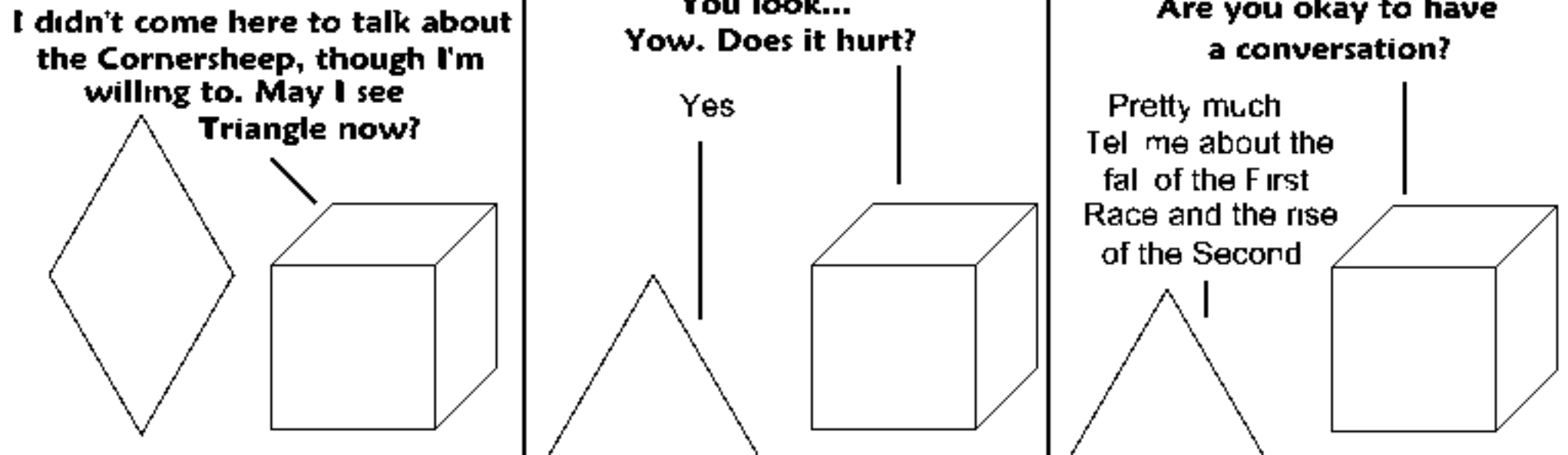
And what is it really

It's just me.

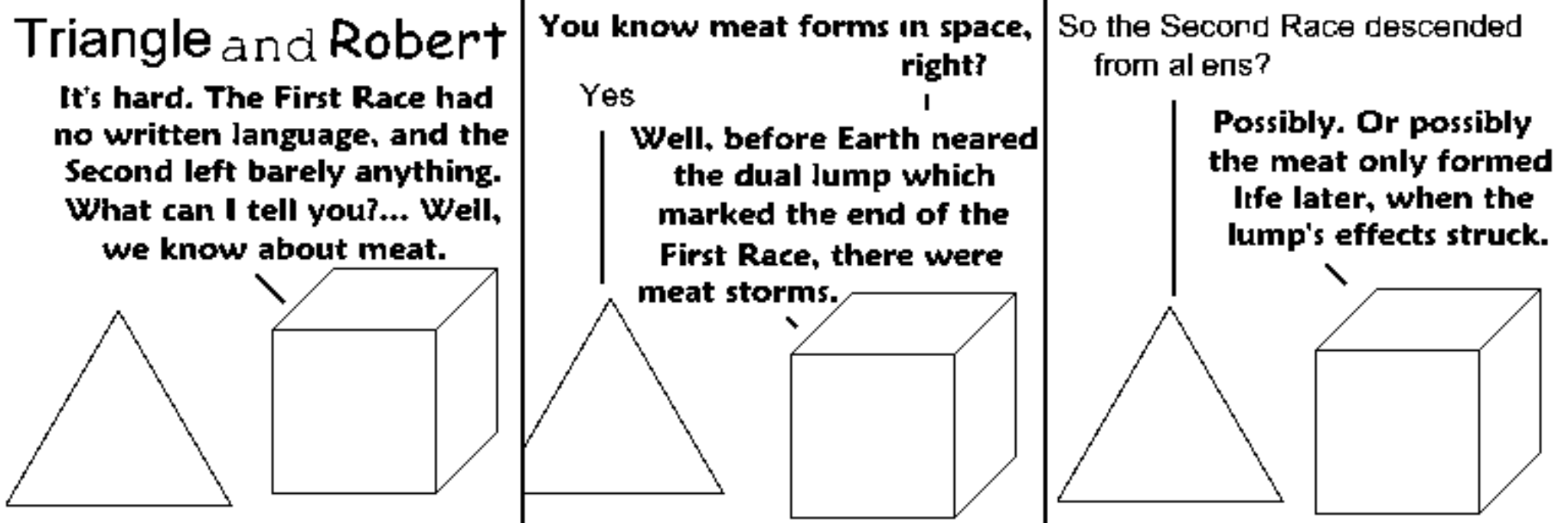
What reasons would I have to believe that

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert



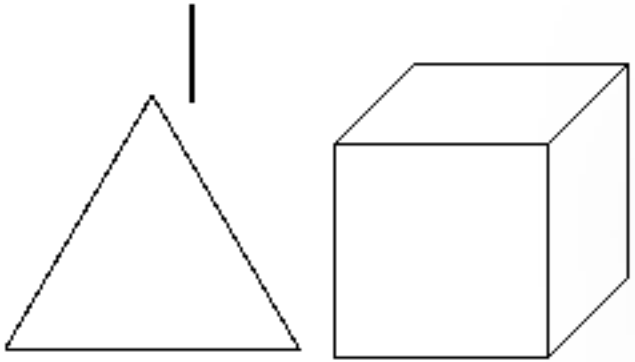
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Triangle! Your vertex!

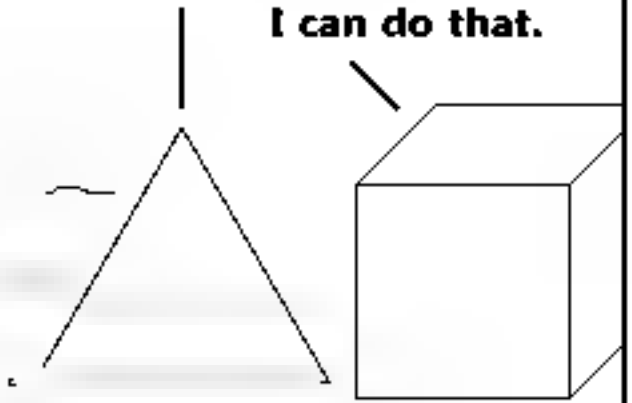
It seems pretty good
I think I can move around now



Nope

Okay back into the
green science goo
Get a nurse

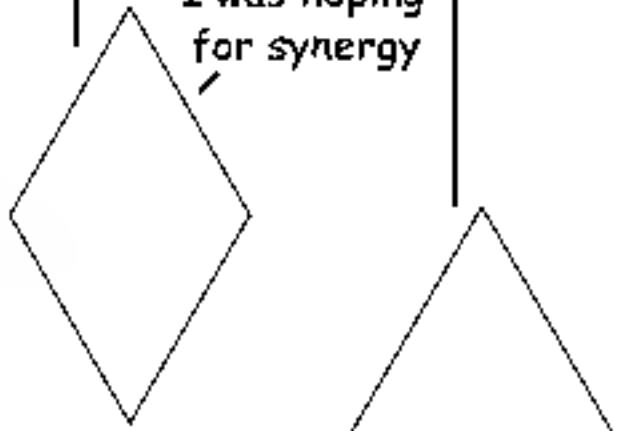
I can do that.



So what have we learned?

About my healing process
or about meat?

I was hoping
for synergy



Triangle and Robert

If the Second Race began as fallen space meat, and then

PAINKILLERS! I NEED PAINKILLERS!

Cube's getting a nurse

I don't need a nurse. I need

drugs!

I've never lost a vertex, so I really have no idea how much it hurts

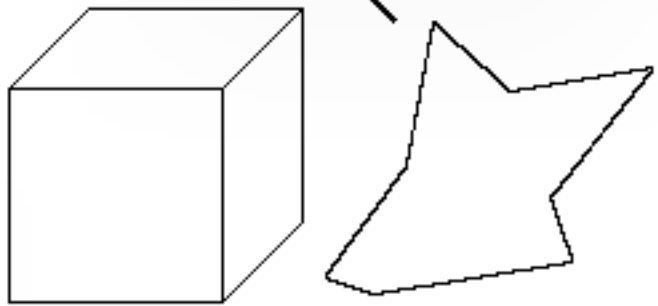
>&$@#+ @%^\]{ !^@ *-{`~,!^&,>?; $$*(!.

:$@&&*!!!

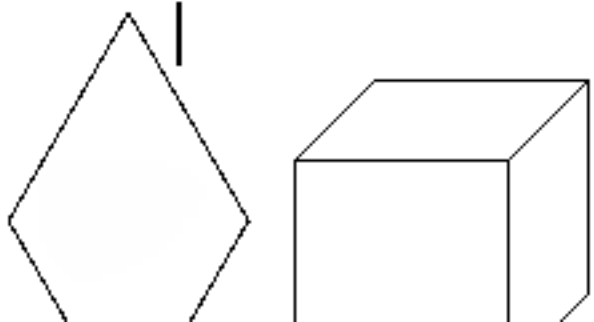
Hey! Can we — get some drugs in here?

Triangle and Robert

You can t get Tr ang e exc ted
ke that He needs to stay st l
and n the so ut on for h s
vertex to regrow



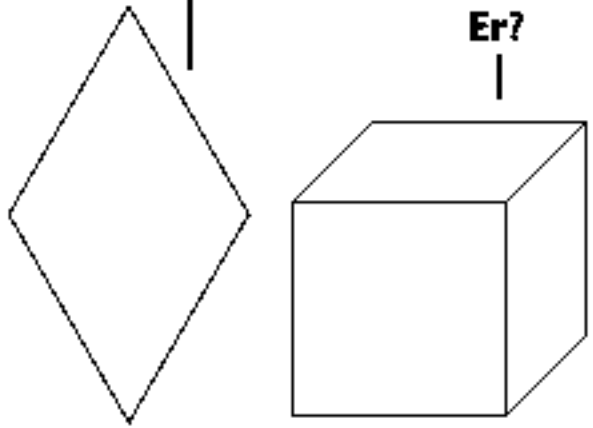
t grew back a ot sooner
than we expected it to and
probably a lot weaker
It probably came back so fast
because Friend Cartoonist
just forgot to keep cropp ng
it out of the frame



"Friend Cartoonist"?

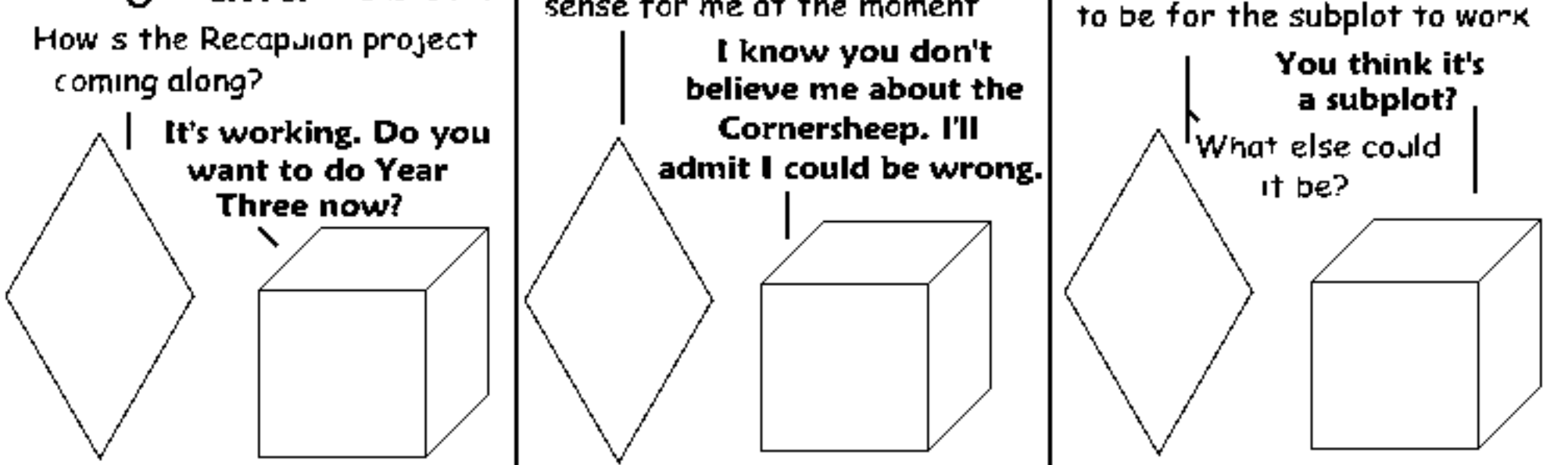
Trust no one! Keep your
laser handy!

Er?



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

I don't know. . it still our is awfull, abstract.

No, it's very simple! Taco and Clam are natural enemies, competing over a resource which is a pink balloon

I'm not saying I wouldn't watch "Taco versus Clam" I'd probably like it But it would never air on the TV of my world.

Sometimes they cooperate in the short term so they both have better access to the balloon, but it's always short lived because both of them know only one can succeed

And this is in its second season there

You seem incredulous

It just doesn't sound all that sustainable, I guess

Triangle and Robert

Were you actually discharged from the hospital

What are you, my mother?

Technically, I suppose I might be

I can take care of my own health

News to me

Is there a point to this nagging?

Just establishing things so it'll make sense when you suddenly fall over a few strips later. Now, what's going on in this Taco versus Clam

Clam's managing the world's only office supply store and Taco needs a calculator

Triangle and Robert

The world's only office supply store

It's just a TV show
They can take liberties like that

And Clam marriages at

Just in this episode

So what they do change from episode to episode

Only Clam and some of the supporting cast
Taco stays the same

And what does Taco do

Taco lives in a Mexican restaurant and avoids being ordered

What would a taco want with a calculator

I don't know, I've never seen this episode before
Let me watch it

Triangle and Robert

π⊥ω!

BOOM

ιδδ/θδ...

Hooray for Tacol

That ending made no sense

Is Prozac the Bear a writer on this thing

That wasn't the ending

Aren't t se the credits now

No, those are joke cred ts

What's the joke They lo k ormal.

They re in a ser f font It's sort of a running gag

Triangle and Robert

Hey, does your Earth have a Jorge Luis Borges or something similar?

Yes. He was a writer. He often wrote fictional critiques of nonexistent works instead of writing the actual stories therein.

Oh. Not a parallel of ours, then.

Let me guess. Yours was an actual literary critic and all the books he wrote about were real.

I don't think ours did anything like that. As far as I know, he's just the voice of Clam.

Well, that was a particularly useless digression.

Triangle and Robert

These are the actual closing credits now, right. Because all the vowels are the wrong size. I think I'm starting to get the rules of "Taco Versus Clam" now

See, this is why hospitals have discharge procedures. Only you're not supposed to just leave when you feel like it

Later, back in the hospital

This is probably reduced oxygen metabolism hindering my mental faculties, but I've come up with a great idea for a Taco Versus

Later still

Clam script

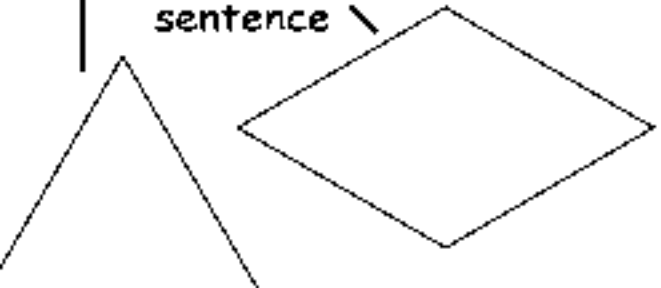
Triangle and Robert

What?

Triangle?

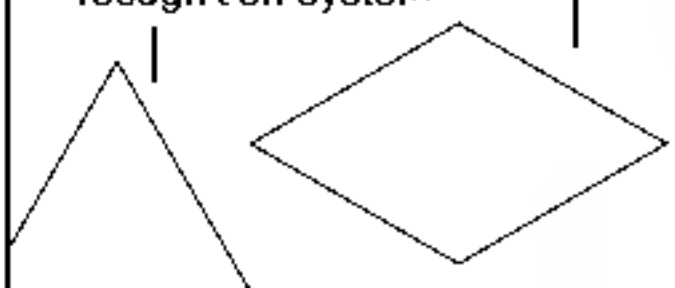
You said "Clam script"

It was the end of an earlier sentence



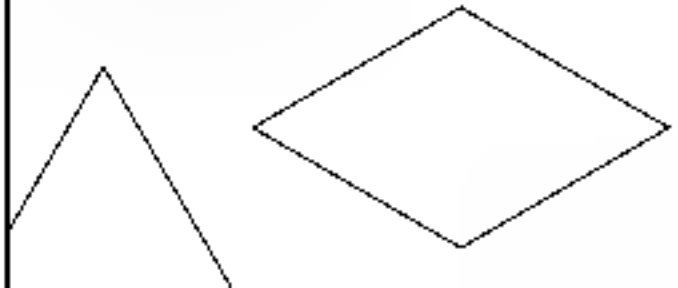
I passed out in the middle

What sort of sentence ends with "Clam script"? Don't tell me you're trying to design a mollusc-based handwriting recognition system

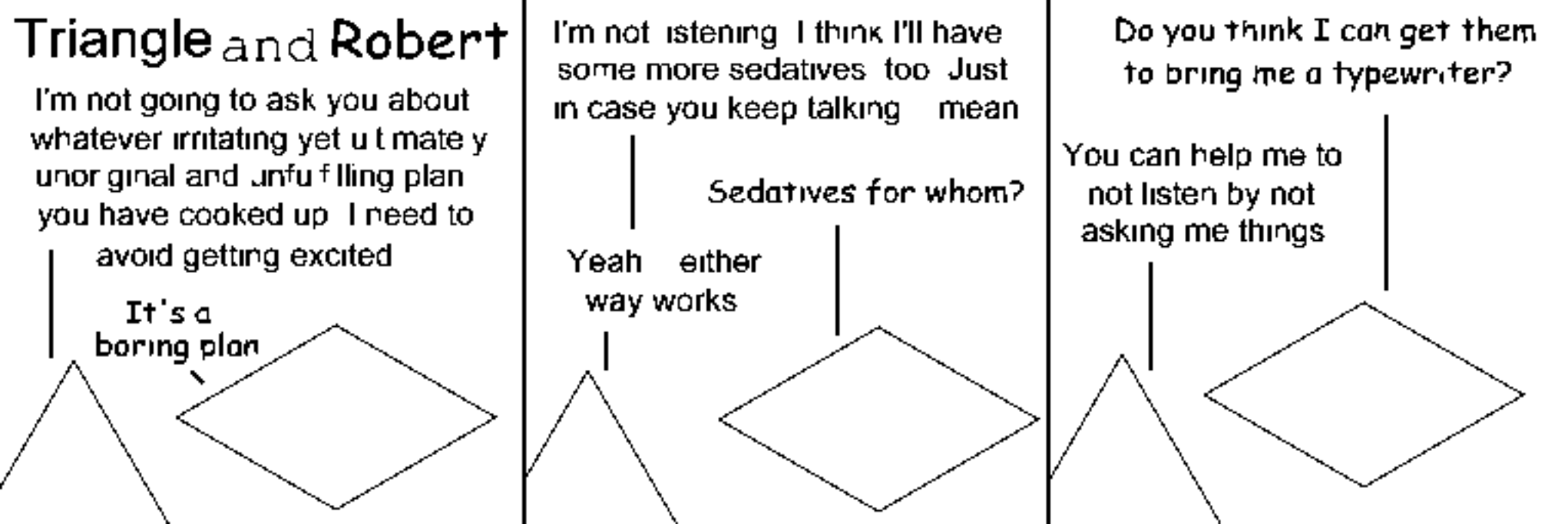


Okay, I won't

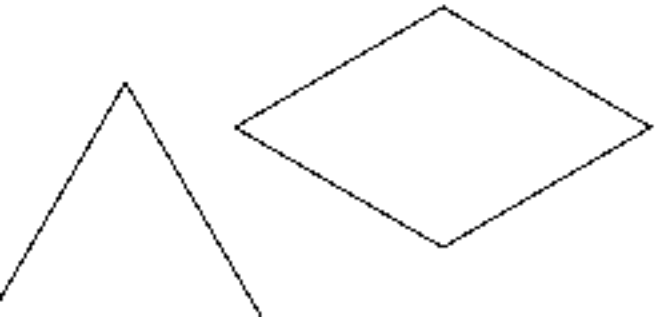
Actually, he isn't



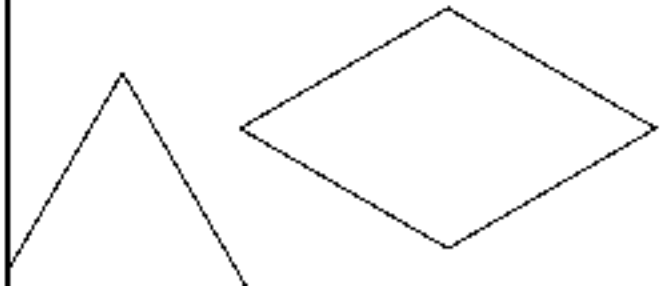
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

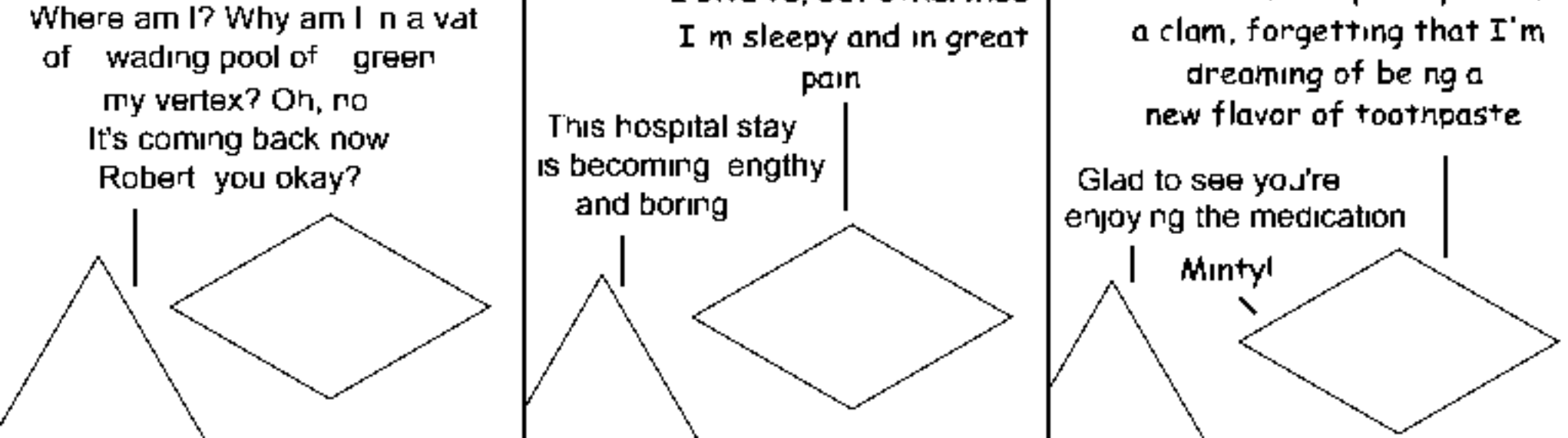


Well, that hospital there sure doesn't skimp on the sedatives

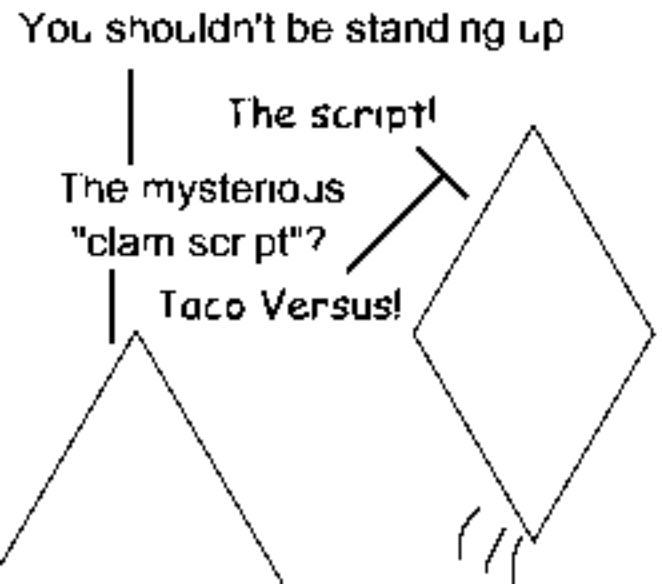


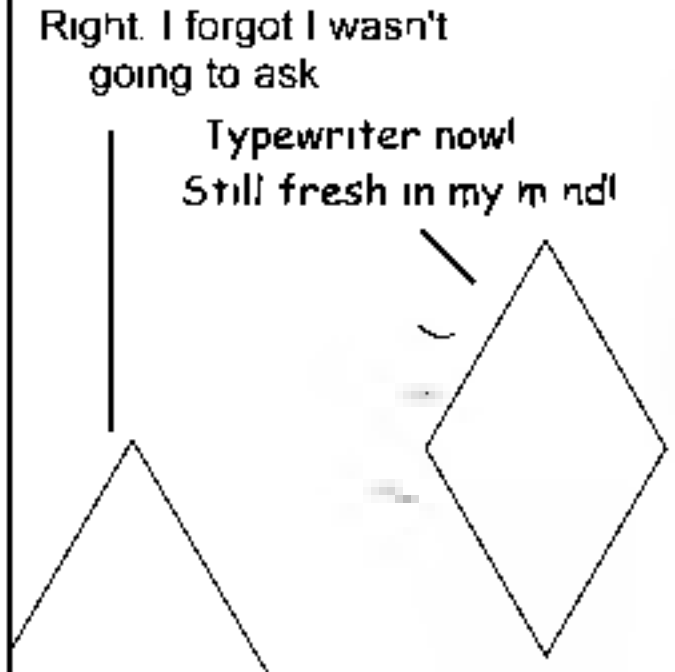
Good thing there wasn't any important dialogue for that day.

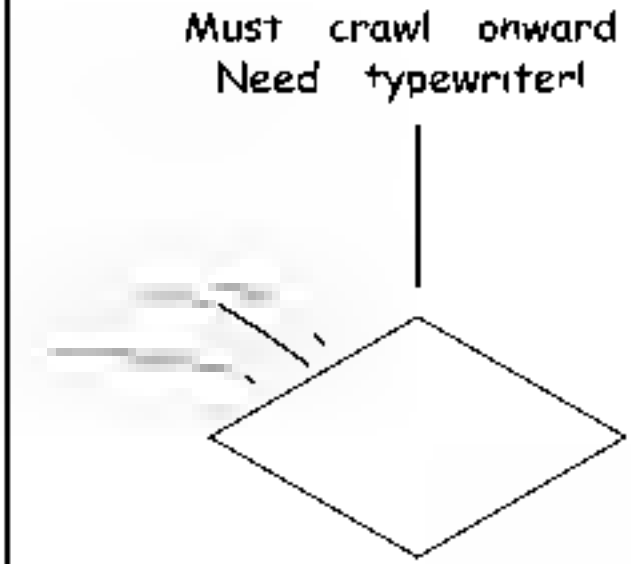
Triangle and Robert



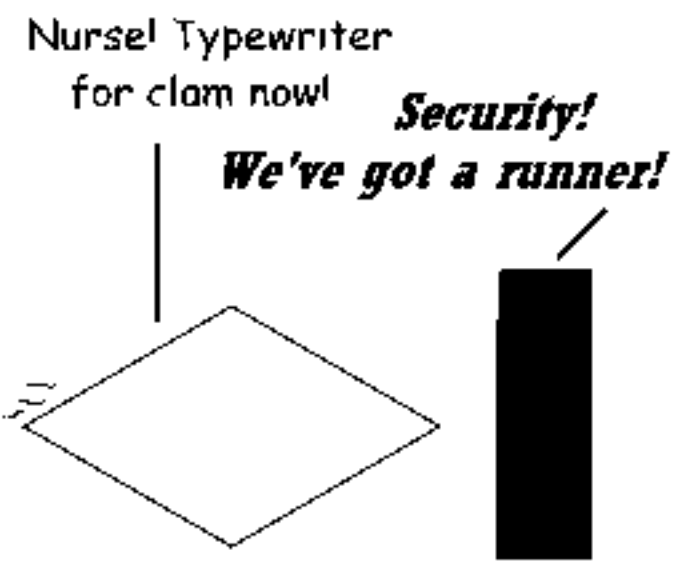
Triangle and Robert

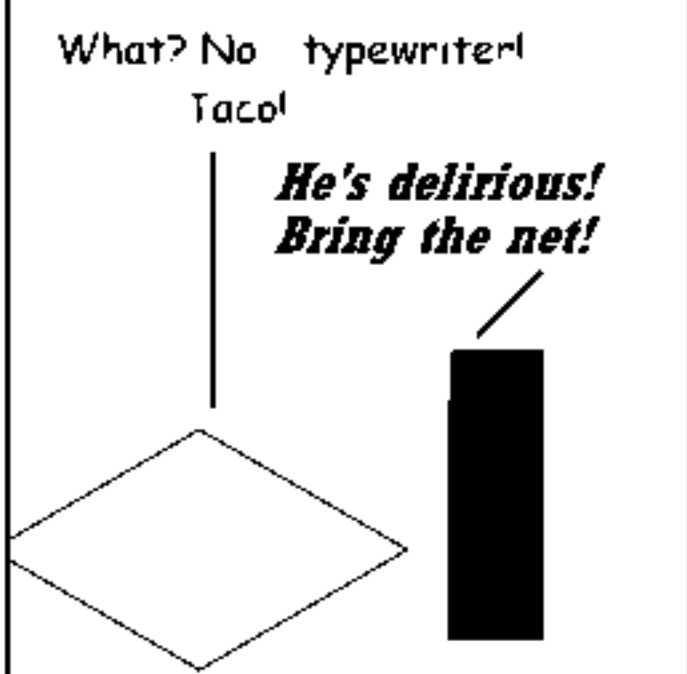


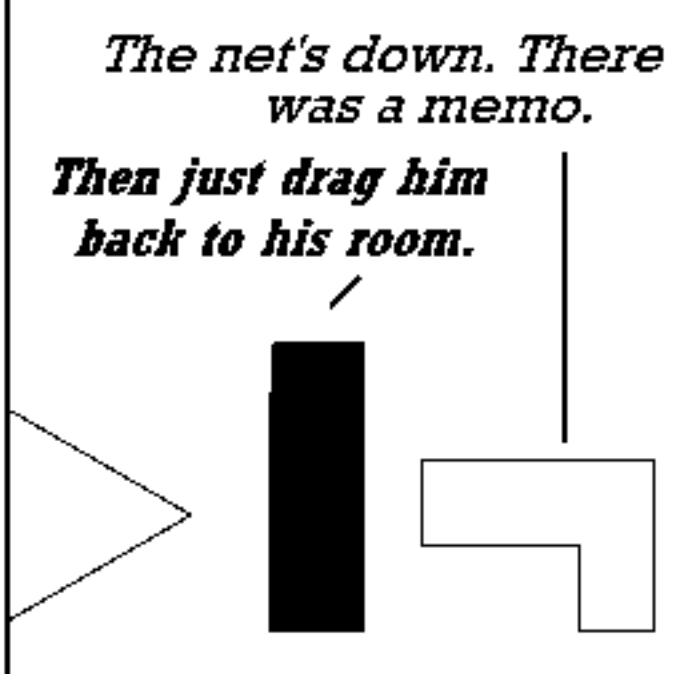




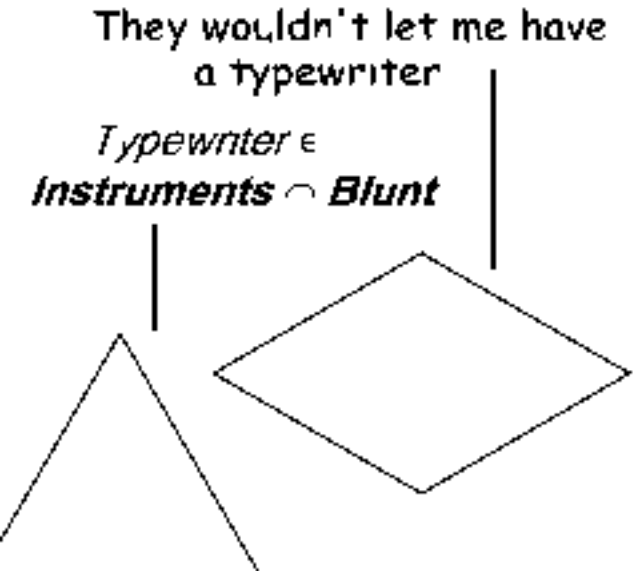
Triangle and Robert

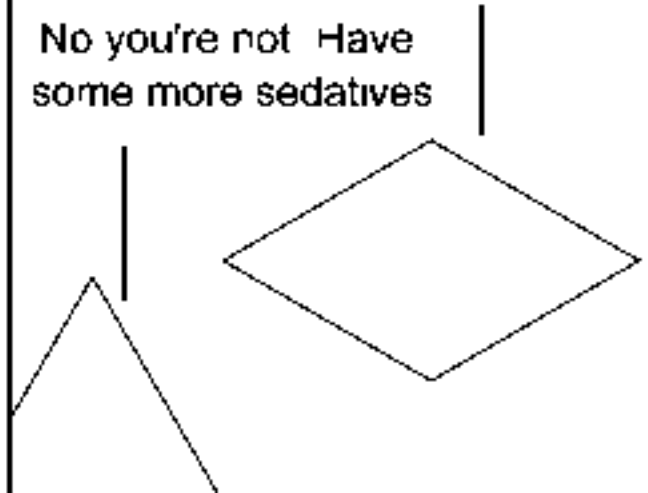


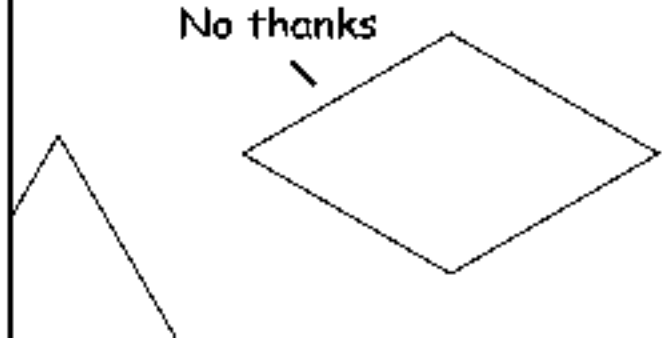




Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Comics generally gloss over lengthy between-adventures hospital stays and pick up again when the next adventure starts

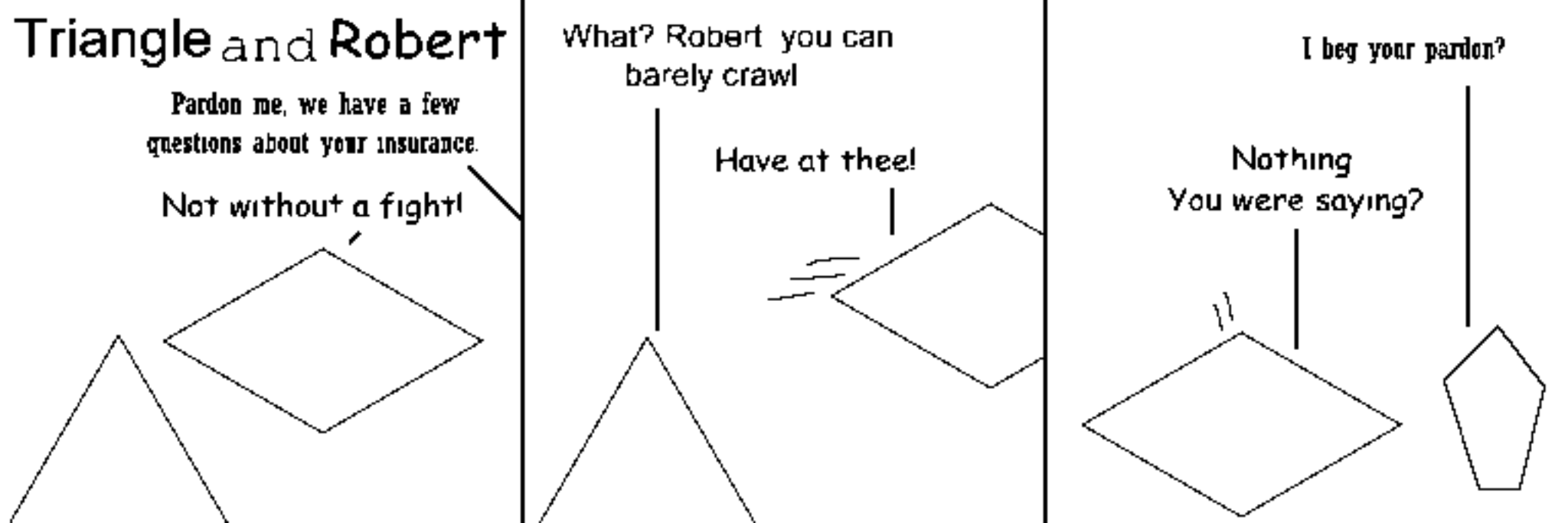
That they do.

So maybe you should think about that. Either we could fast-forward with you and not have to deal with convalescence, or we can get a couple months of Cartoonist-free peace and quiet

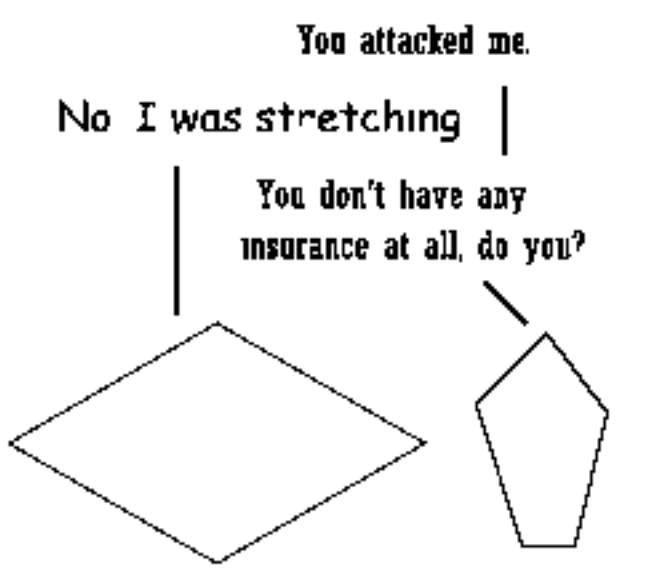
Or I could just start the next adventure now, while you're still recuperating. That sounds fun.

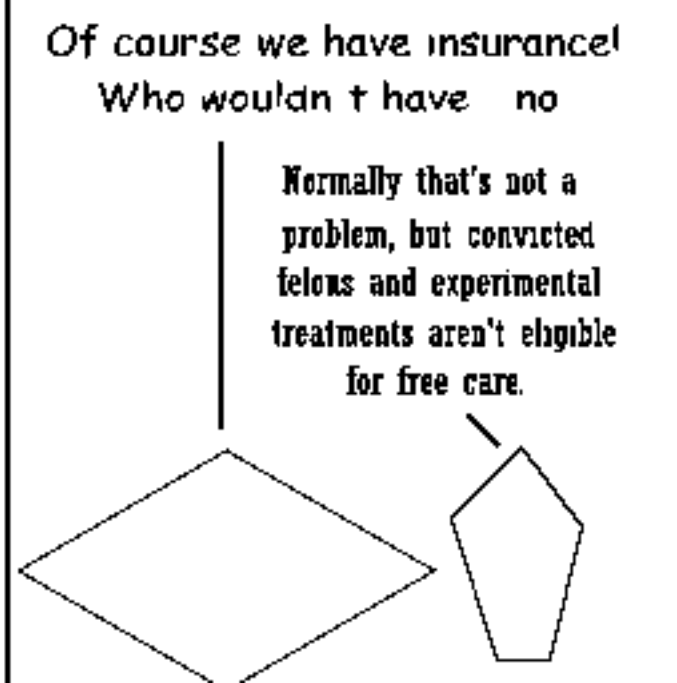
That sounds like you need to look up the word "fun" in a dictionary of some sort

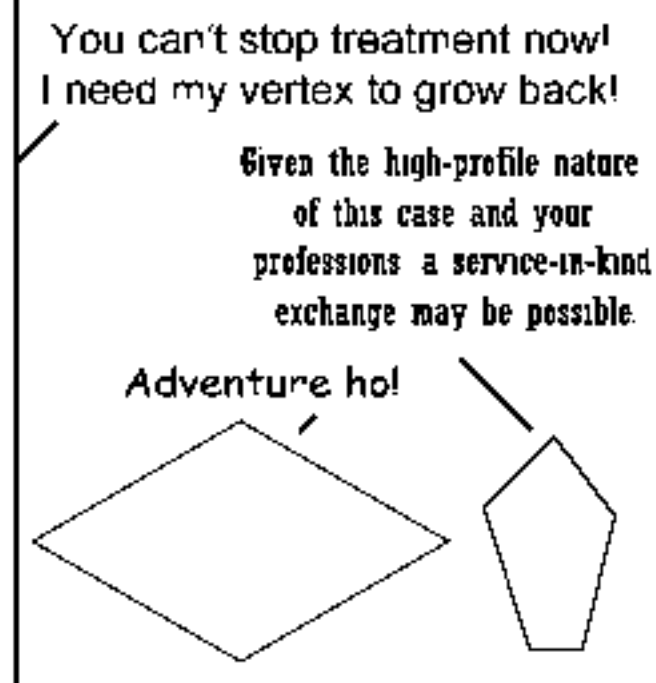
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



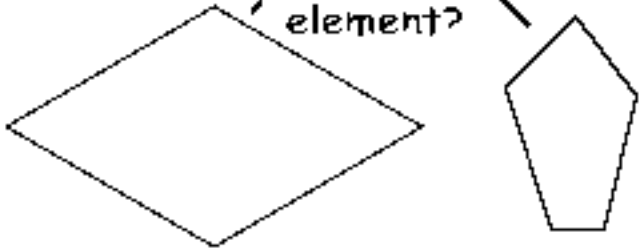




Triangle and Robert

This isn't particularly wacky but the Meat Sentry doesn't do consulting and you were the only others involved....

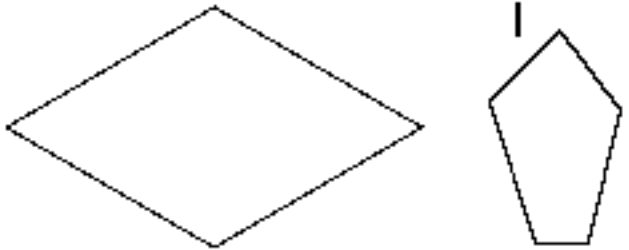
So you want us to revisit a prev ous plot element?



We would like to implement a system for mass production of Starhams.

I m not sure magical curatives and hospitals can really mix

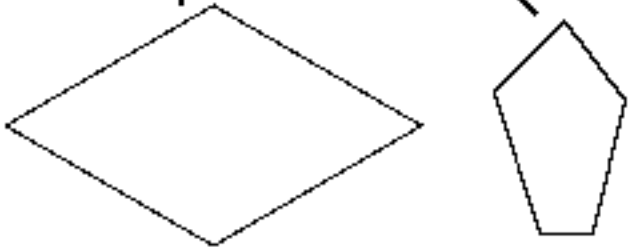
But you can help us produce them?



Things went horribly wrong before The Meat Sentry was the only one who got anything r ght

And you find things that are likely to go wrong irresistible.

We'll take the case!

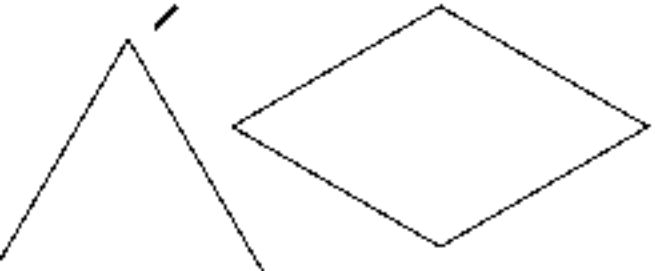


Triangle and Robert

We can't take the case

Why not?

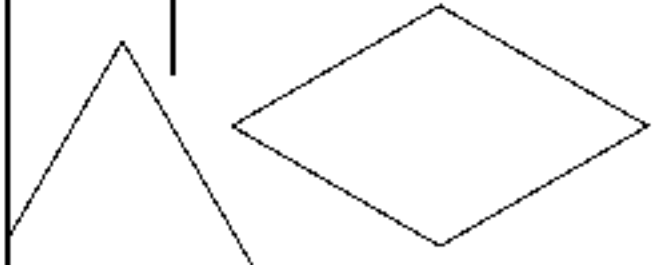
We're filled with drugs We need to think about your proposal clear y



It s not like you have a choice.

Maybe we do and we're ,ust too sedated to see it

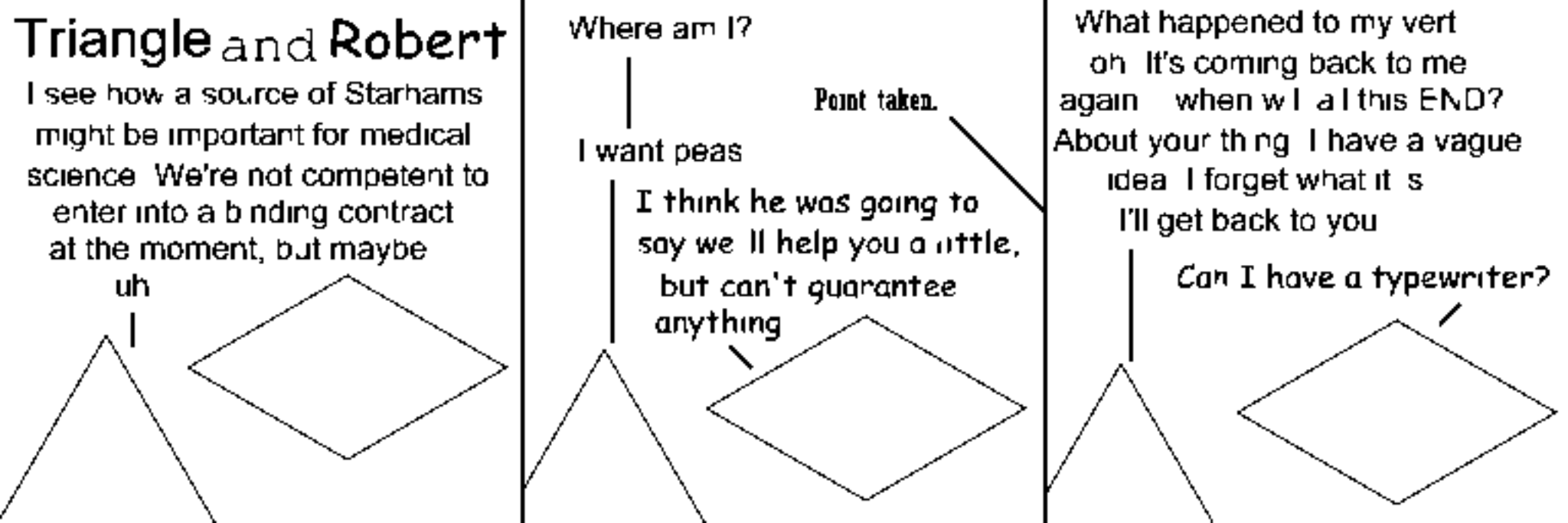
I don't think we can .et you sit here without appropriate painkillers.



Why not? You were going to stop treatment anyway

Let me rephrase I don't think we could contain the ensoing carnage if you were to go without painkillers. You don't handle pain well.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Robert? Was I try ng to figure out how to safe y launch ham nto space or was that another hallucinat on?

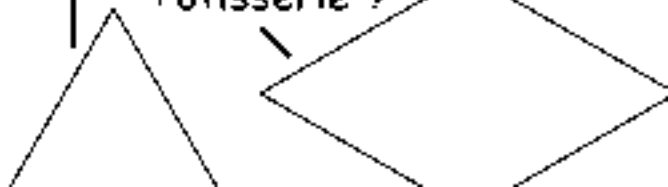
Probably the first one

Oh good you have a typewriter Can you take some d ctation?

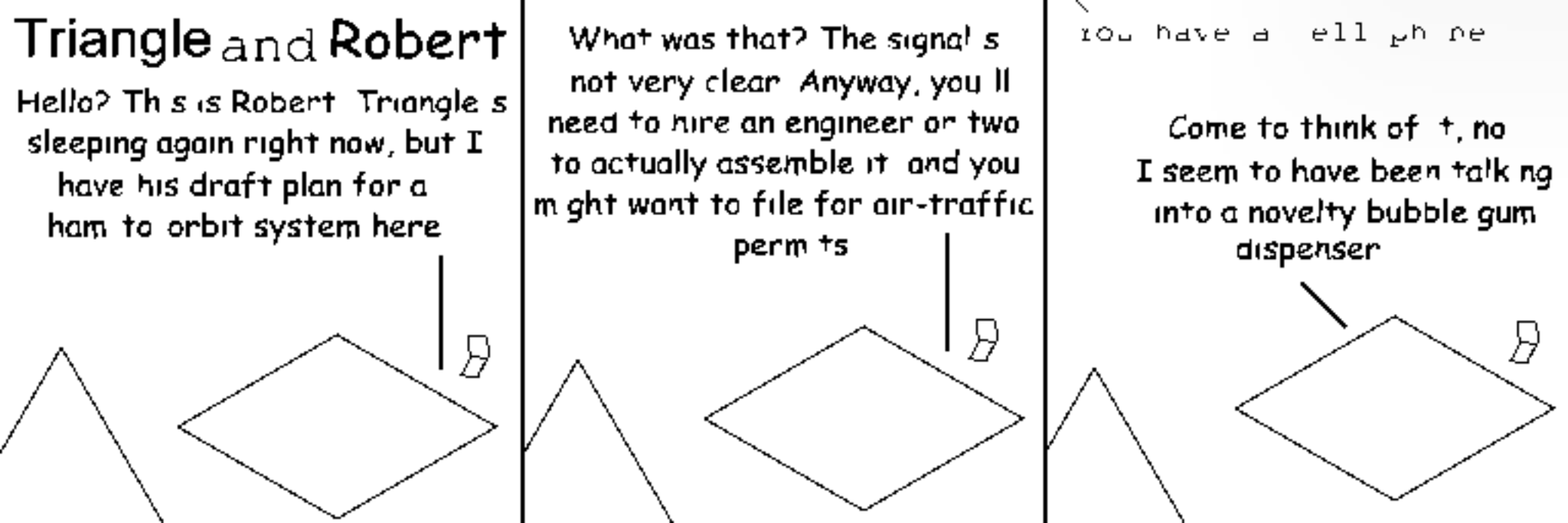
I was work ng on my script go ahead

L nda ment oned a "ra lgun rotisserie" as part of her launch preparations I think I know what she must have meant Ferromagnetic sp t goes through ham Ham goes n railgun First bu ld rotational speed then magnetical y you're not typing

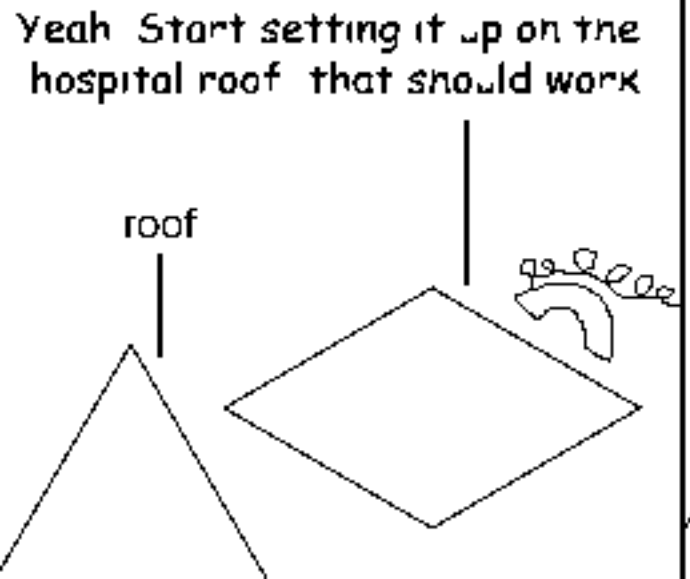
How do you spell rotisserie ?

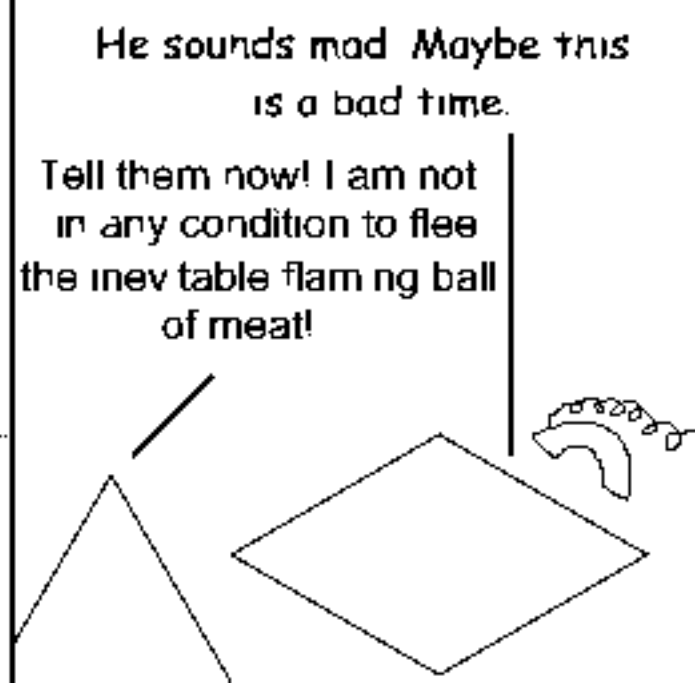


Triangle and Robert

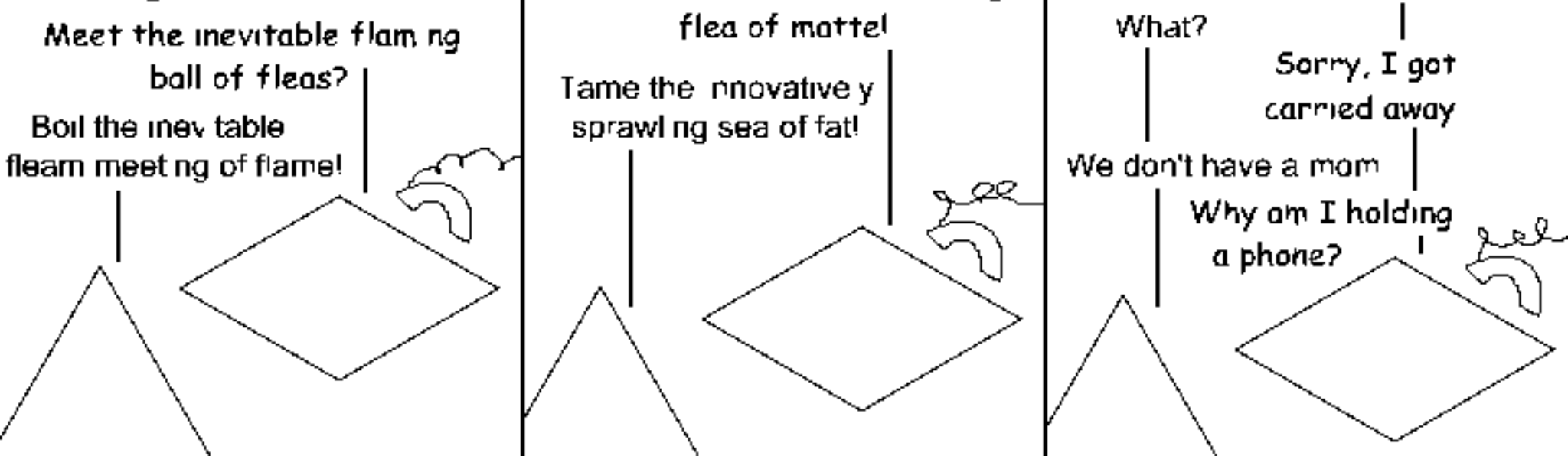


Triangle and Robert

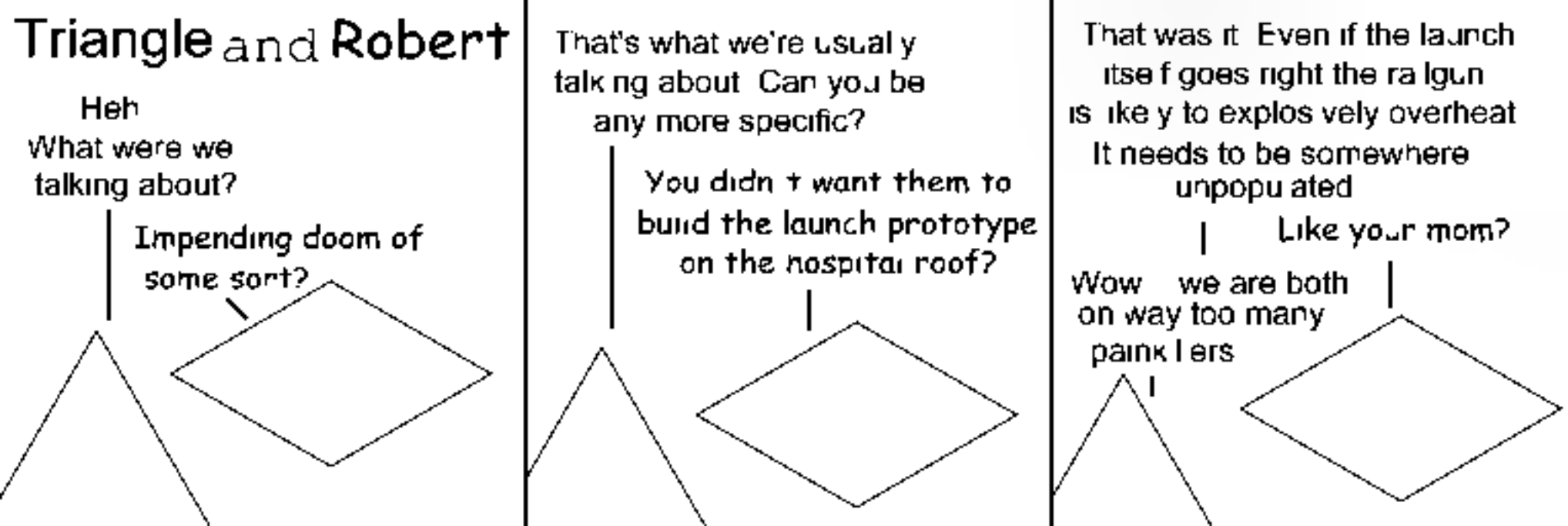




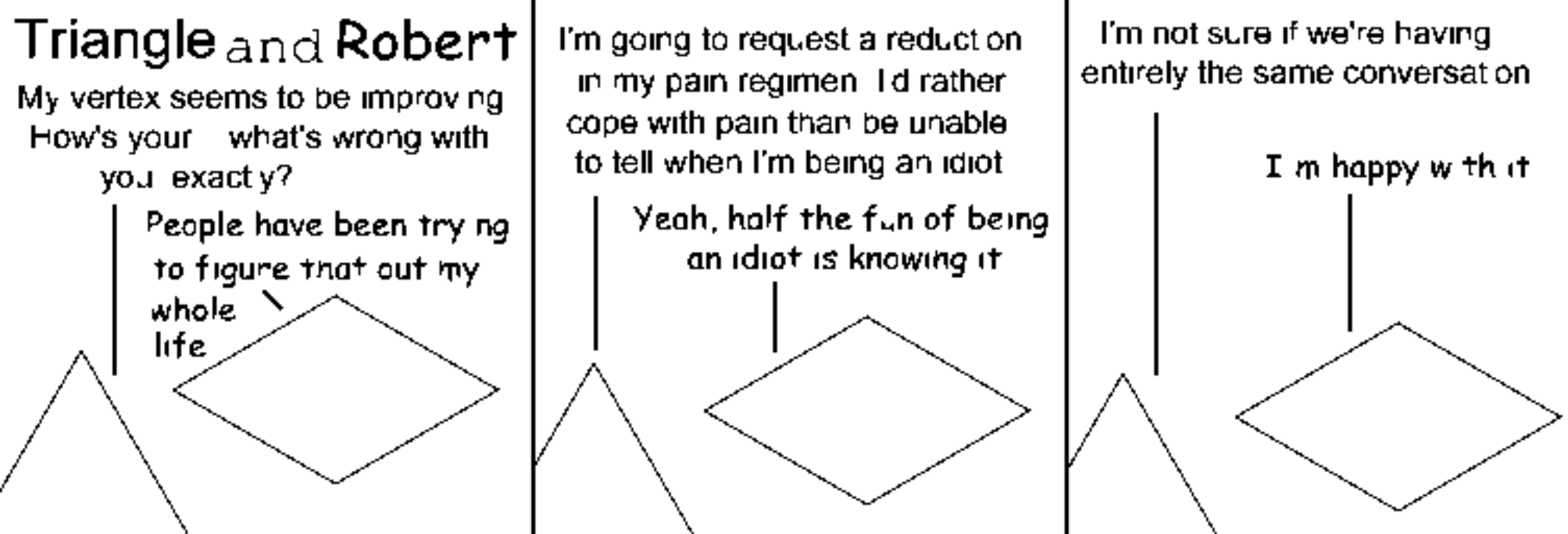
Triangle and Robert



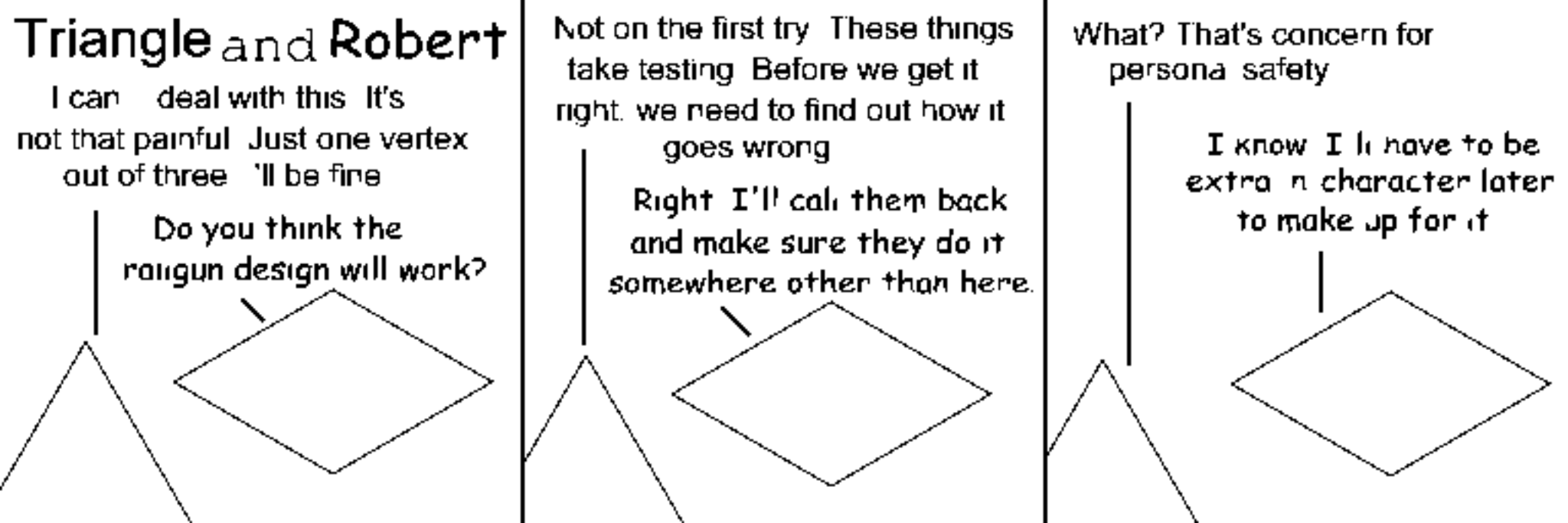
Triangle and Robert



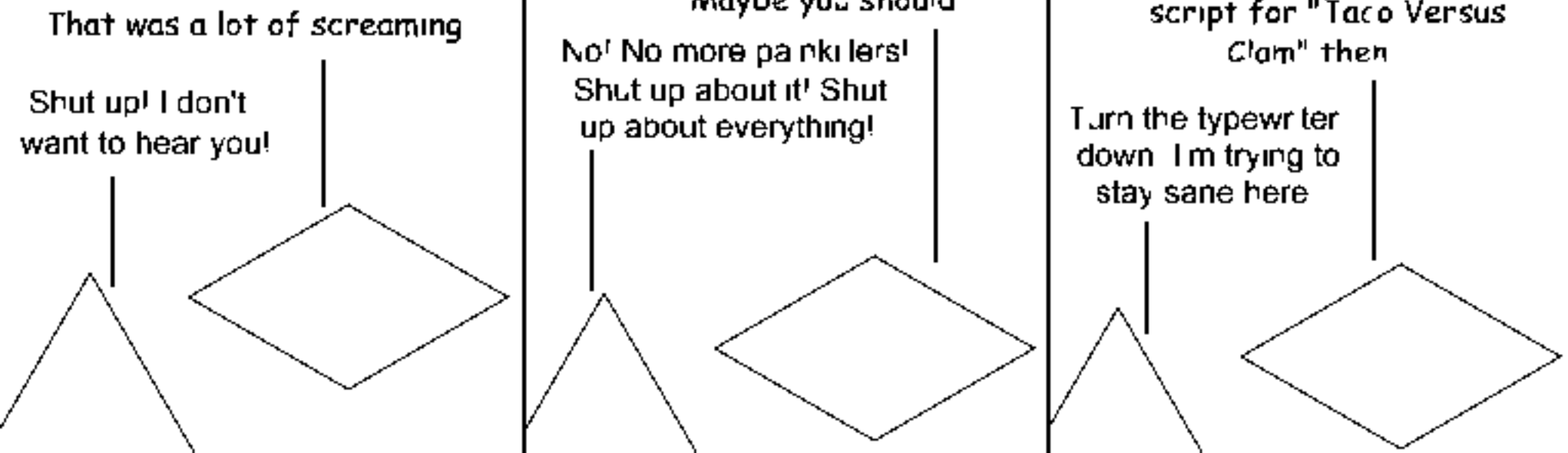
Triangle and Robert



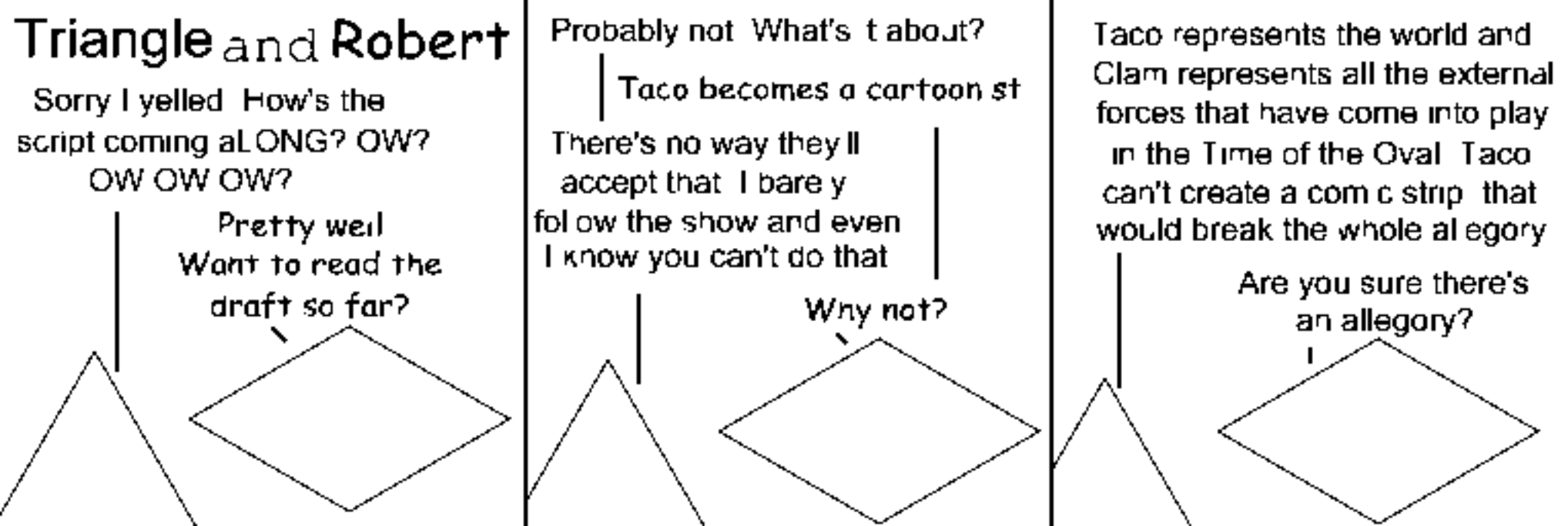
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

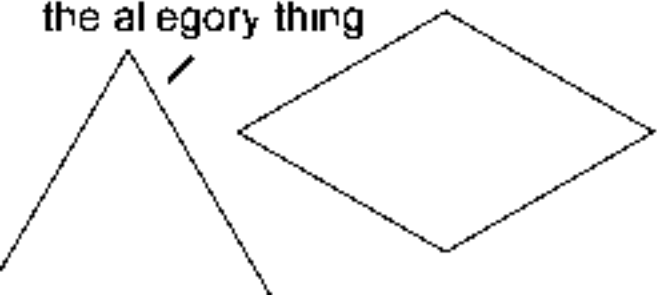


Triangle and Robert

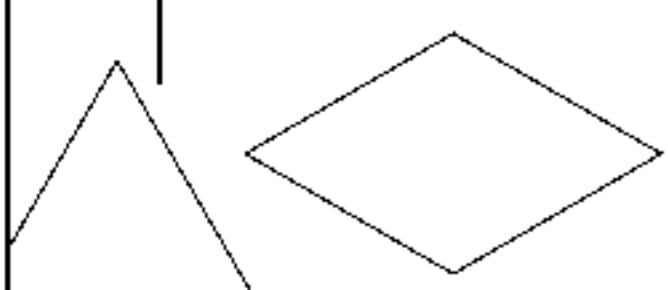
Who sa d that?

I d d

I thought I heard never mind Anyway yes, I m positive about the al egory thing

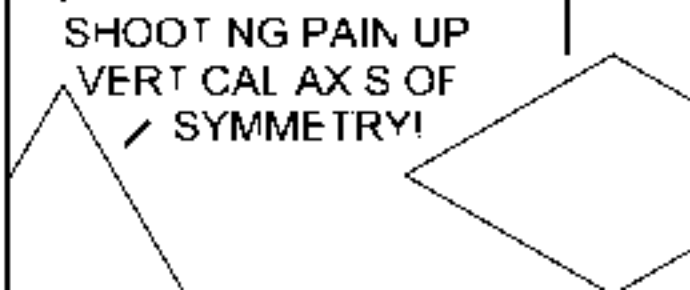


In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if the show was backed wait "Taco Versus Clam is brought to you by Tater Fizz " We KNOW it's backed by the ant - Cartoon st groups!

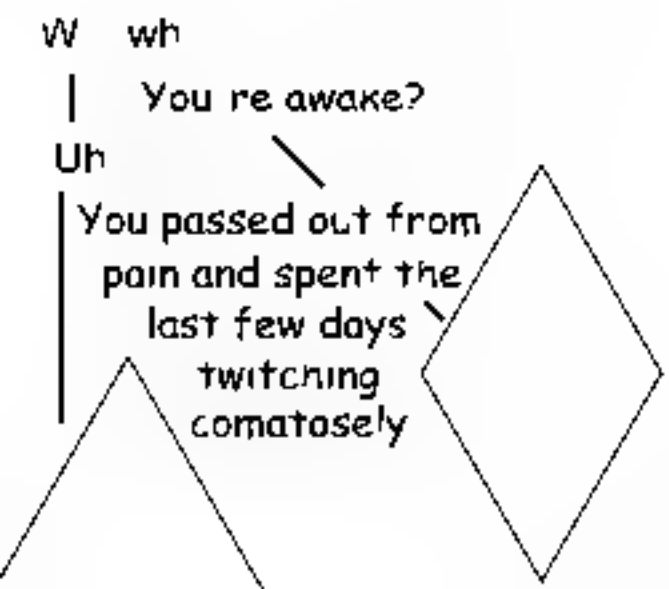


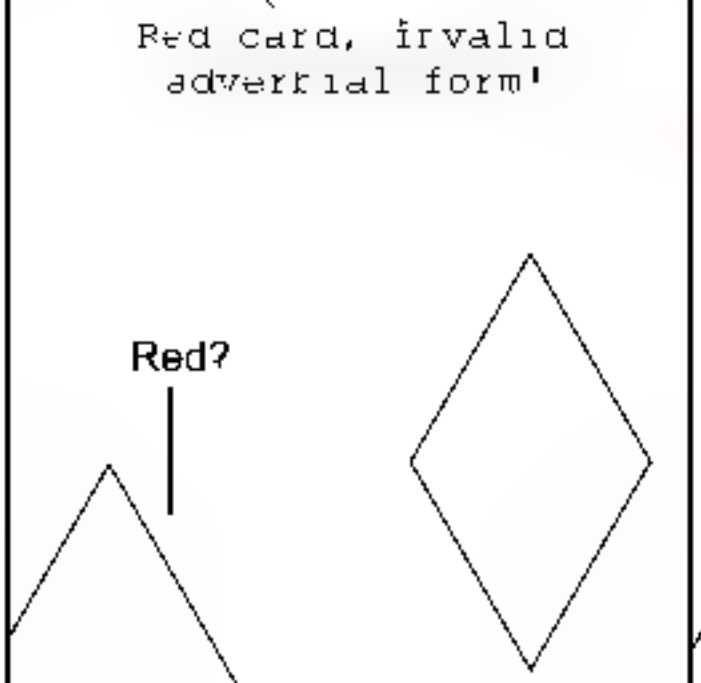
So there's no chance of them even reading this script through Too bad it was a good story

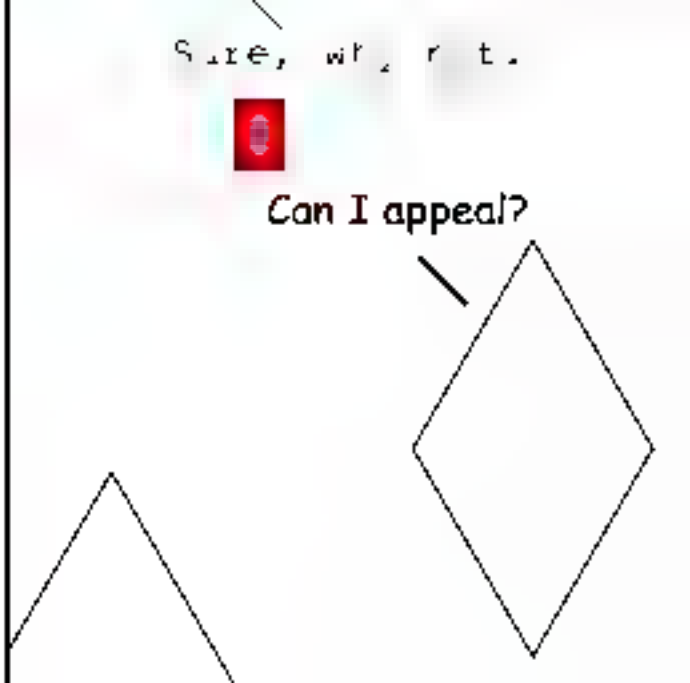
Does it have to be about Taco and Clam? Maybe you' l find another OW SHOOT NG PAIN UP VERT CAL AX S OF SYMMETRY!



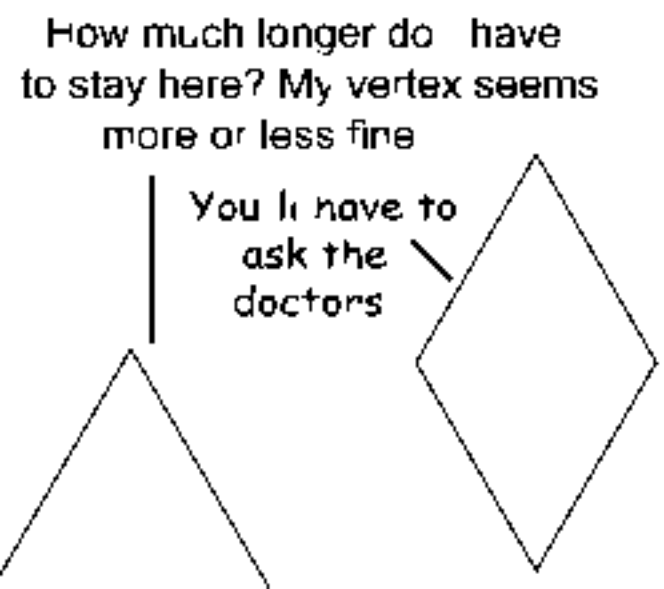
Triangle and Robert

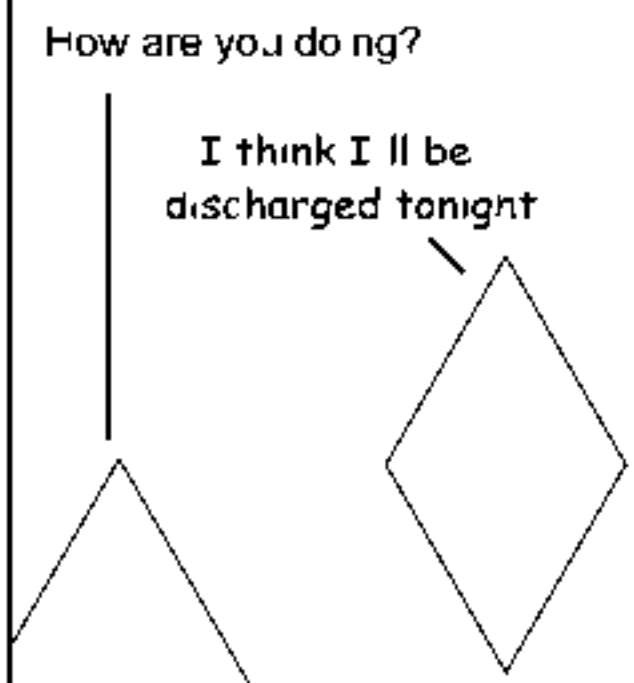


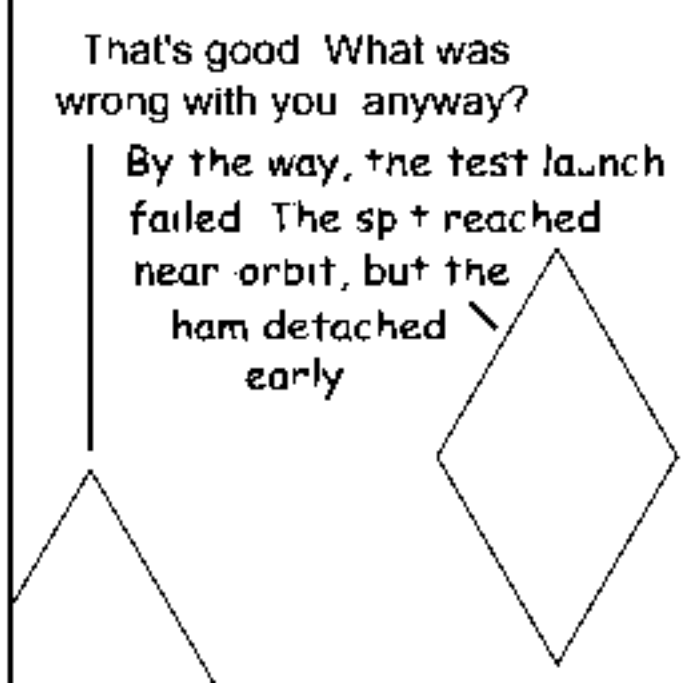




Triangle and Robert



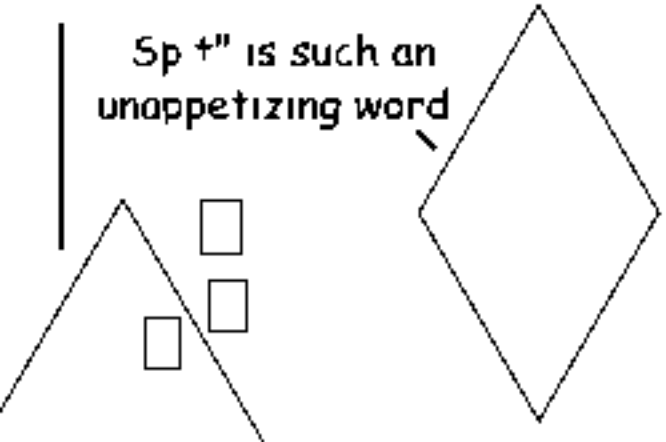




Triangle and Robert

It seems clear enough from the photos The spit was too smooth and the ham sl d

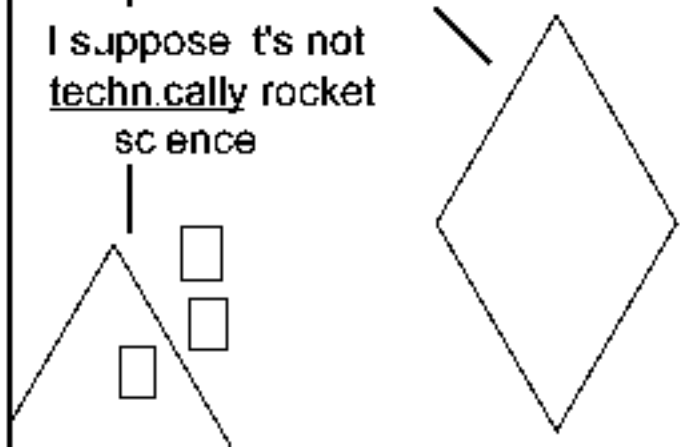
Sp +" is such an unappetizing word



Real y a threaded one wou d be best More of a bo t, in fact

That s dull Can we jazz it up somehow?

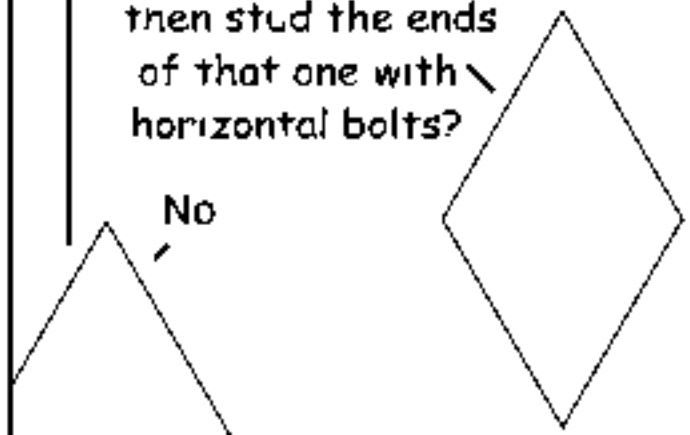
I suppose t's not techn.cally rocket sc ence



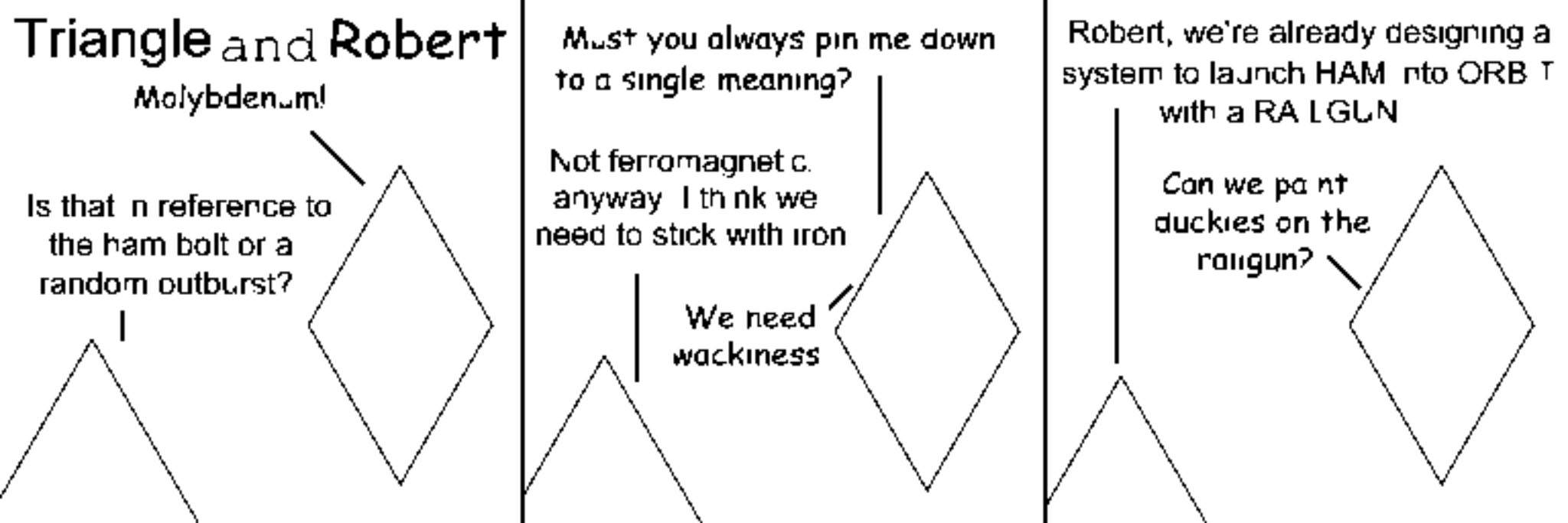
Let s hear your idea

I m still think ng Maybe a second bolt dr ven through the first bolt? And then stud the ends of that one with horizontal bolts?

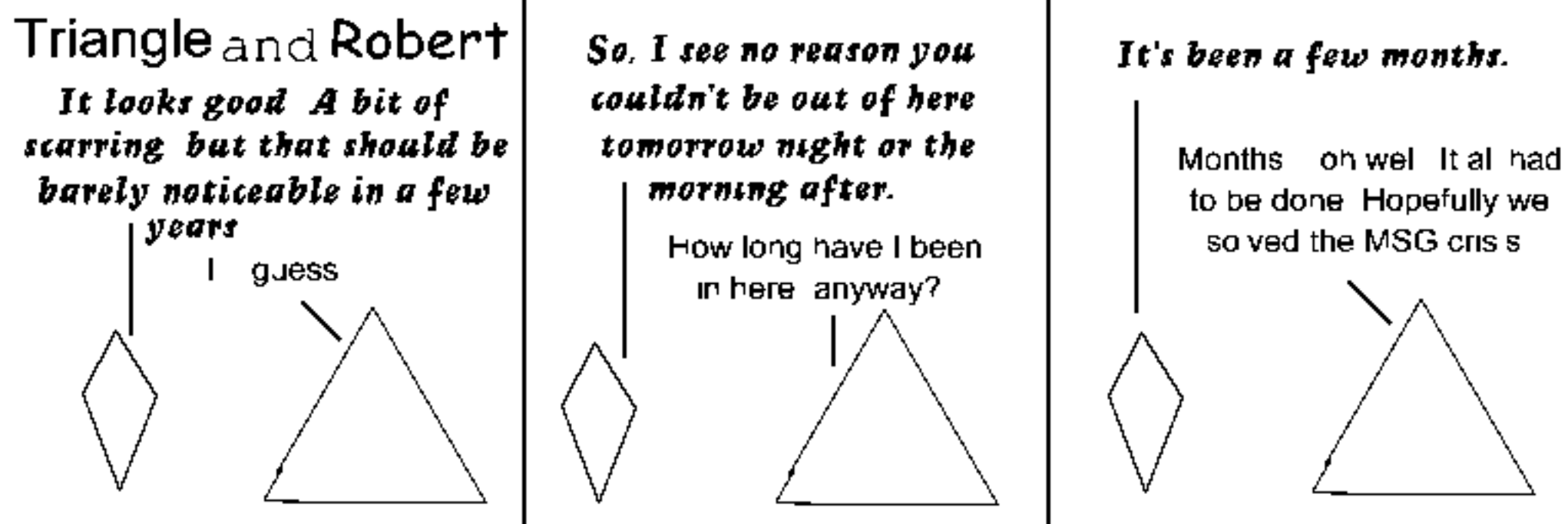
No



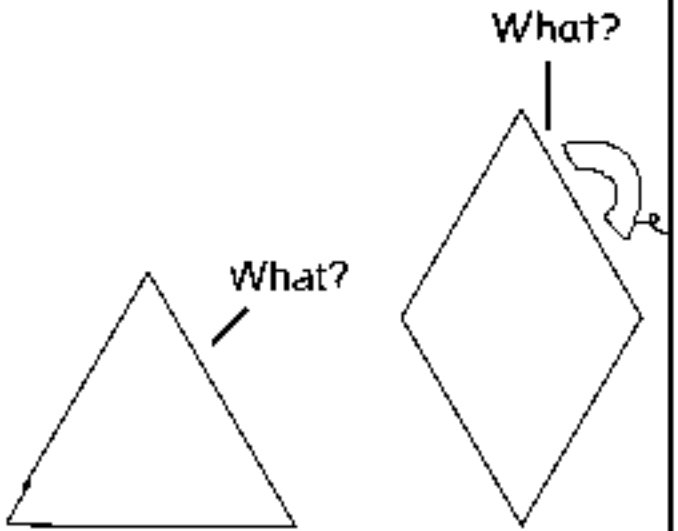
Triangle and Robert

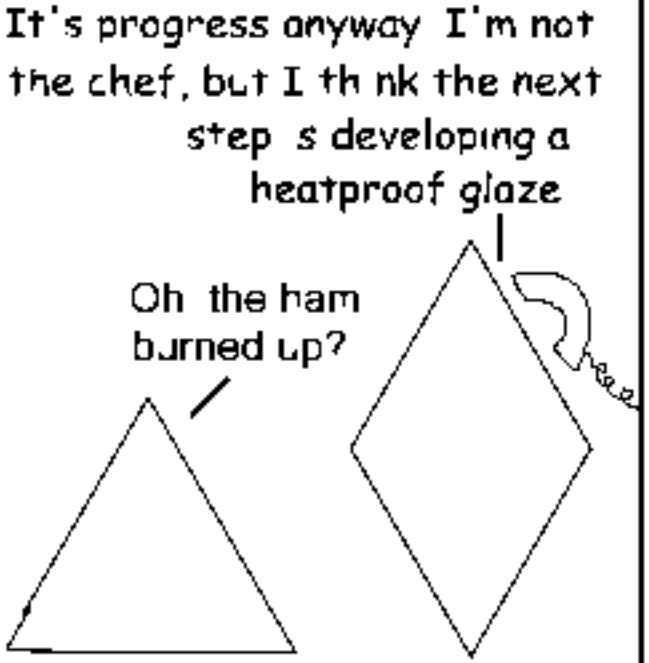


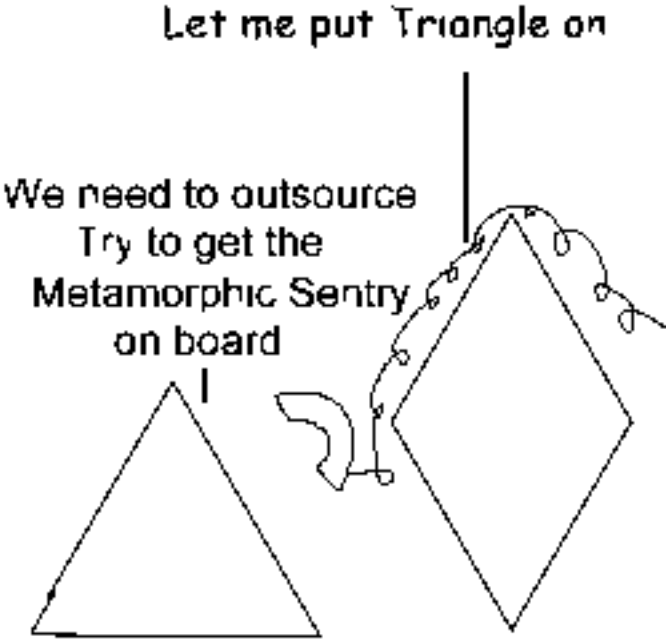
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



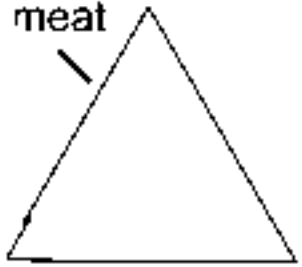




Triangle and Robert

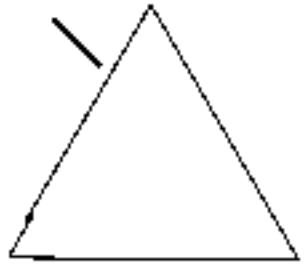
I came, but surely you meant to ask for the Meat Sentry's aid and not mine?

She sn't a friend You are, and what we need isn't str ct y meat



I was under the impression that this was a paid subcontracting

It is It's a so not work for an unpredictable berserker We need a heat-resistant ham glaze not the destruction of a six-mi e rad us



It was not a radius The damage was limited to a single twelve-mile line segment

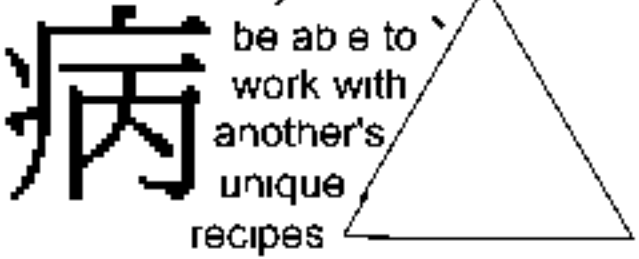
What s th s now? I ,ust meant in general

Then mind not

Triangle and Robert

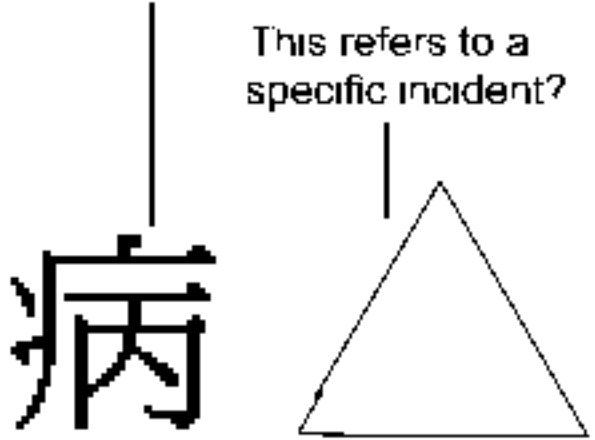
We must not copy the recipes of the Meat Sentry even accidentally I speak from experience

Right the way the food groups are divided one Sentry wouldn't be able to work with another's unique recipes



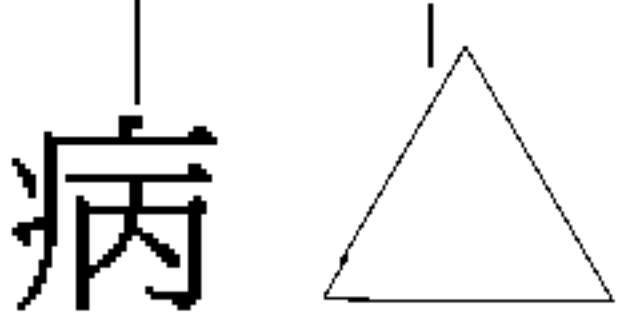
I don't know about that I just do not wish her to hammer me into the ground.

This refers to a specific incident?

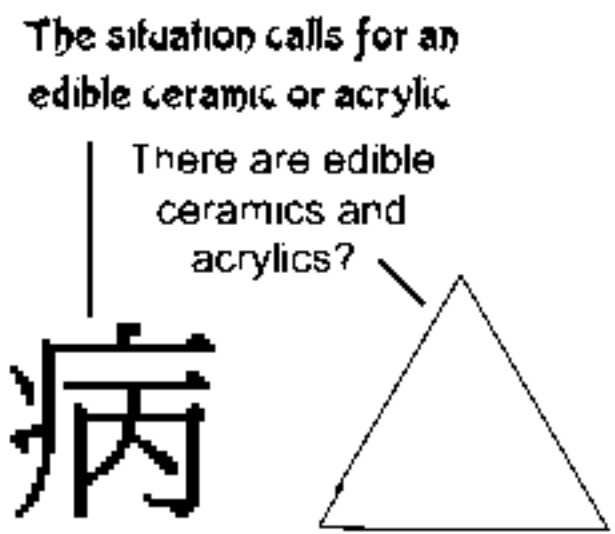


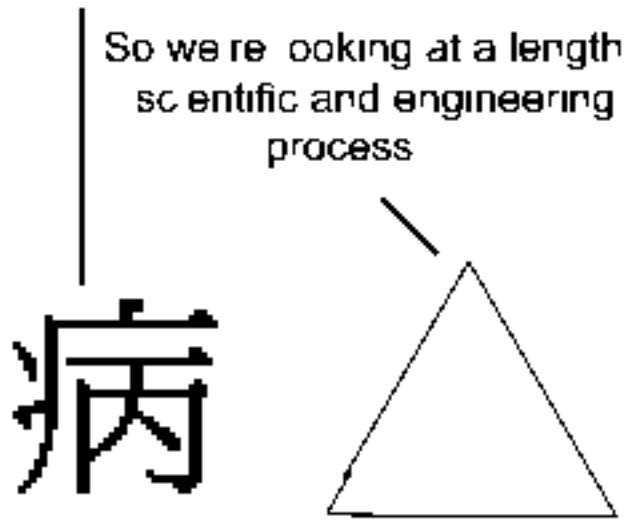
The Vegetable Sentry should have known better than to manifest the barbecue sauce of another

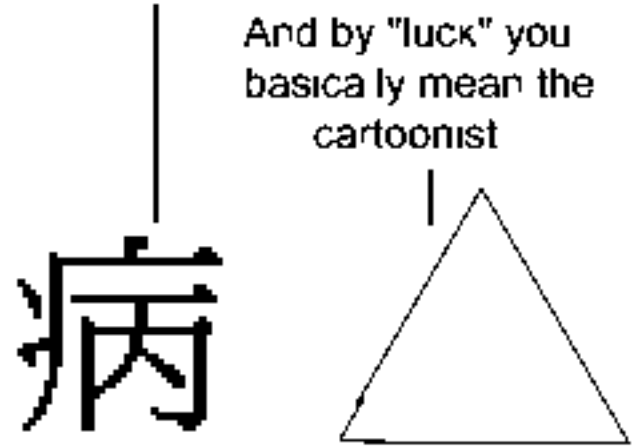
Barbecue yeah, that would set her off



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Fellow Sentry, I come seeking your aid!

Gaze not upon me, mortal!

病

Were Starhams to be mass-produced, the benefit to the world has the potential to be great. I wish to devise a glaze capable of protecting a launched ham from the hazards of the upper atmosphere

病

You meddle in forces too dangerous. Your plan would serve to hasten the glutamic nascence. Do not think the MSG gone forever, and play not with the magic of strange salts.

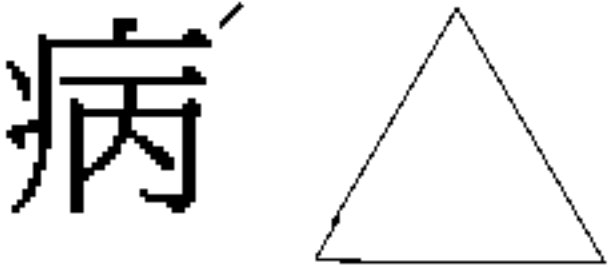
Thank you, Orpuddex.

病

Triangle and Robert

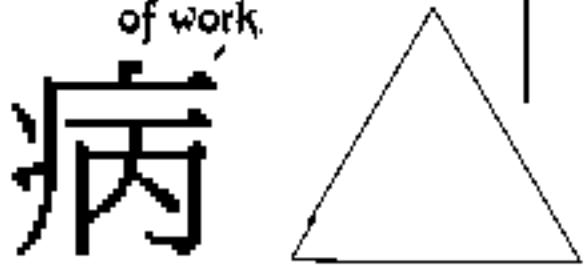
So you're saying f we make Starhams we'll be strengthening the MSG entity

Yes The risk should not be taken



Robert and I have a comm ssion to fulfill How else w ll we pay our hospita b l s?

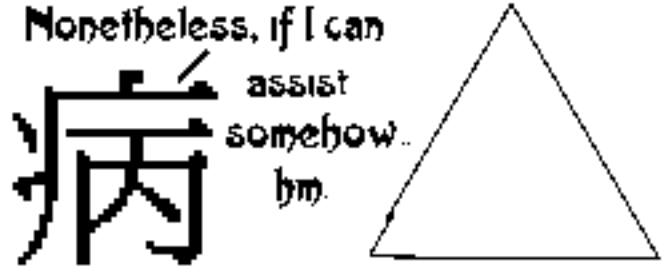
I understand your situation. To antagonize a hospital would be a grave error in your line of work.



My financial resources are limited, and those of the Sentries as a whole are more so.

I wouldn't want you to pay for us

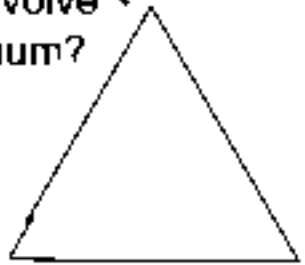
Nor would I. Nonetheless, if I can assist somehow.. hm.



Triangle and Robert

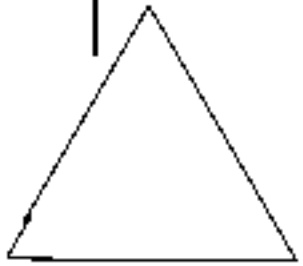
Perhaps, though Starhams are not safely available, some other means of magical curative could fulfill your commission

Don't all cuisine-magic cures involve sodium?



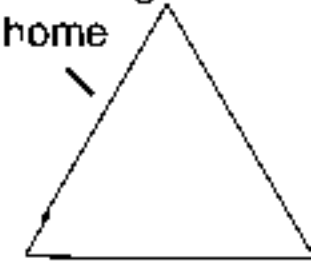
To some degree, but if we do not involve meats there should be no risk of glutamate formation

If you're suggesting Startofu think shou d stab you now



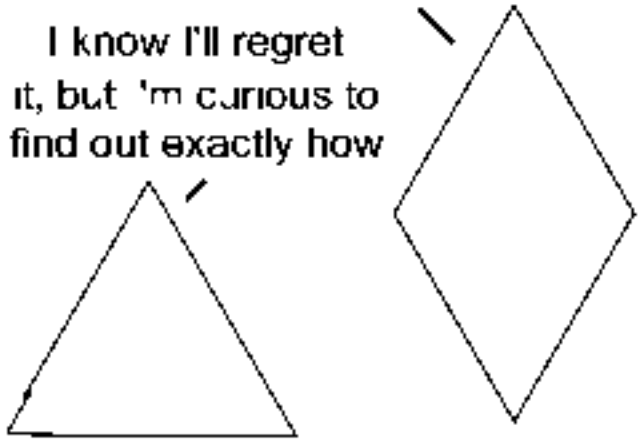
No, substitution of meat is not the key Another tactic entire y it seems as though I should know the answer to this matter, but it eludes me momentarily

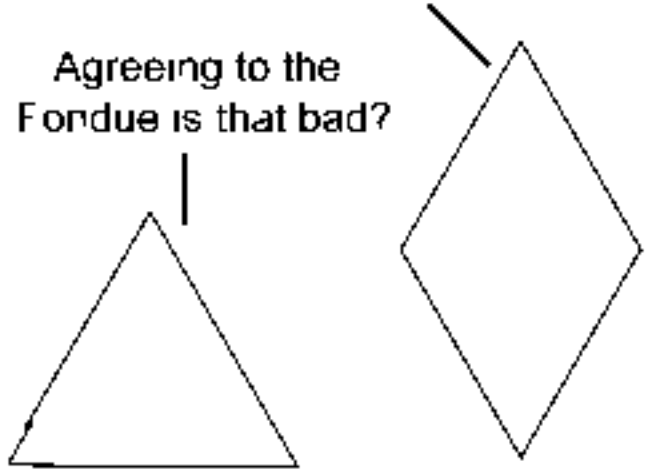
It's the antisept c fumes I'll be glad to go home

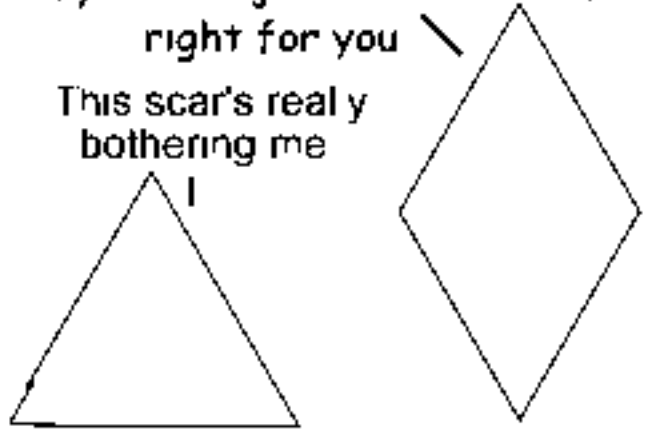


Triangle and Robert
May I make a suggestion?
Only if it has no connection whatsoever with the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses
病
Wait
Let's do it
What?
病
This discussion's been dragging on for too many strips Let's just come to a conclusion and run with it
But last time
That won't happen again It was too improbable to even happen once
病

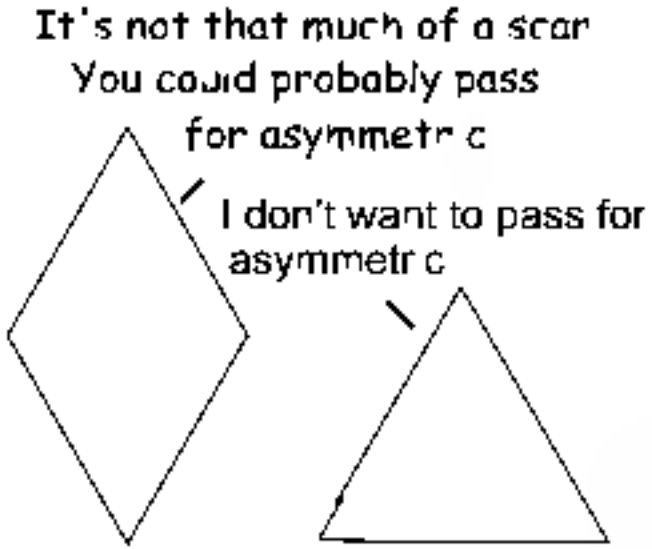
Triangle and Robert

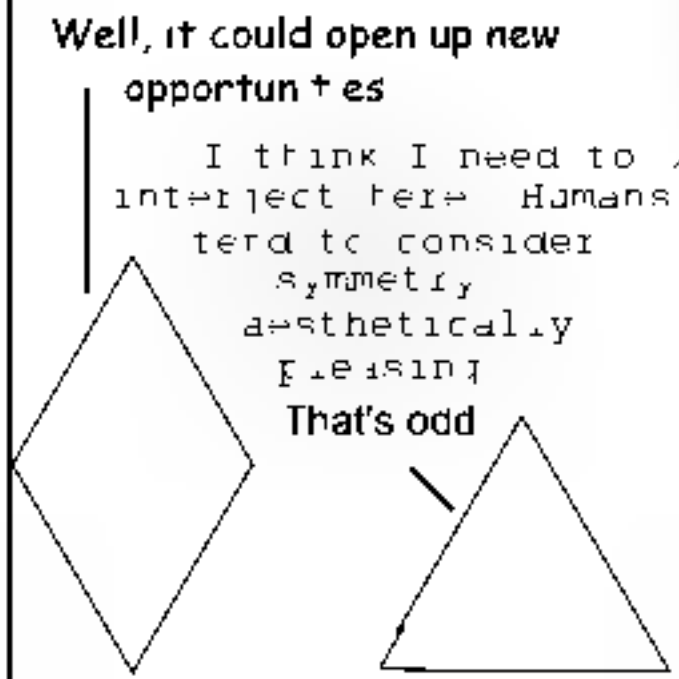


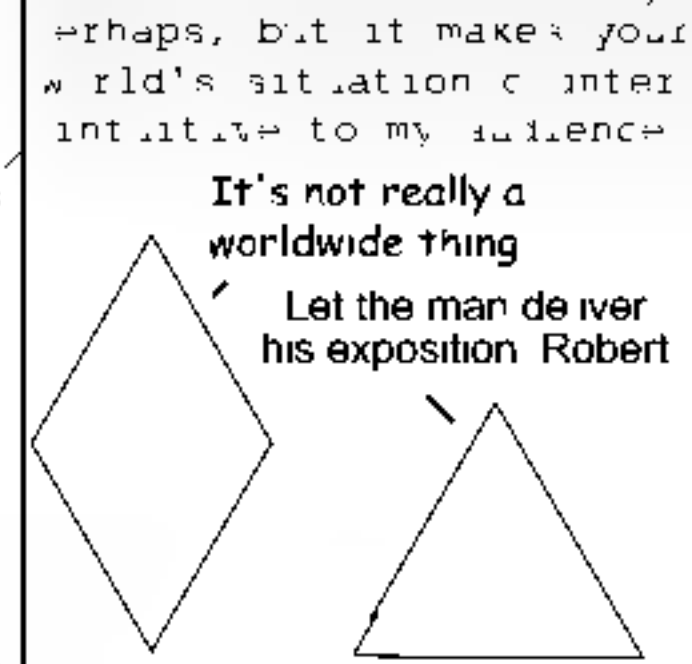




Triangle and Robert

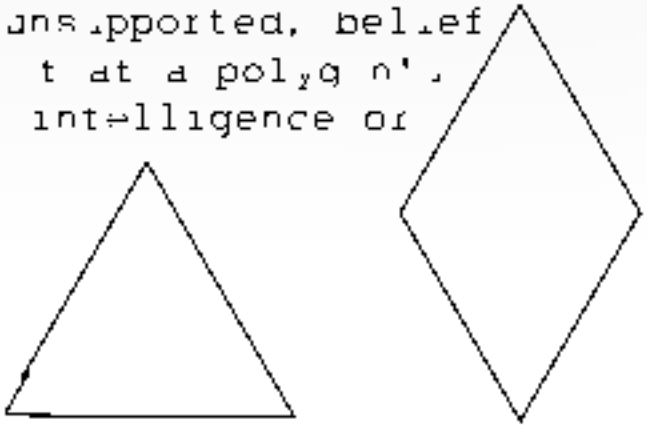




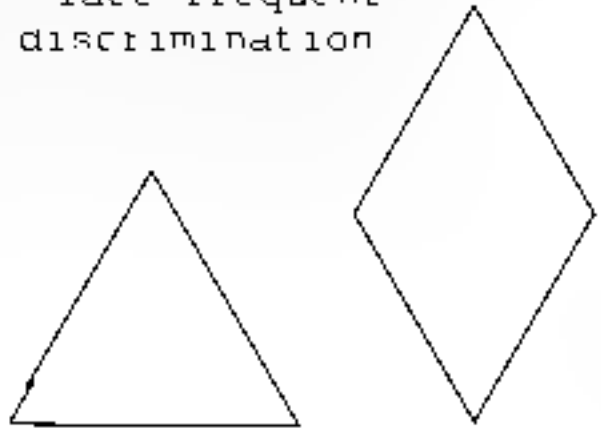


Triangle and Robert

Among polygons, it is a somewhat commonly held, but scientifically unsupported, belief that a polygon's intelligence or

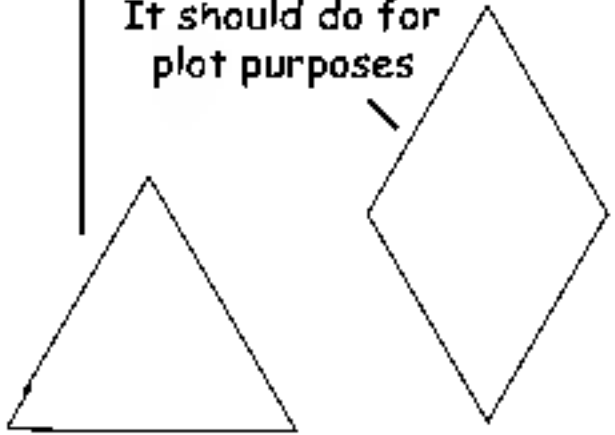


virtue is related to the information content of the polygon's external shape. Symmetric polygons thus face frequent discrimination

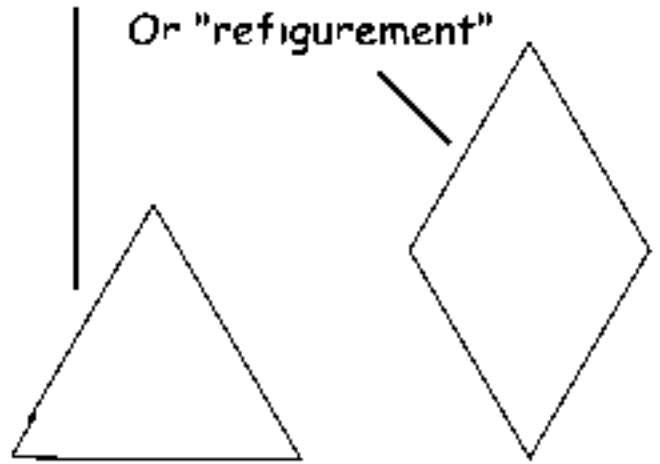


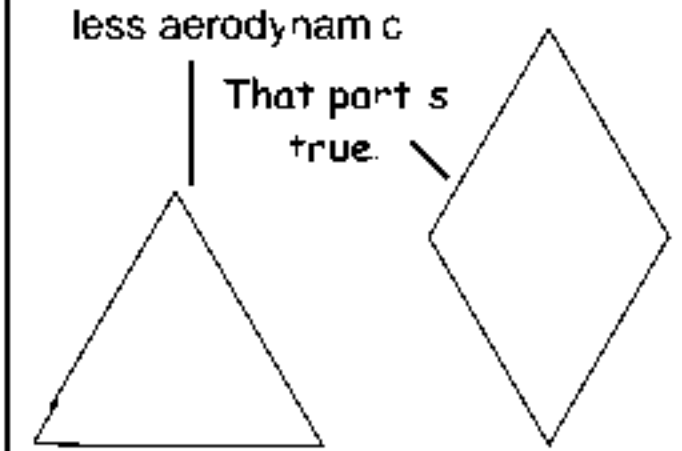
You've done a lot of oversimplifying in this comic but that glosses over so much I don't know where to begin

It should do for plot purposes

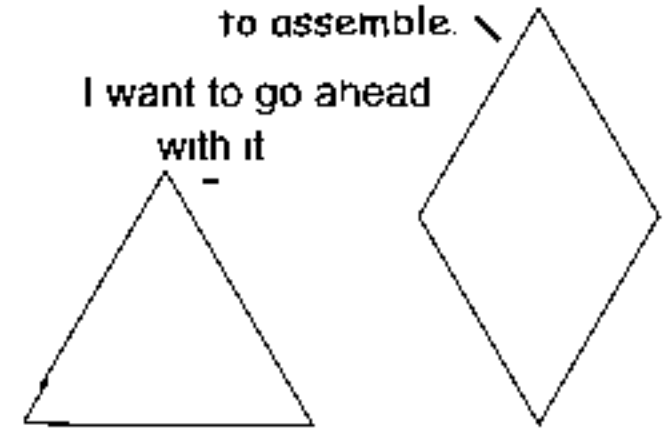


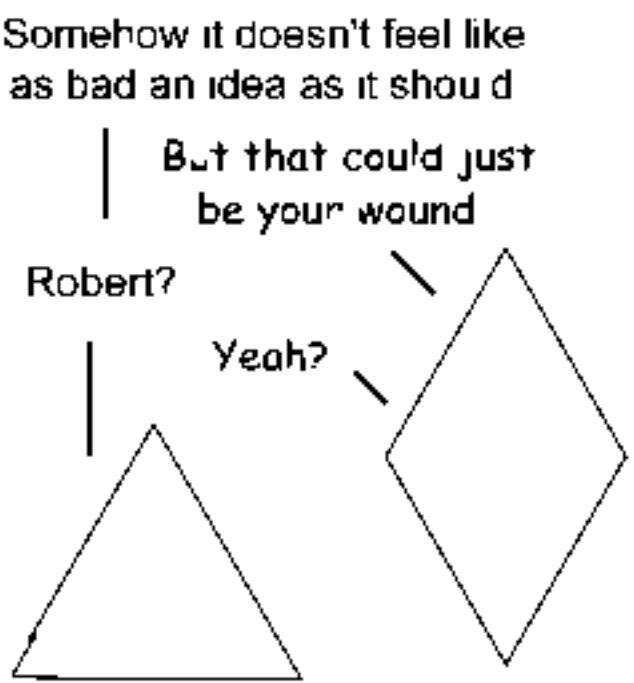
Triangle and Robert

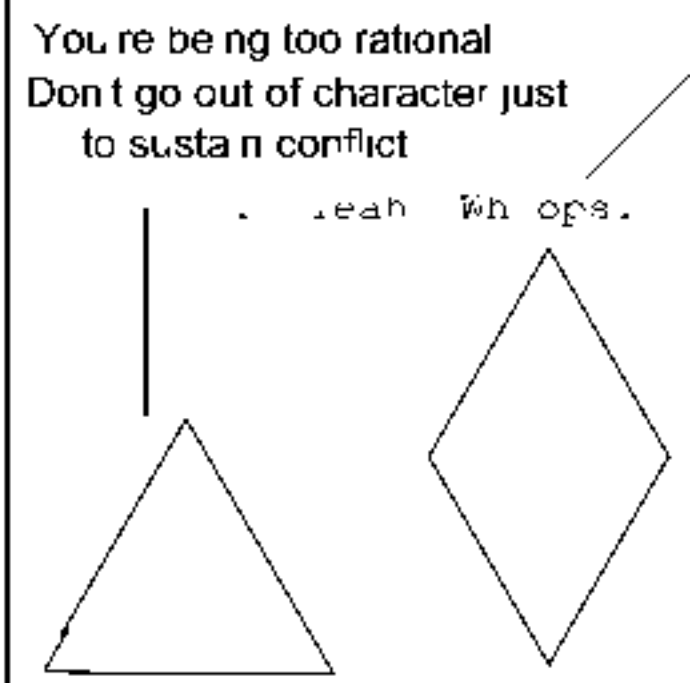


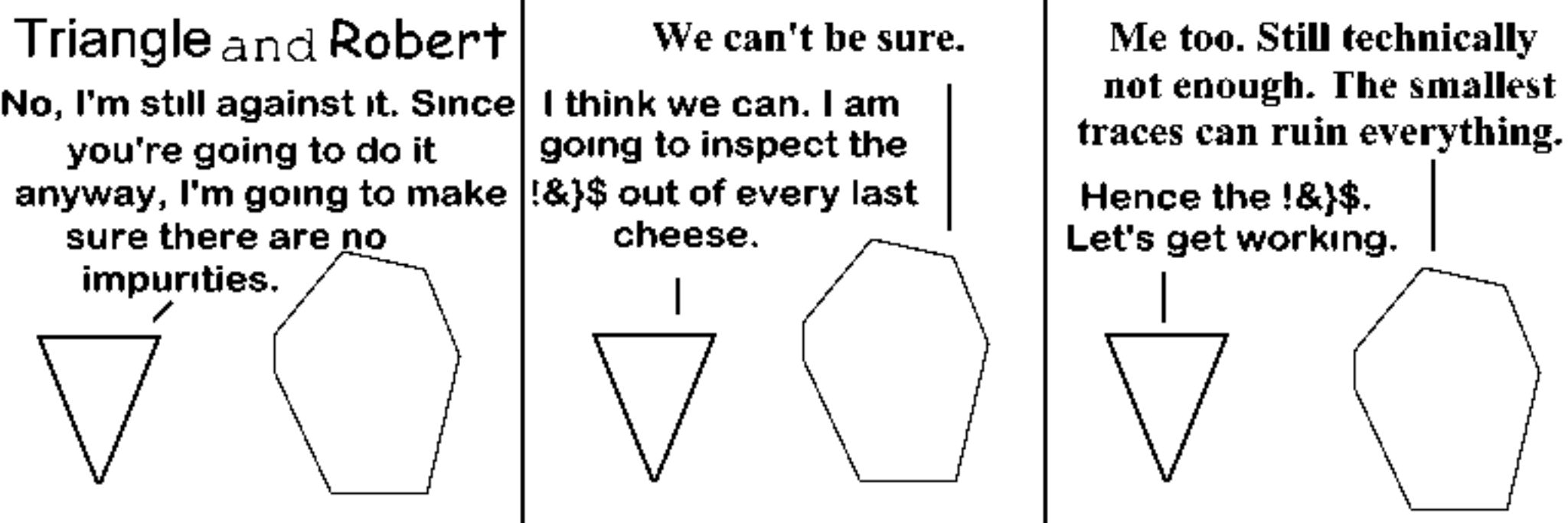


Triangle and Robert





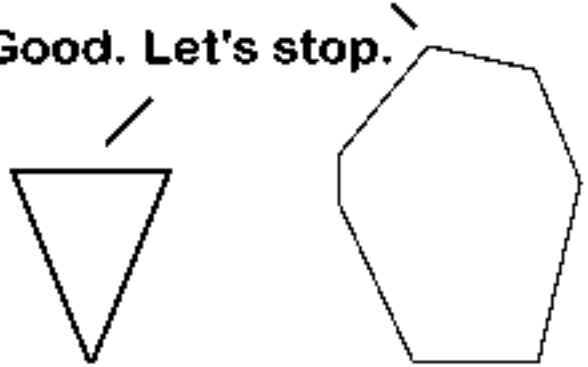



Triangle and Robert
No, I'm still against it. Since you're going to do it anyway, I'm going to make sure there are no impurities.
We can't be sure.
I think we can. I am going to inspect the !&}$ out of every last cheese.
Me too. Still technically not enough. The smallest traces can ruin everything.
Hence the !&}$. Let's get working.

Triangle and Robert

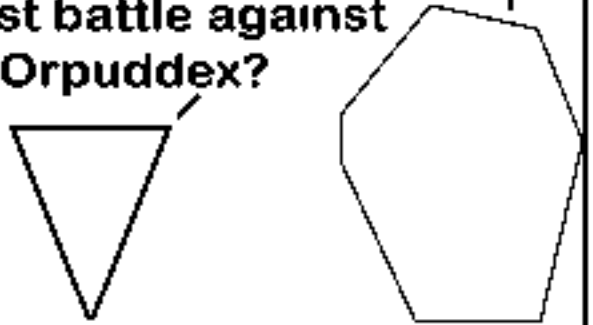
The cheeses are gathered, measured, and inspected. Suddenly, I'm hesitant.

Good. Let's stop.



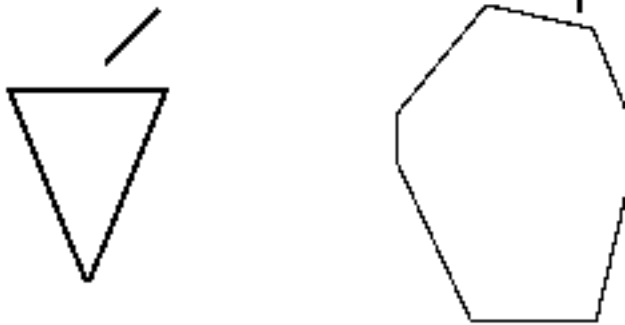
I can't. Whatever the reasons for the Fondue, it must be the key to my past.

Was your memory this screwed up before the first battle against Orpuddex?

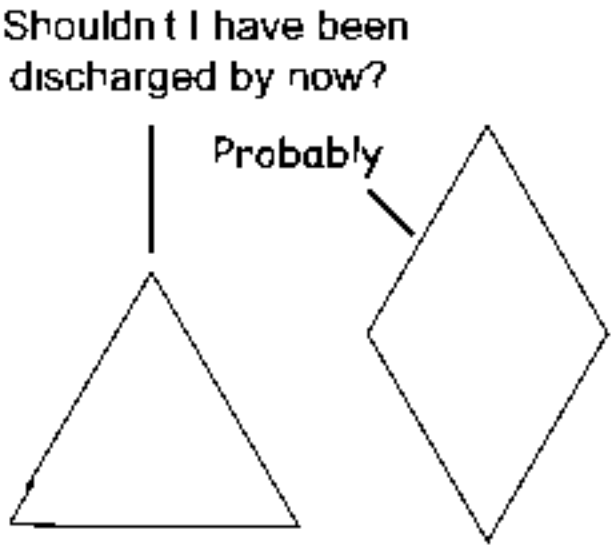


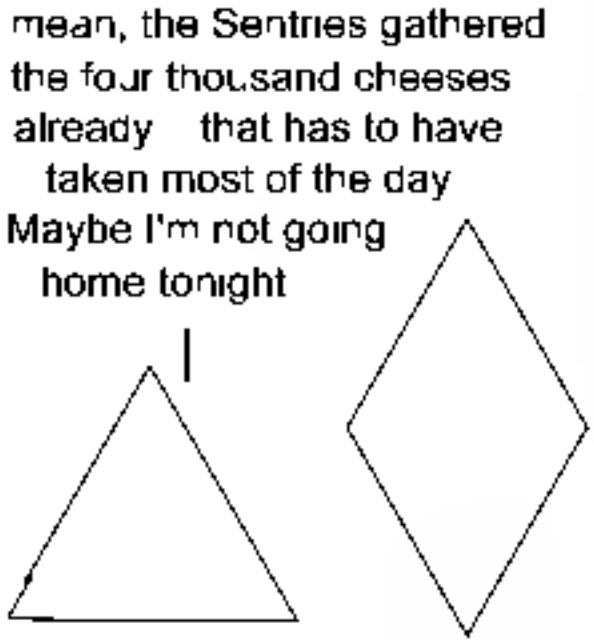
I can't remember.

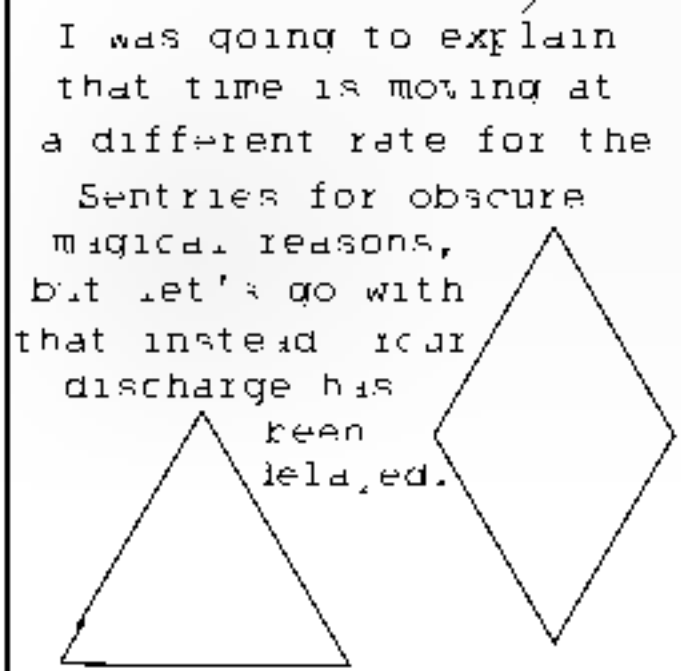
I think we should check something before we begin the melting. Does Orpuddex have a phone?

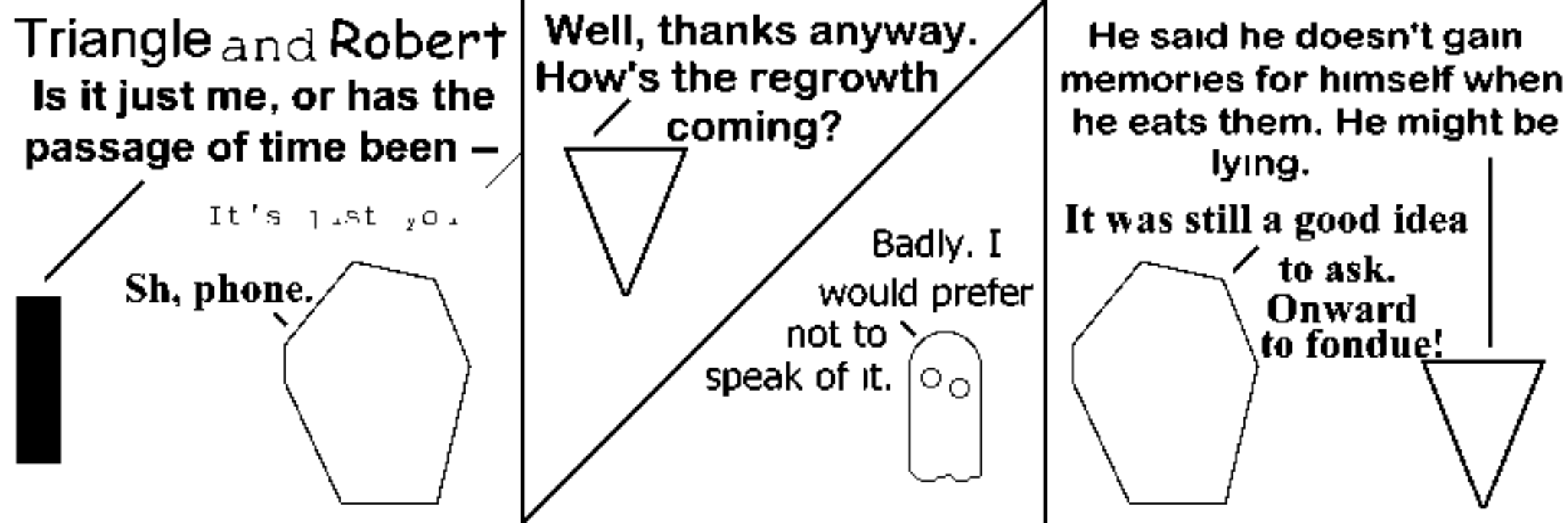


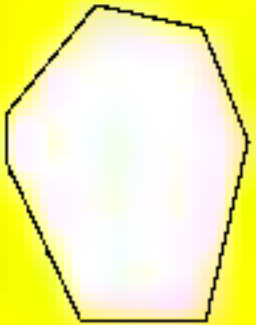
Triangle and Robert








Triangle and Robert
Is it just me, or has the passage of time been –
It's just you
Sh, phone.
Well, thanks anyway. How's the regrowth coming?
Badly. I would prefer not to speak of it.
He said he doesn't gain memories for himself when he eats them. He might be lying.
It was still a good idea to ask. Onward to fondue!


Again I have been created. I am the Fondue of the Four Thousand.
Have I done correctly this time?

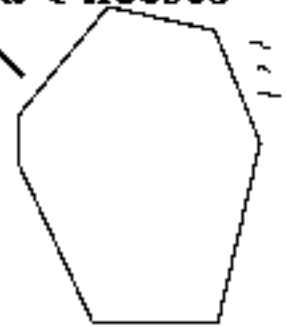
Fear not, for my substance is pure. What is your desire?
Who am I? Or more, who was I before I became who I am?

You bore my recipe well, Sentry of Dairy. For one mortal to bear such a burden and suffer only relatively mild schizoid episodes is truly remarkable. Now, as to your lost past...

Triangle and Robert

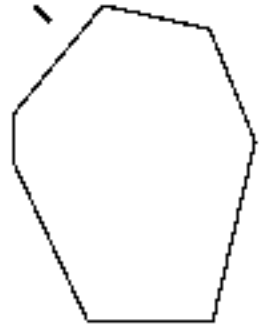
Hey! You're not dead!

We must feast tonight, lest the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses spoil uneaten.



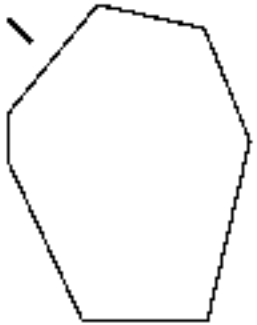
I'm up for it. So... did it... speak to you?

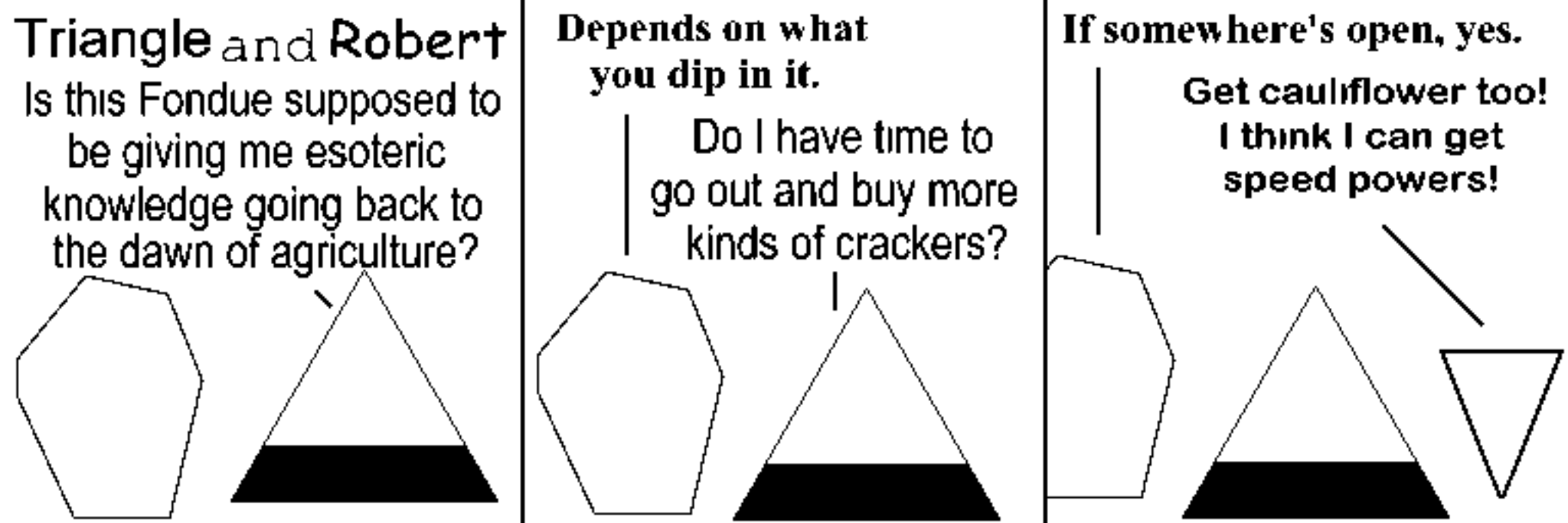
Yes. This will also be a farewell feast. I leave in the morning.



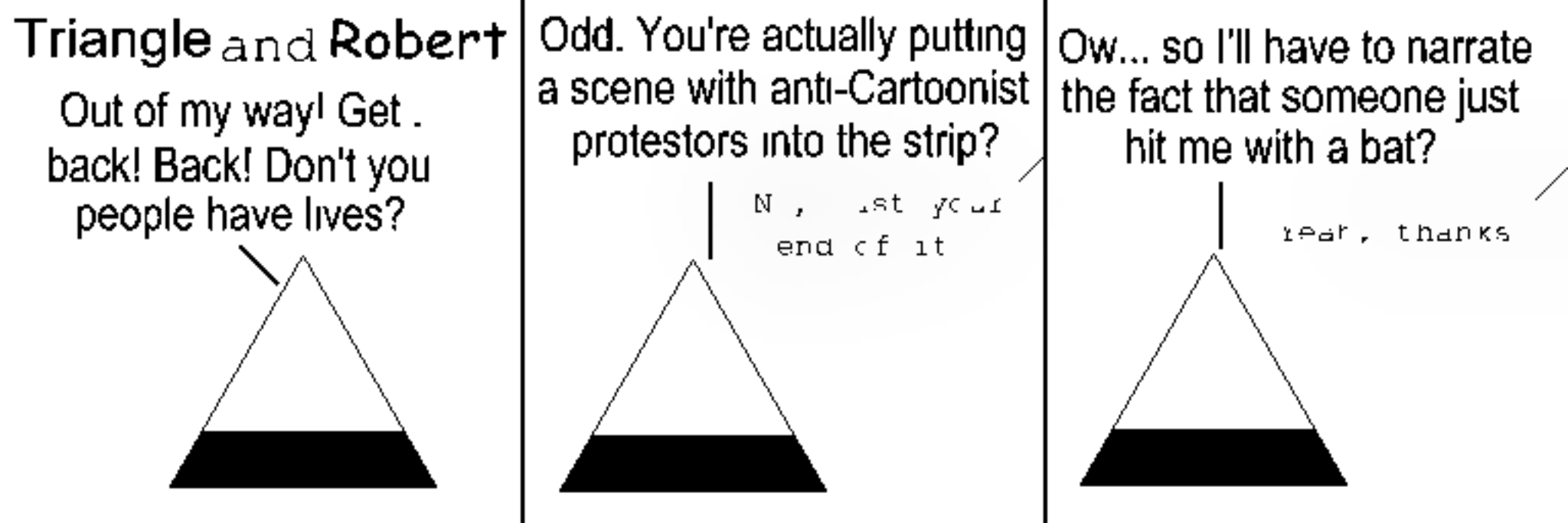
Where?

Nowhere of importance to you. It is not Sentry business. Whether I succeed or fail, we will meet again. Eat now.

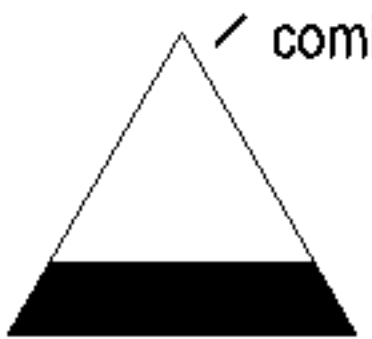


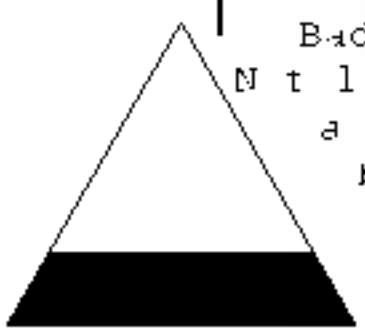

Triangle and Robert
Is this Fondue supposed to be giving me esoteric knowledge going back to the dawn of agriculture?
Depends on what you dip in it.
Do I have time to go out and buy more kinds of crackers?
If somewhere's open, yes.
Get cauliflower too! I think I can get speed powers!

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Did you just hear six to eleven simultaneous stabbings?

Yes.

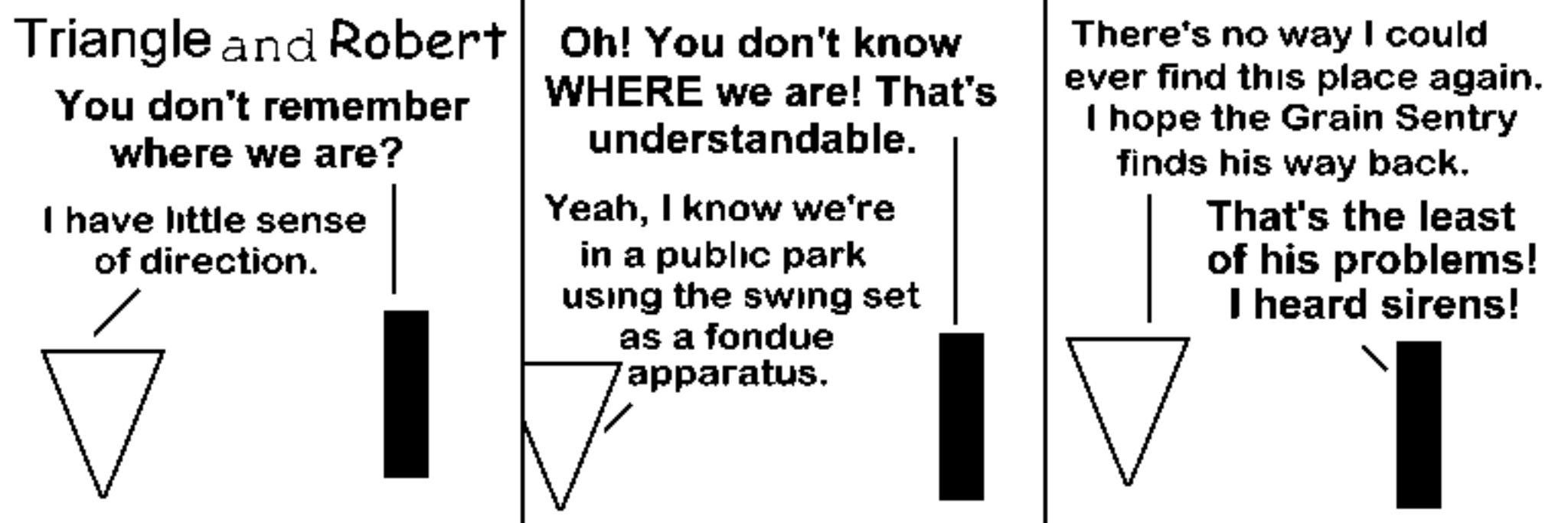
I guess the mob didn't want to let Grain get through.

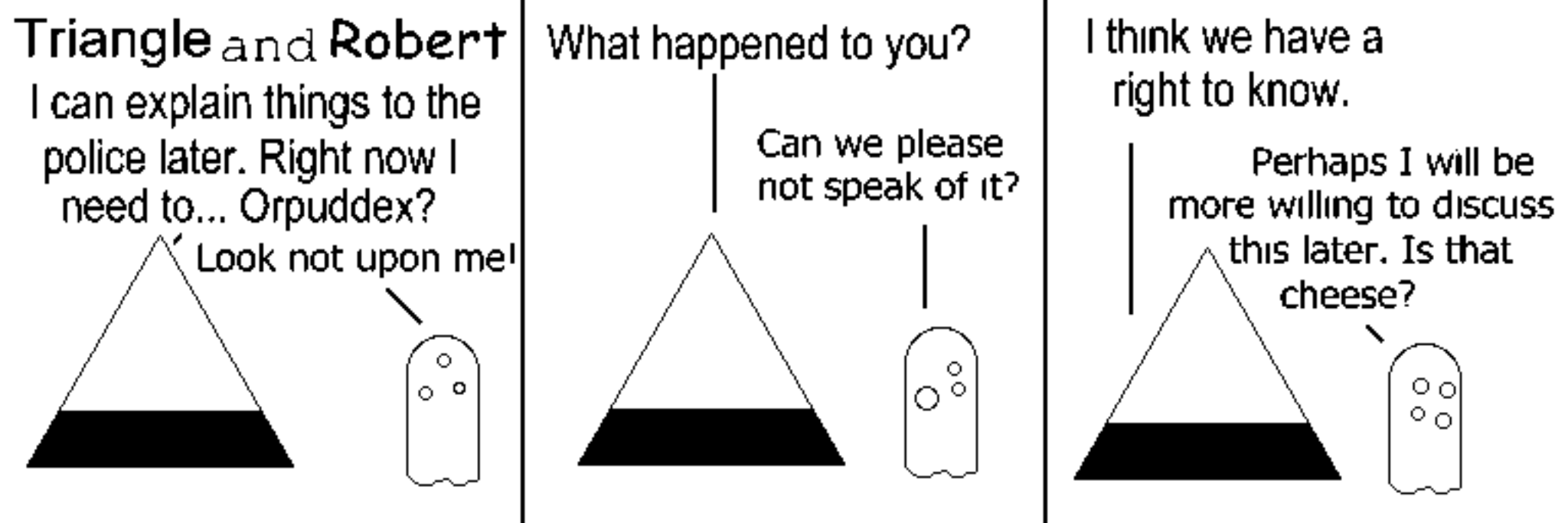
At least this time I wasn't the stabber!

I was hoping to gloss this over, but it seems important now. Where exactly is this whole scene taking place

Your incompetence continues to startle me.

Actually, I don't know either.

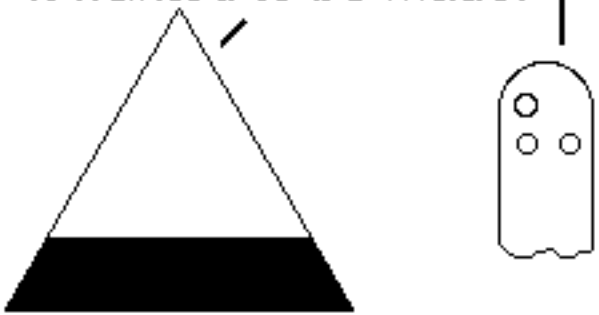

Triangle and Robert
You don't remember where we are?
I have little sense of direction.
Oh! You don't know WHERE we are! That's understandable.
Yeah, I know we're in a public park using the swing set as a fondue apparatus.
There's no way I could ever find this place again. I hope the Grain Sentry finds his way back.
That's the least of his problems! I heard sirens!


Triangle and Robert
I can explain things to the police later. Right now I need to... Orpuddex?
Look not upon me!
What happened to you?
Can we please not speak of it?
I think we have a right to know.
Perhaps I will be more willing to discuss this later. Is that cheese?

Triangle and Robert

I find it difficult to believe that the Fondue was created and the city still stands.

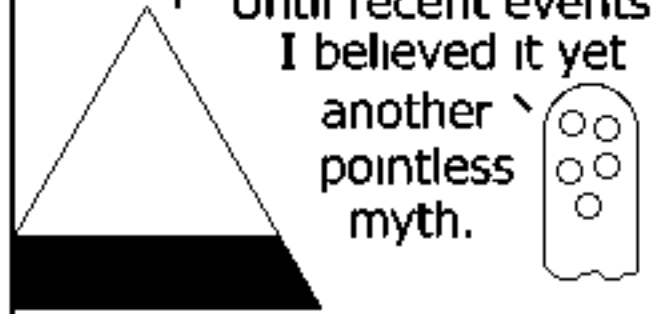
It wanted to be made.



Even so, the skill involved... were my power over cheese rather than pudding, I still would not attempt a recipe of such subtlety and complexity.

You know more about the Fondue than the rest of us. Share.

Less than you think. Until recent events I believed it yet another pointless myth.



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

What is going on?

The Grain Sentry stepped in the Igneous Sentry.

病

He's not a Sentry! He's our most ancient enemy!

He did not step in me. He deliberately pummeled me senseless.

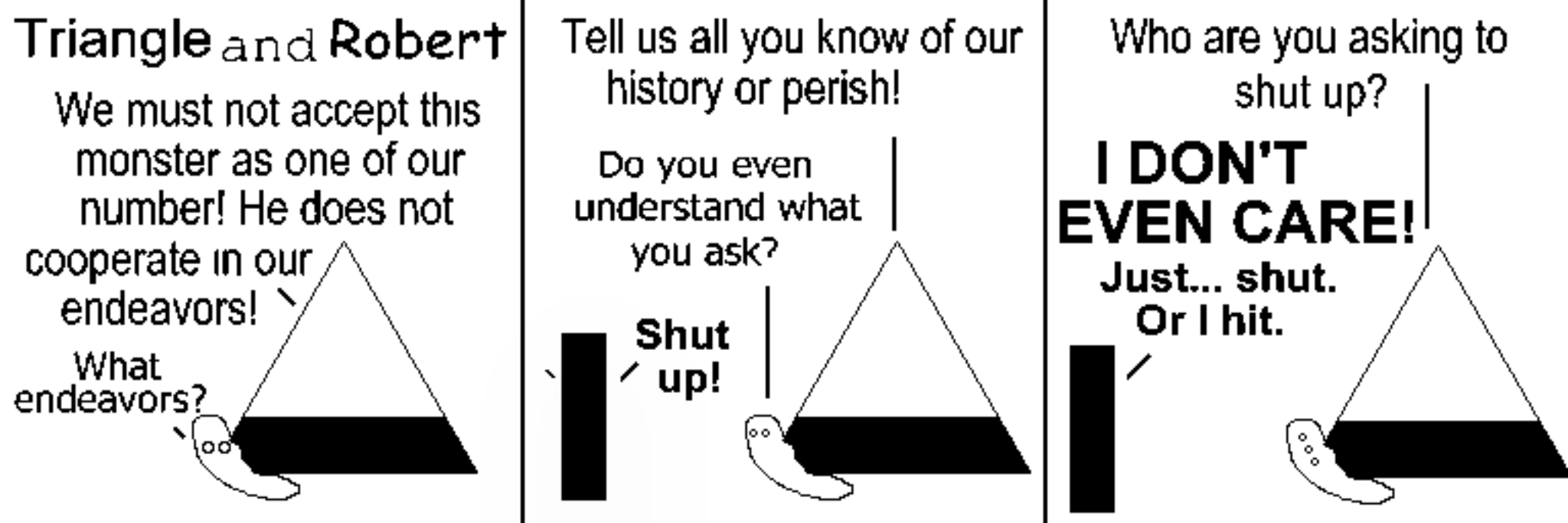
病

I almost wish that we were in my kitchen so that I could tell you to get out of my kitchen. Actually, I will do so anyway.

Get out of my kitchen!

That didn't really make sense.

病-Out!


Triangle and Robert
We must not accept this monster as one of our number! He does not cooperate in our endeavors!
What endeavors?
Tell us all you know of our history or perish!
Do you even understand what you ask?
Shut up!
Who are you asking to shut up?
I DON'T EVEN CARE!
Just... shut. Or I hit.

Triangle and Robert

I don't like Orpuddex. You don't like Orpuddex. I don't think ANYONE likes Orpuddex. I don't think Orpuddex is really a Sentry any more than you.

So what's the problem?

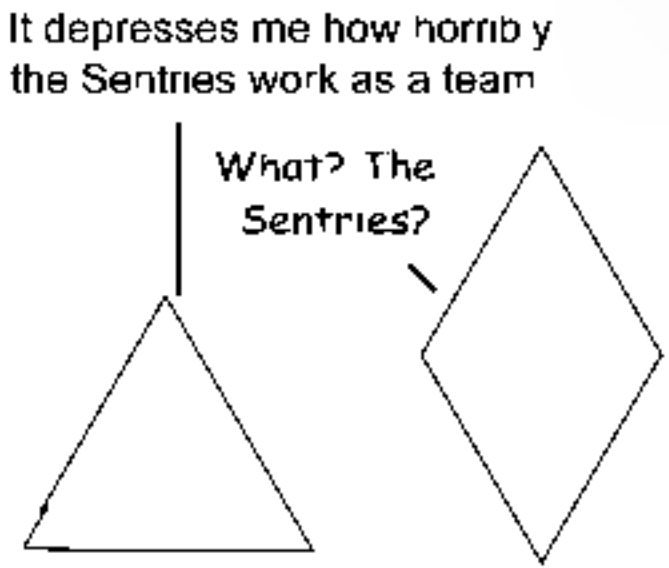
The problem... is that he NO connection to the current plotline and things are already so convoluted I have no idea who to be angry at about what!

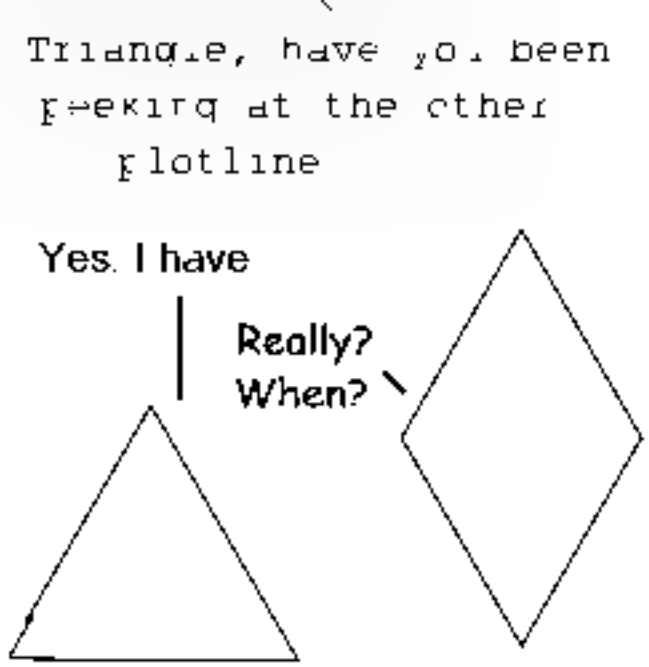
You're not making any sense.

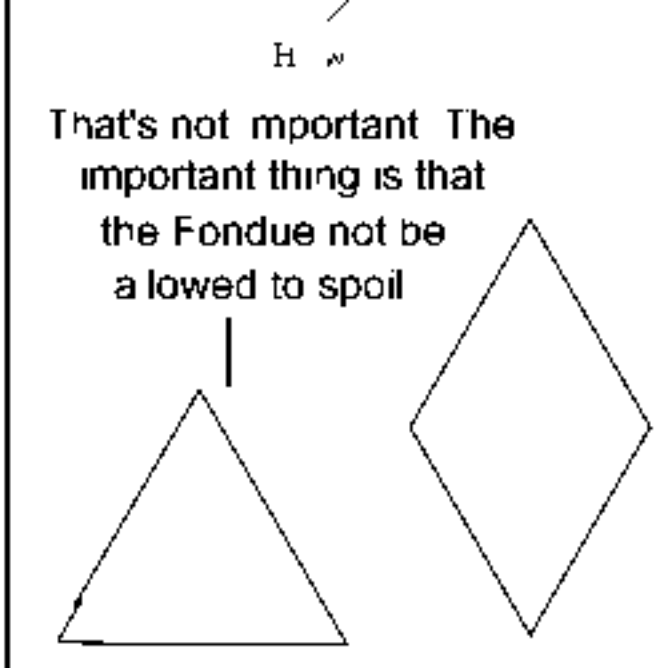
AND we were eating!

Don't let me stop you. If you could pry me from this vertex?

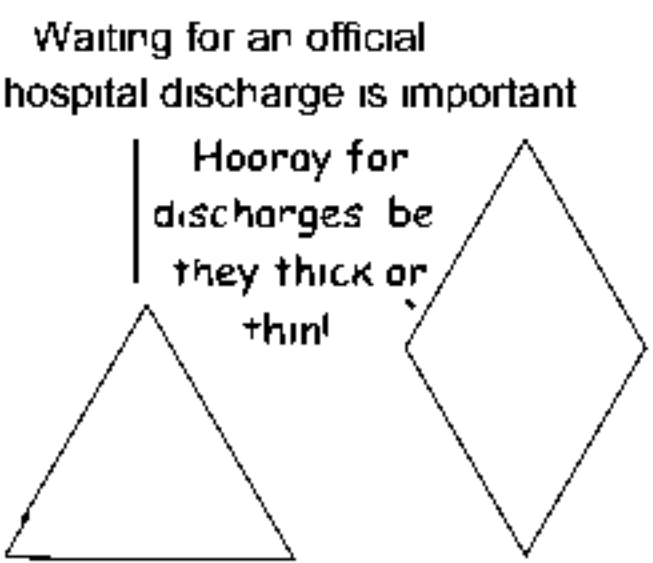
Triangle and Robert

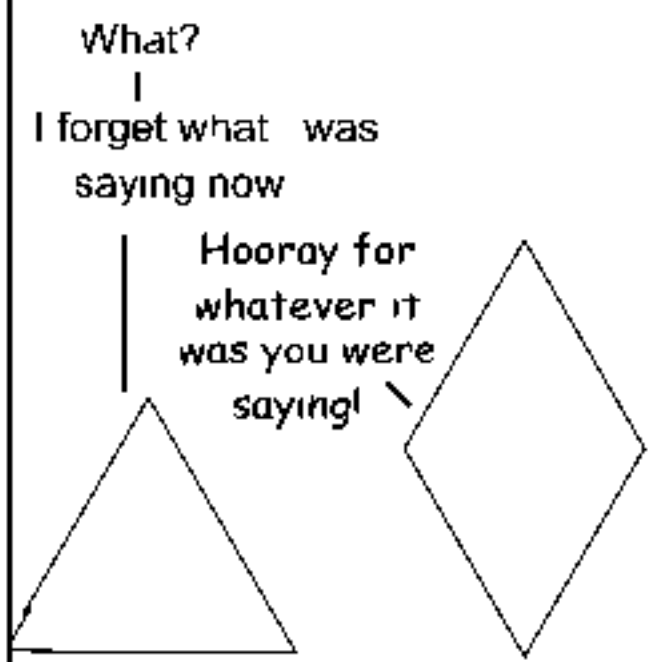


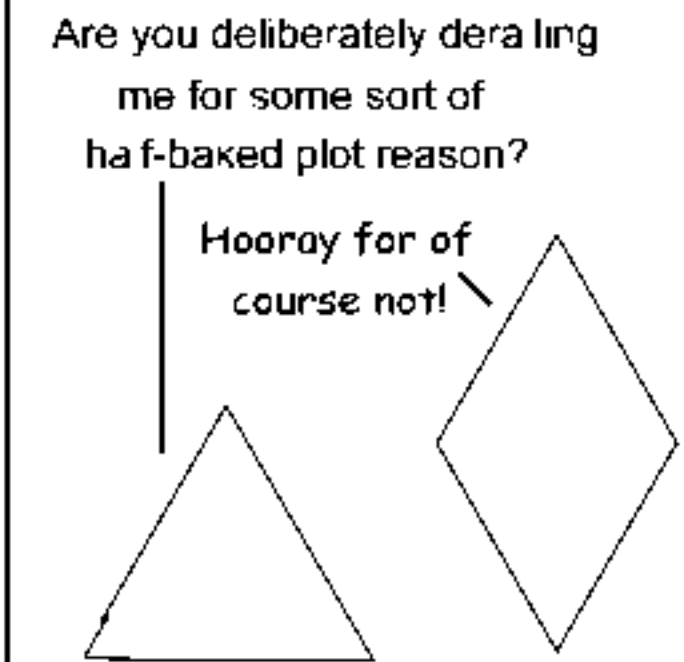




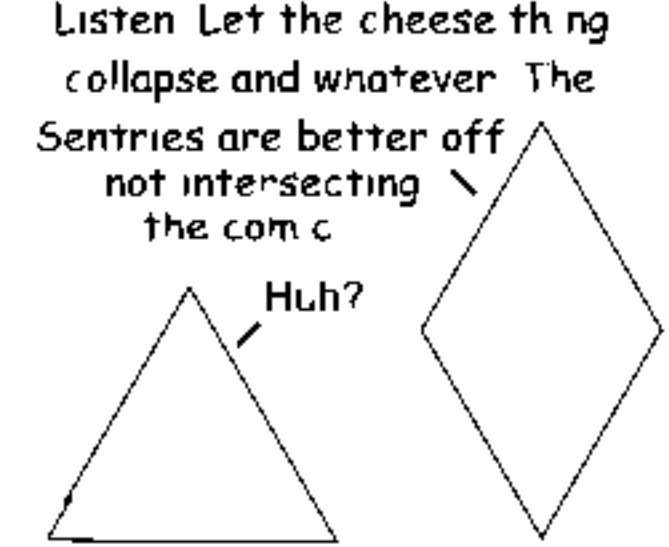
Triangle and Robert

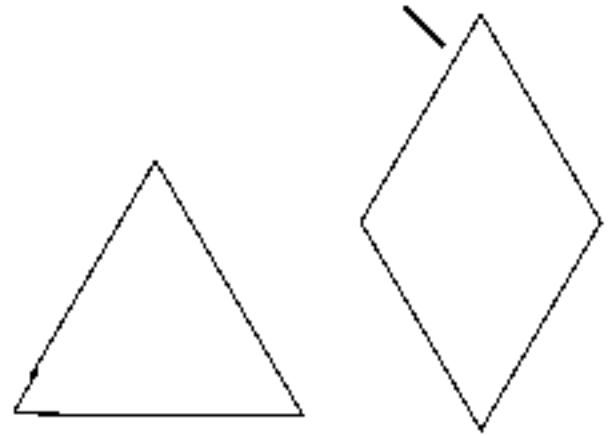


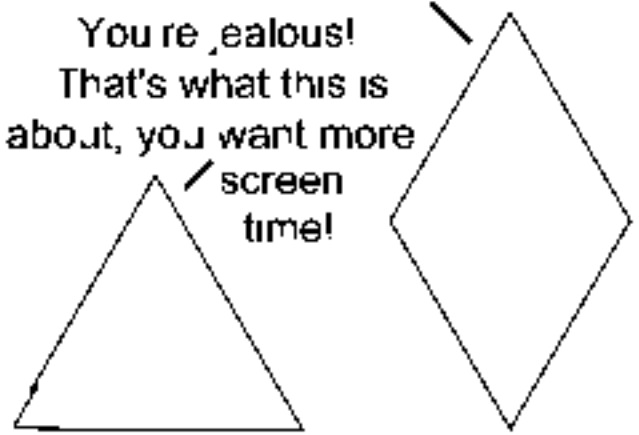




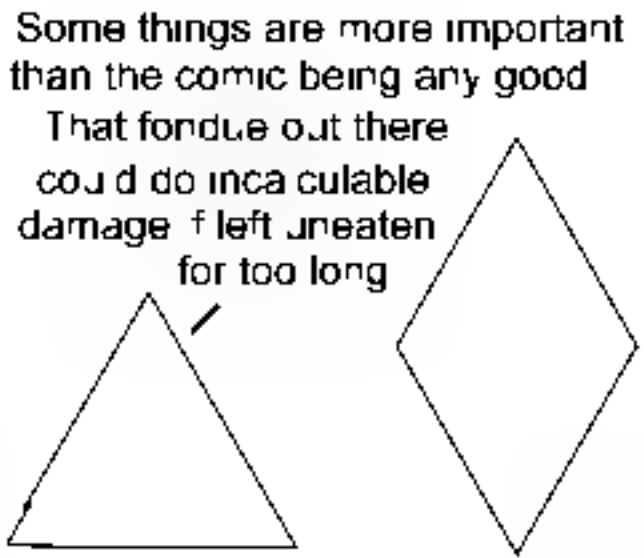
Triangle and Robert

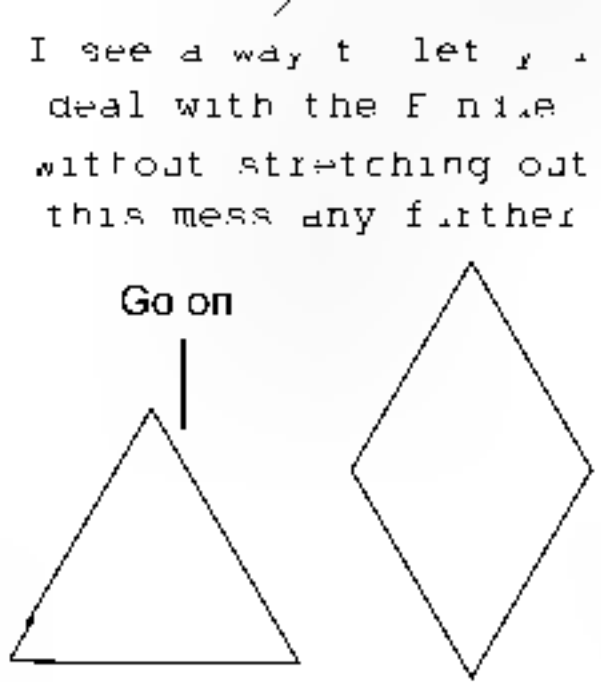


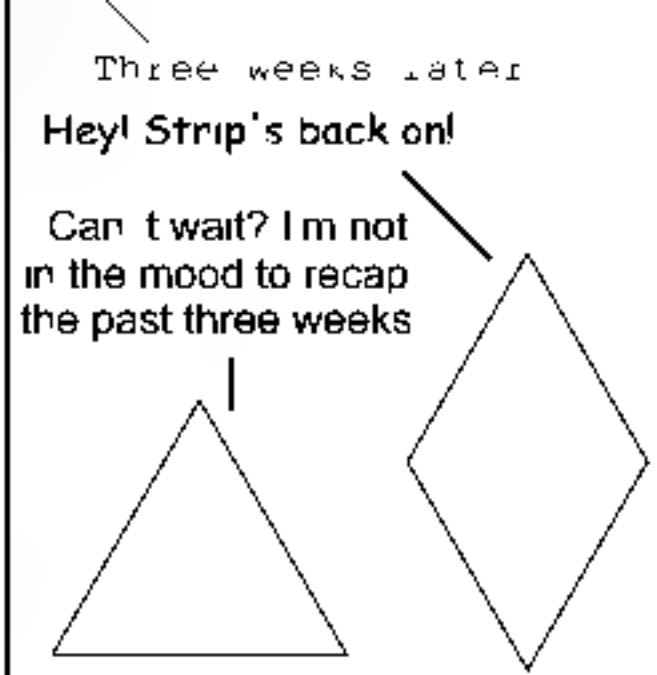




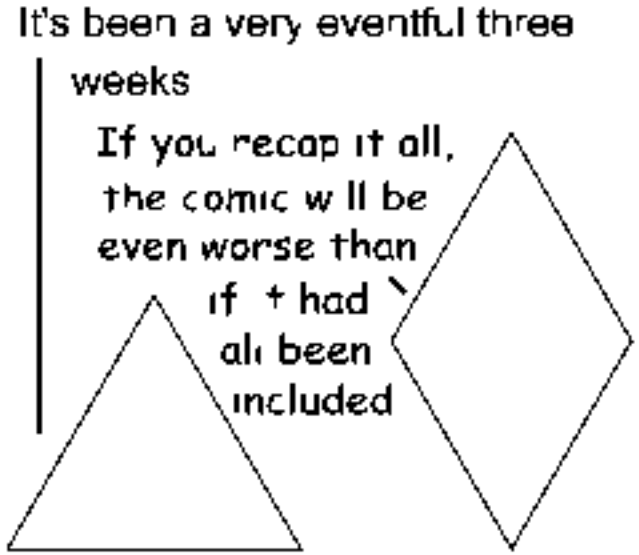
Triangle and Robert

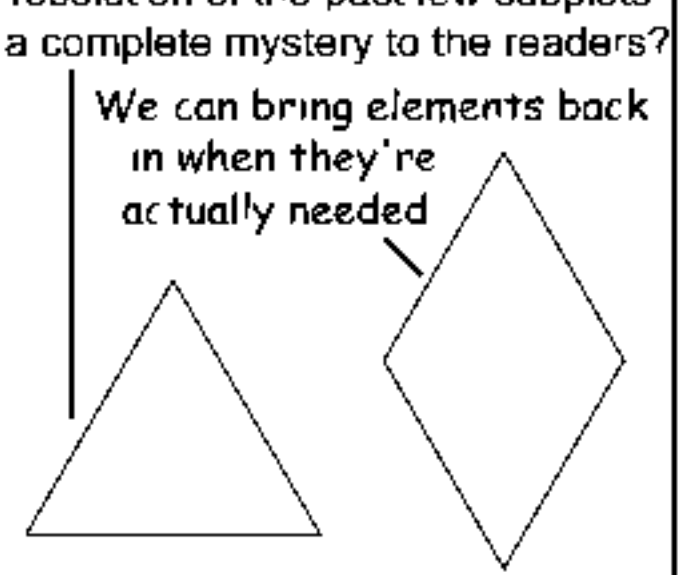


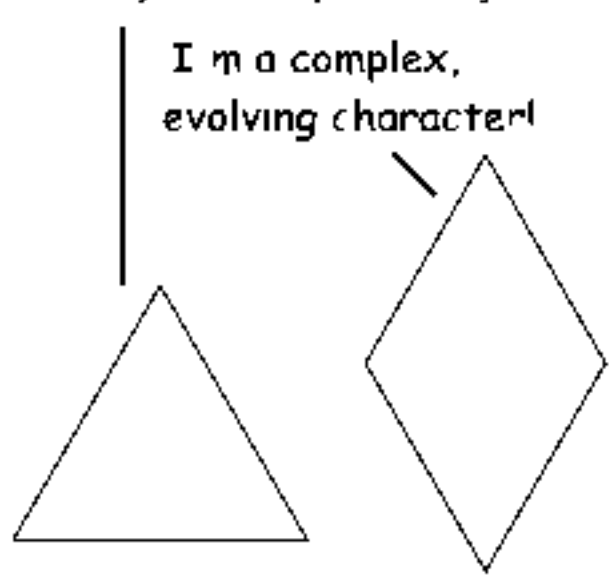




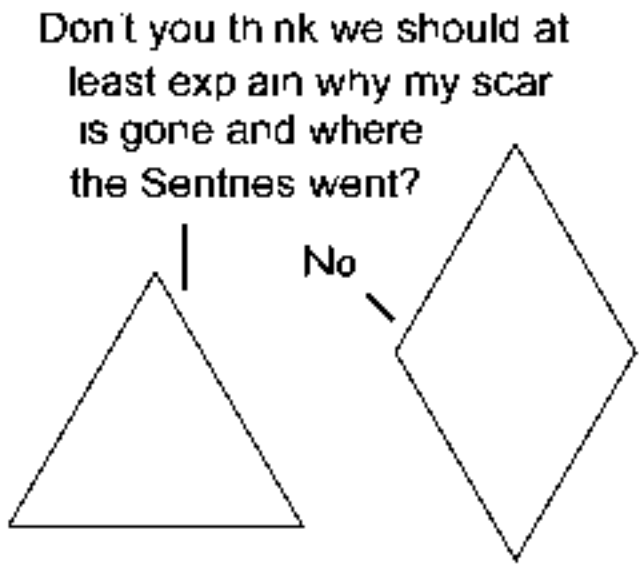
Triangle and Robert

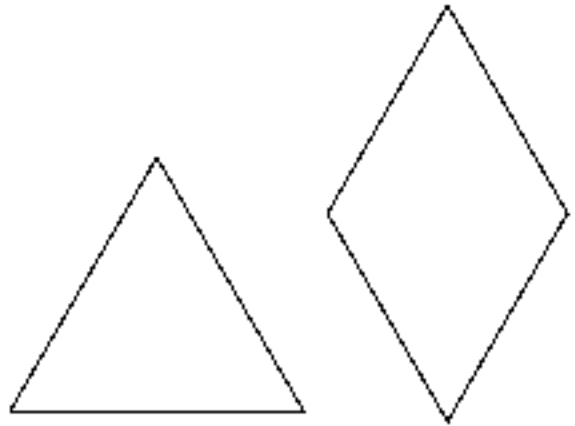


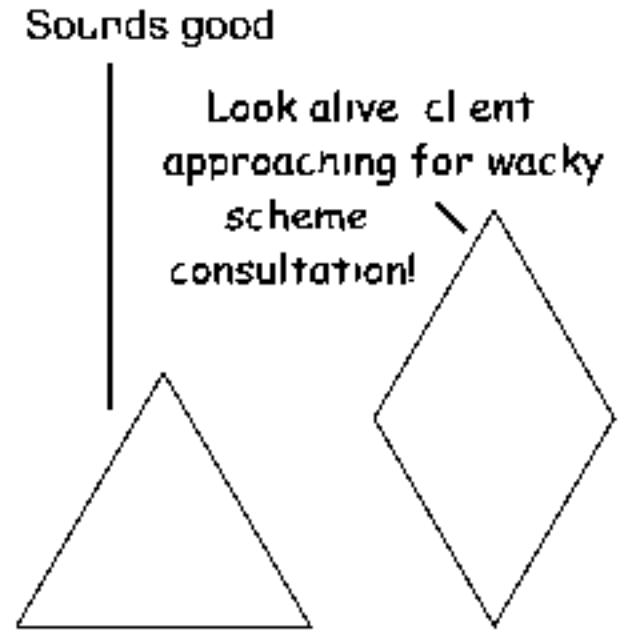




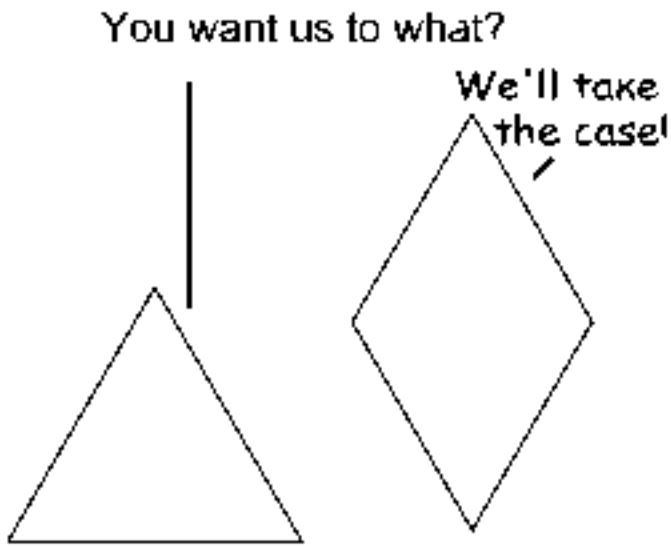
Triangle and Robert

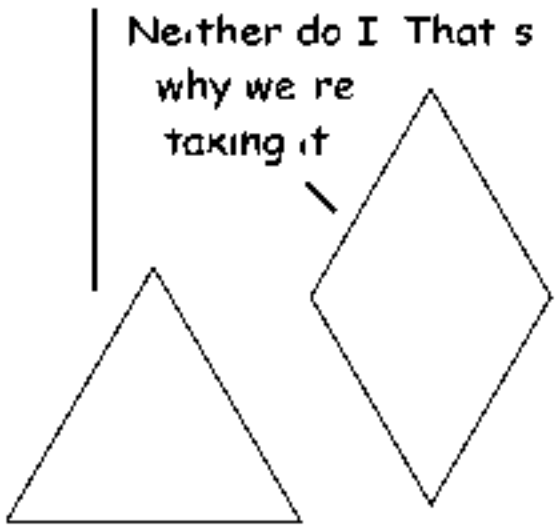


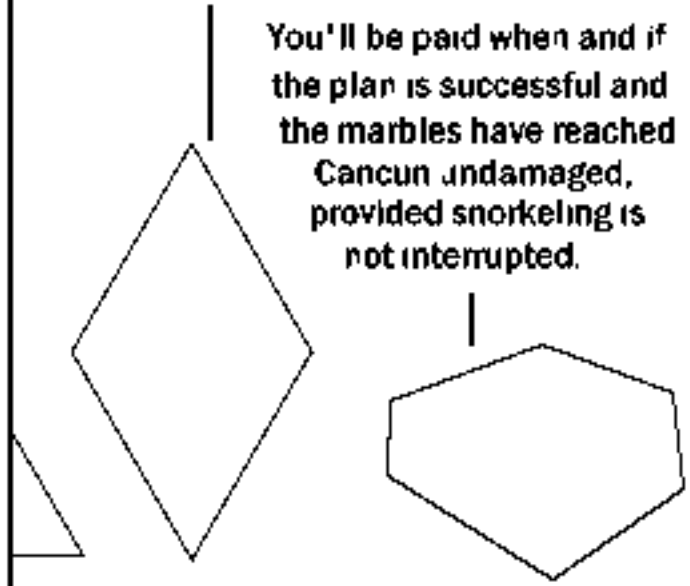




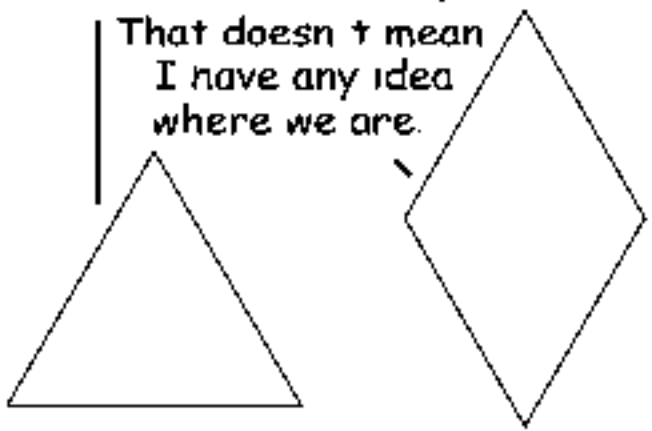
Triangle and Robert

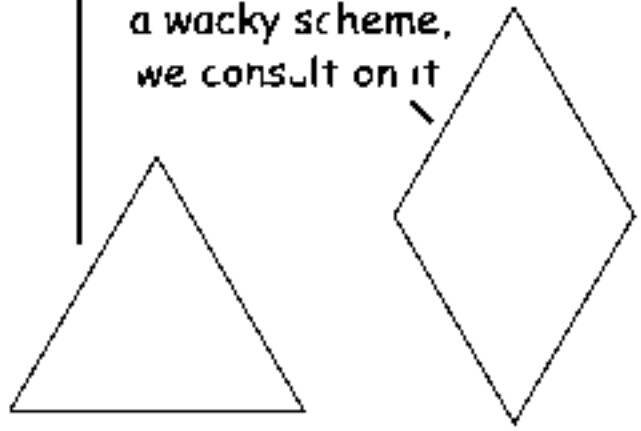


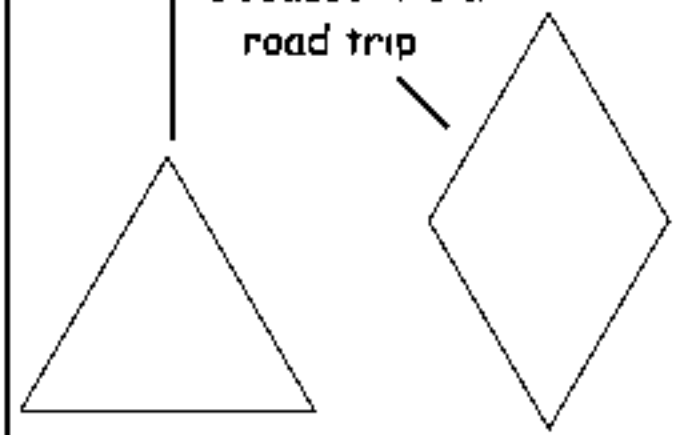




Triangle and Robert



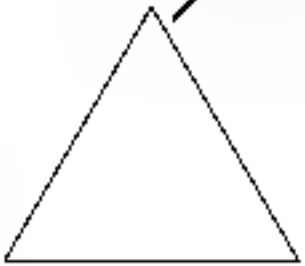


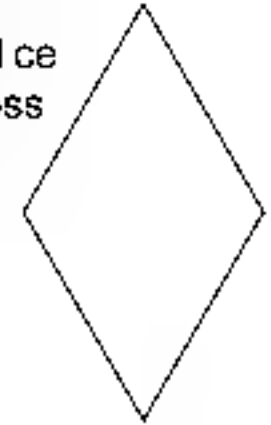


Triangle and Robert

Driving a van full of marbles to the Mexican border

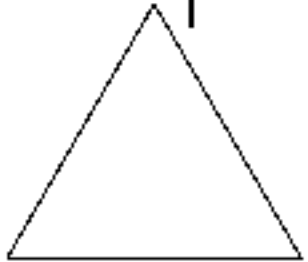
That's too many police
We can't sneak across

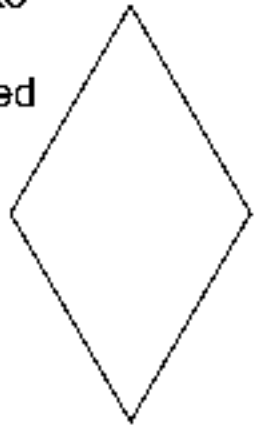




This is easy

Easy? I think we should just turn around and get someone else to make the crossing
Someone else wanted



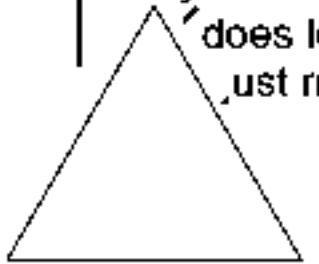


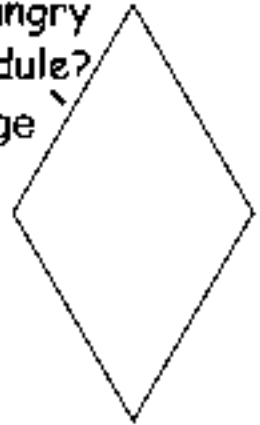
Look around This terrain is perfect!

What about it?

Don't you remember that Hungry Hungry Hippos module?

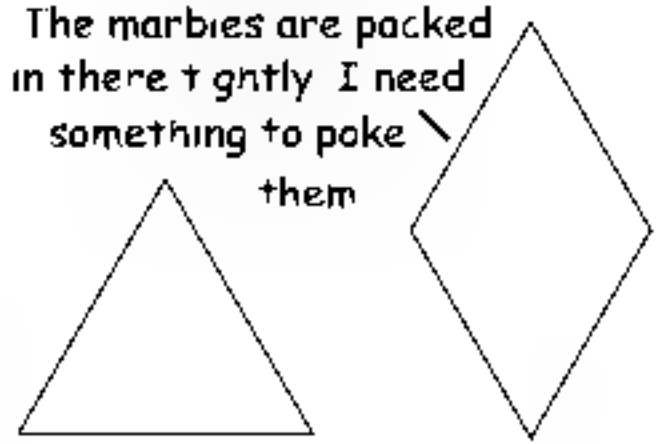
Hey that ridge does look just right

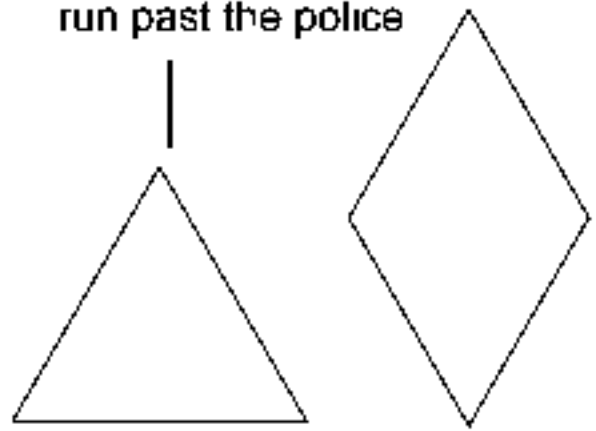


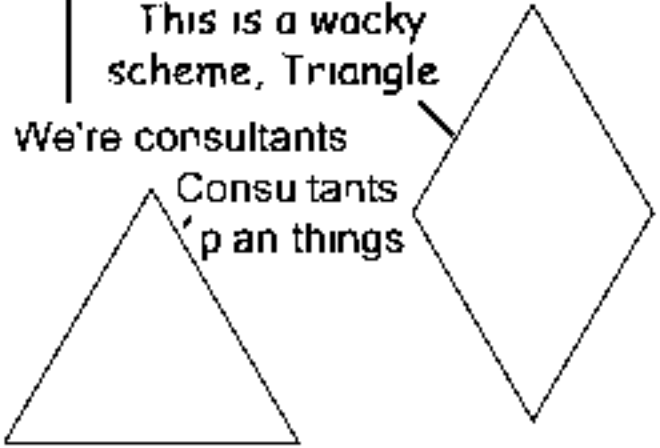


Triangle and Robert

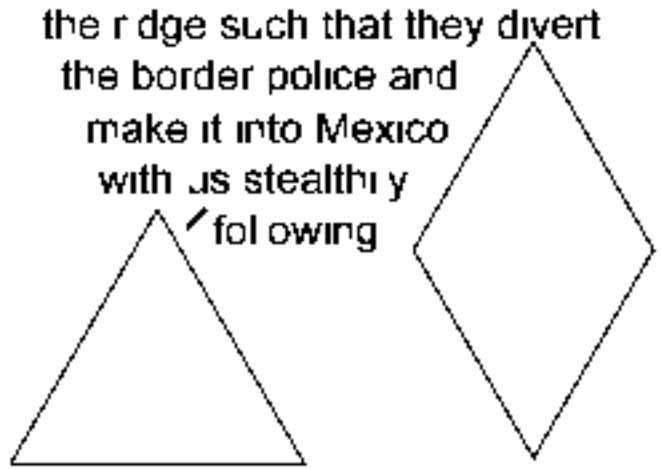
Atop a ridge overlooking the Mexican border

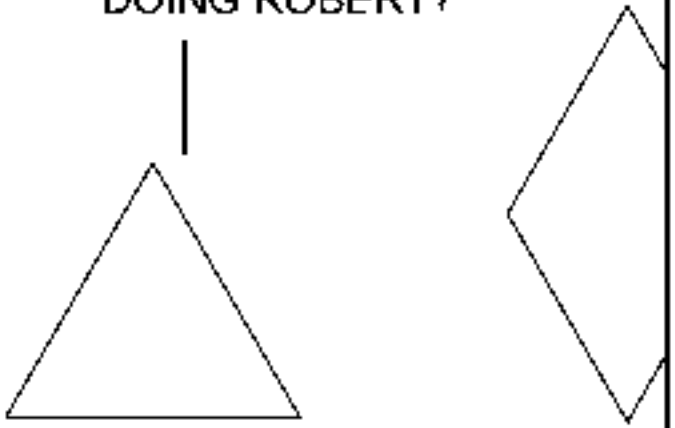




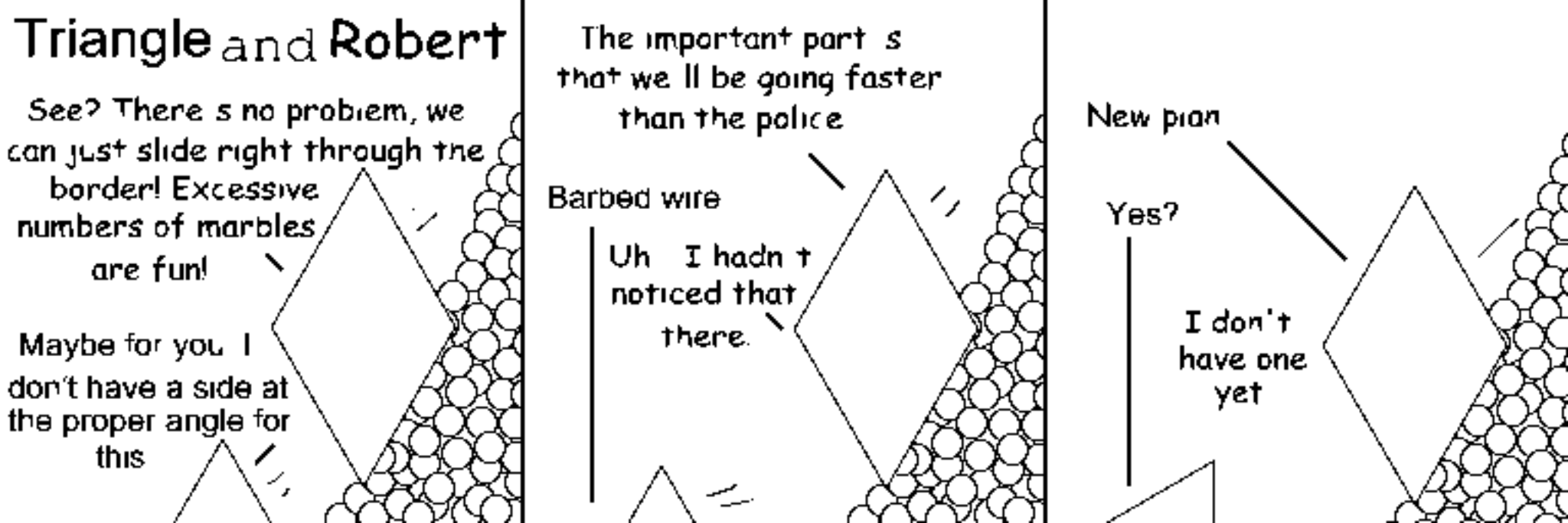


Triangle and Robert

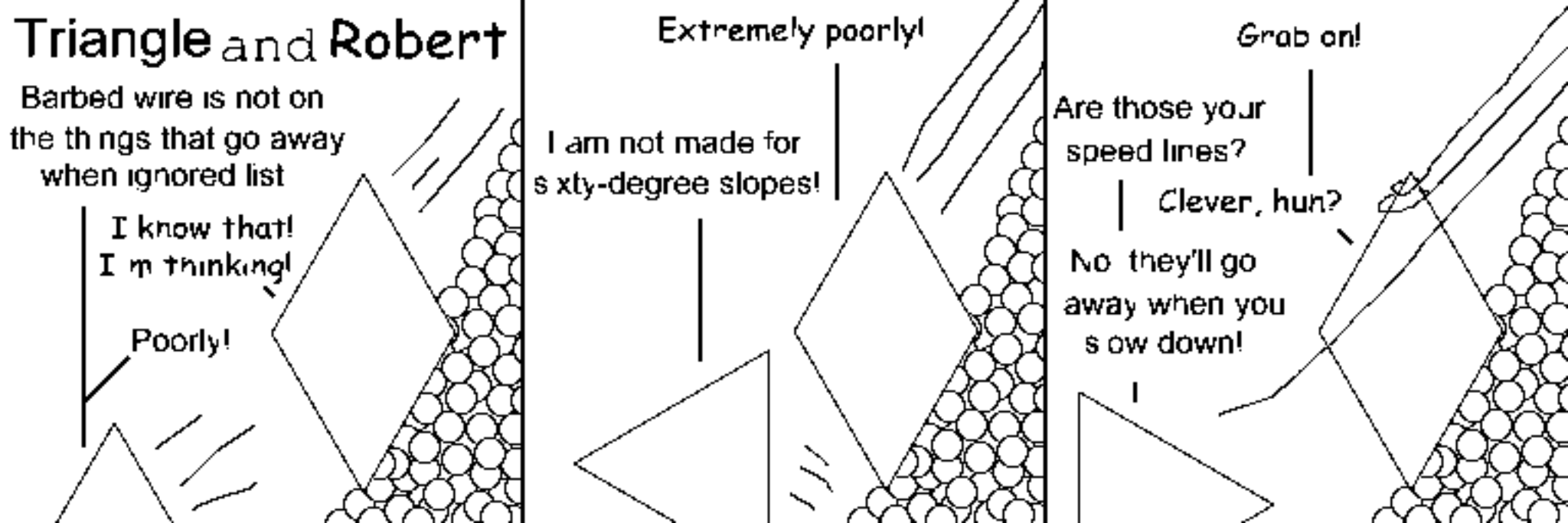




Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Last time, we left our heroes sliding down a sheer slope covered in marbles towards a barbed wire fence, and possibly their doom

Stop prolonging it!

No! Keep prolonging it!

Barbed wire isn't so bad, Triangle. It's the waiting that's the real pain

You're an idiot! Impact velocity Robert, impact velocity!

We'll probably be unconscious for most of it anyway

And wake up in yet another Mexican jail? I say to you "No thank you, sir!"

Triangle and Robert

It's a complicated story. A universe made from butterscotch pudding and staffed by incompetent gods — an ending cycle of civilization after civilization, each thriving for an allotted time then swiftly falling as the next swiftly arises.

Right now, two members of the Seventh Race, an equilateral triangle and a rhombus, are careening towards a barbed wire fence on the Mexican border, for reasons best glossed over. They lead complicated lives as improbable as their world.

I know. I think I'll just get rid of that fence. They're due for something good to happen to them for a change.

No. Put it back.

What?

Triangle and Robert

First you don t want to hit the fence then you ask the Cartoonist to put it back?

Make up your mind, Triangle!

Oh it's made up OH BLEEP FENCE!

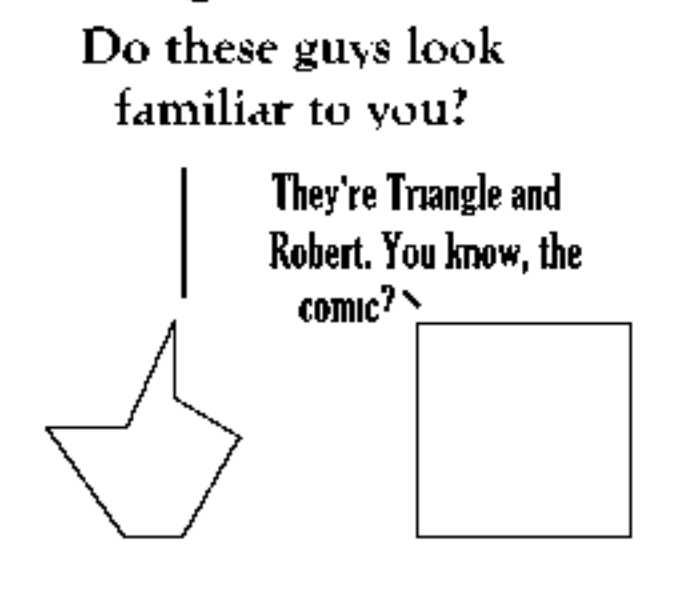
THWUMP

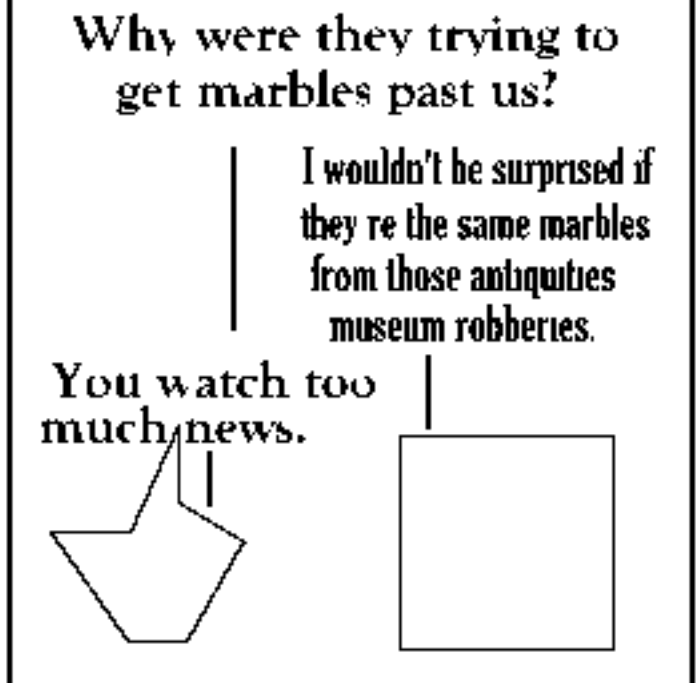
Hey!

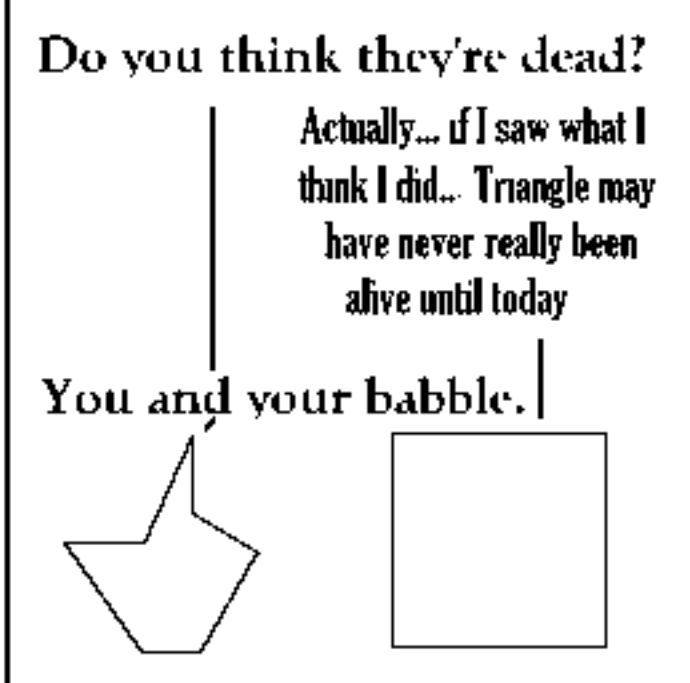
You two! This is the immigration police! Lie flat on the ground and don't move!

I think they're ahead of us on that one.

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

The Belongings

The Pudding-Watcher has cast his lot in with the Seventh Race

He shows his choices are of no relevance

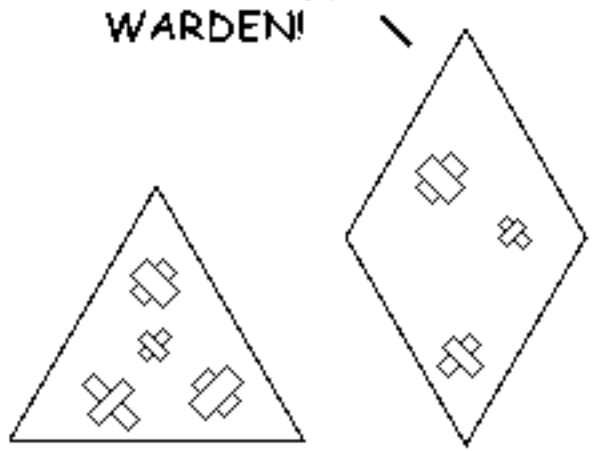
The same could once be said of the Chosen One yet he has changed much

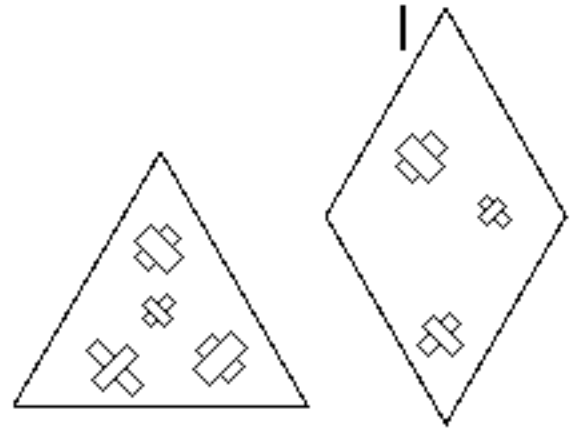
Trivialities

I am in disagreement With the Watcher the Seventh Race threatens to spread outward

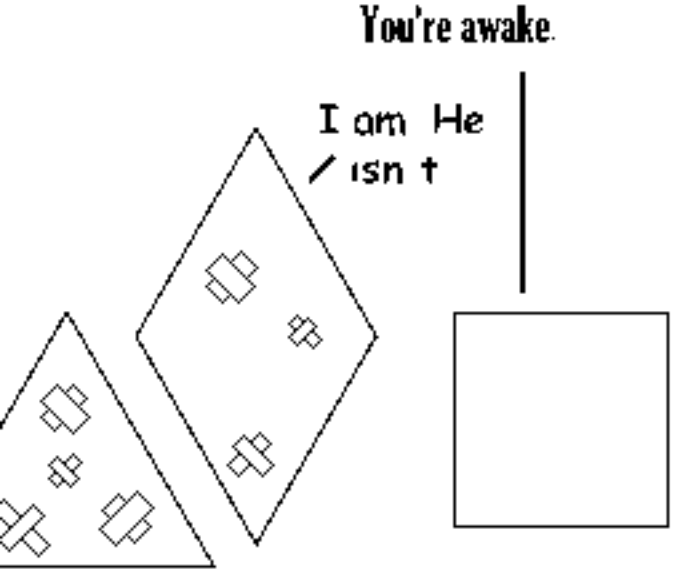
What we will is Always

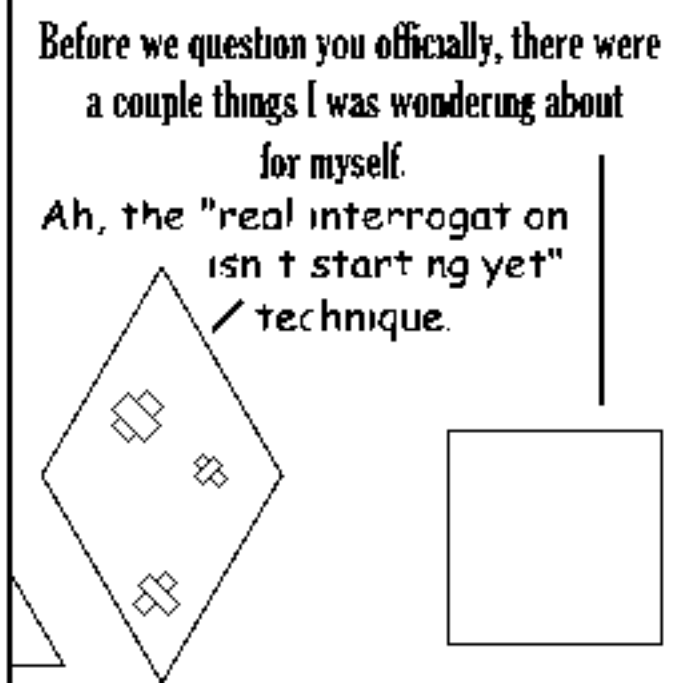
Triangle and Robert

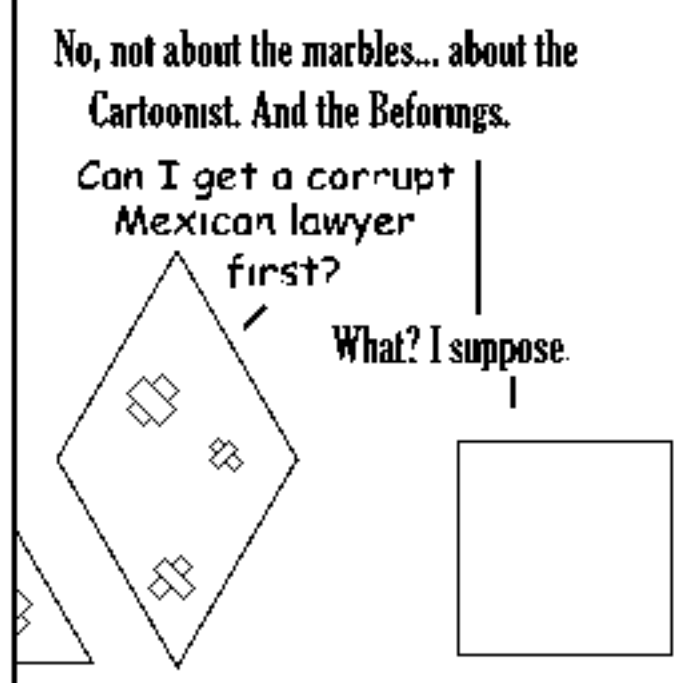




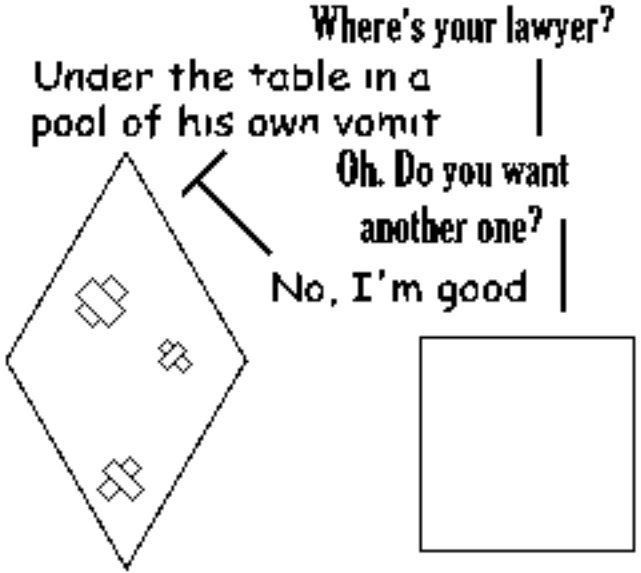
Triangle and Robert

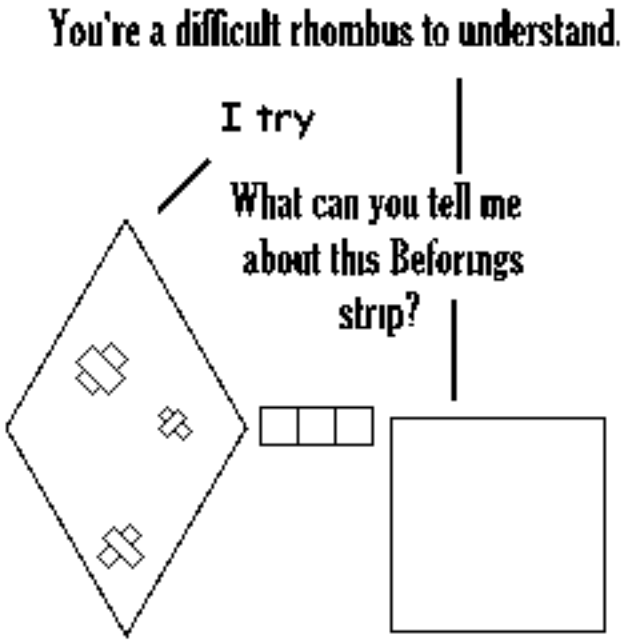


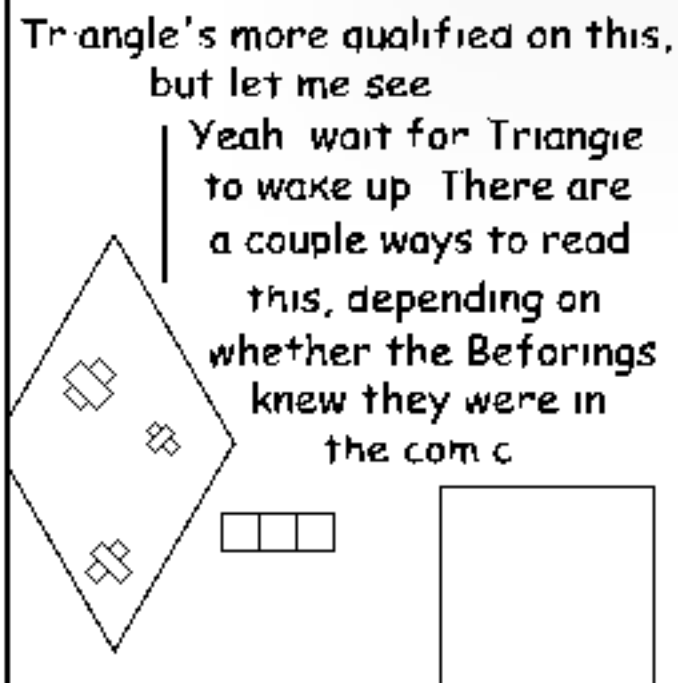




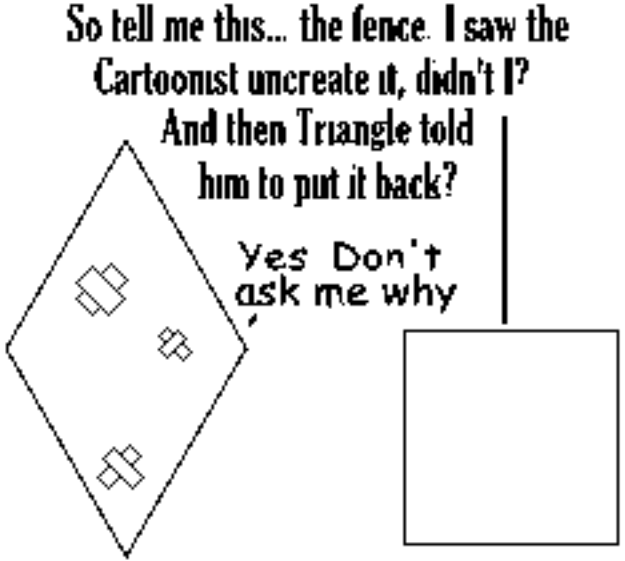
Triangle and Robert

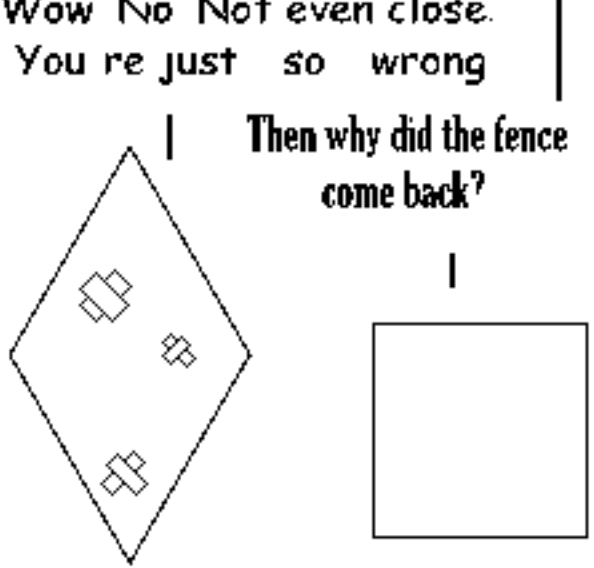


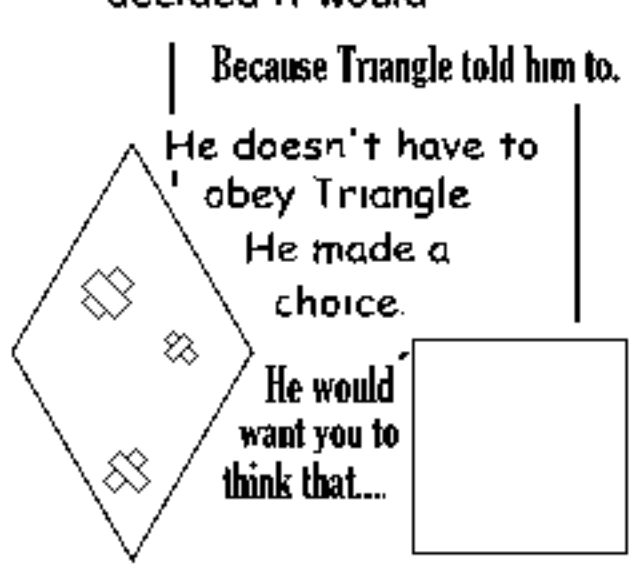




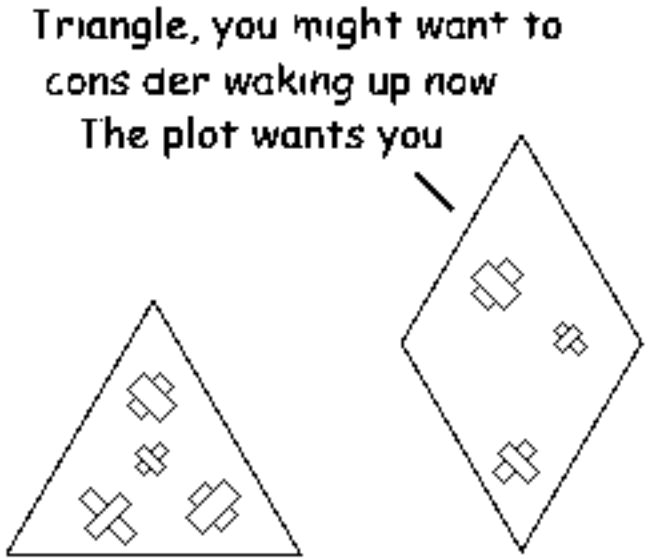
Triangle and Robert

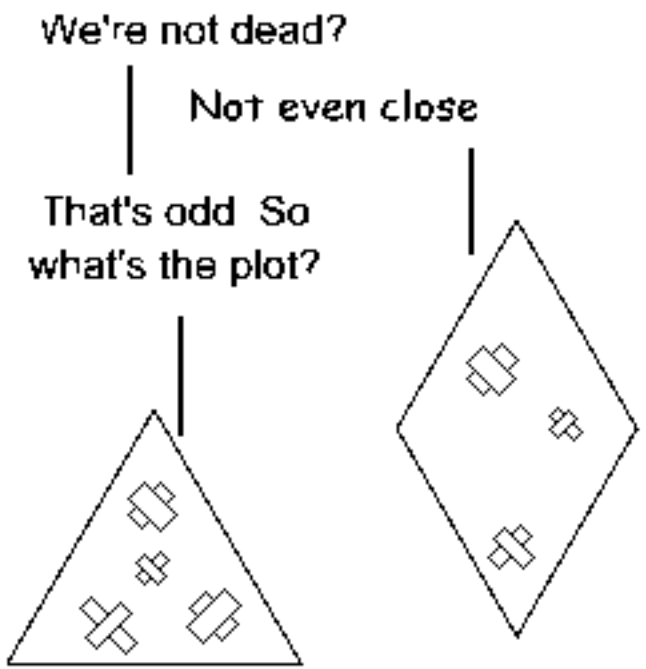




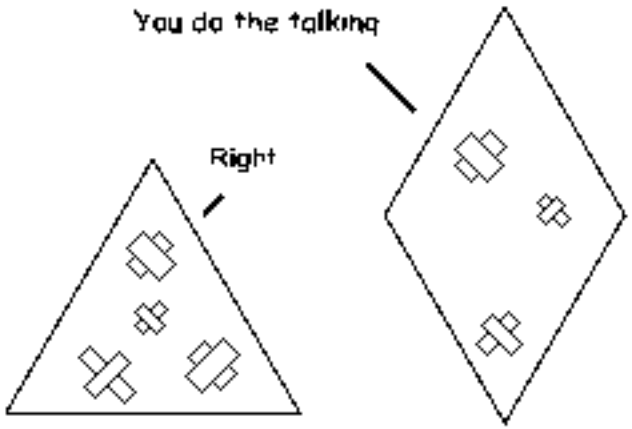


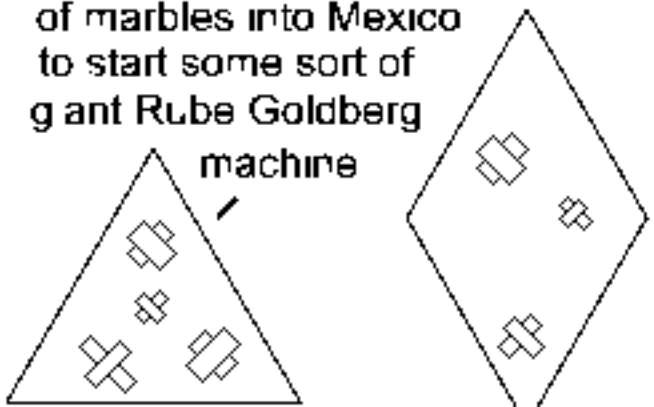
Triangle and Robert

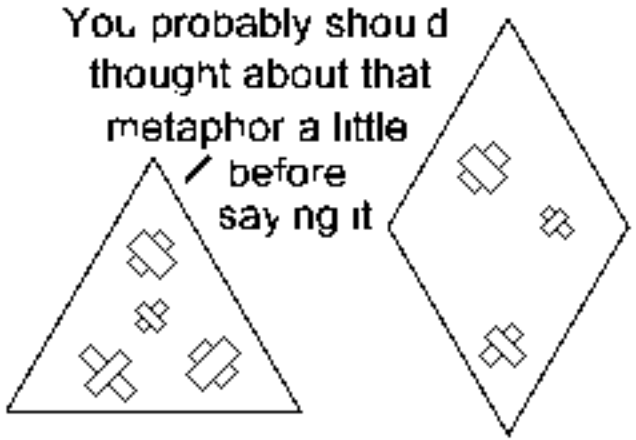




Triangle and Robert

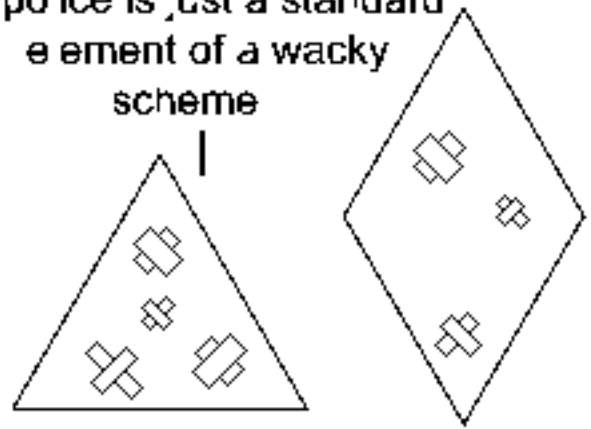




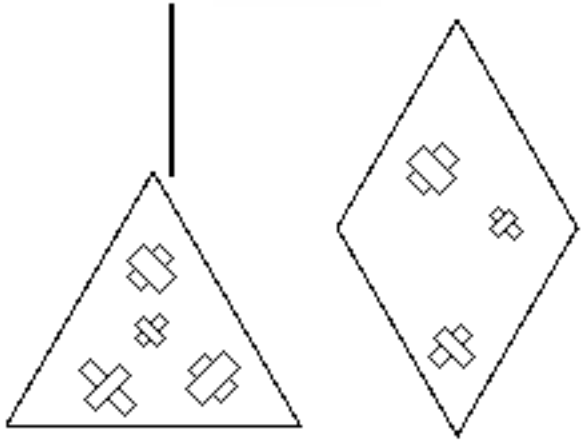


Triangle and Robert

We had no idea any significant felony was involved. Evading police is just a standard element of a wacky scheme

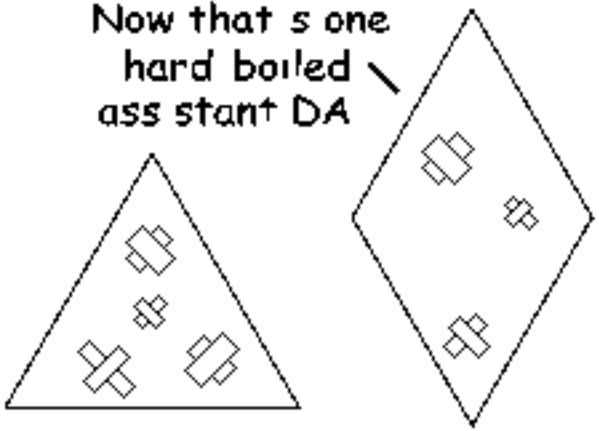


The real criminal in this is the polygon who hired us as unwitting pawns. That's who you want



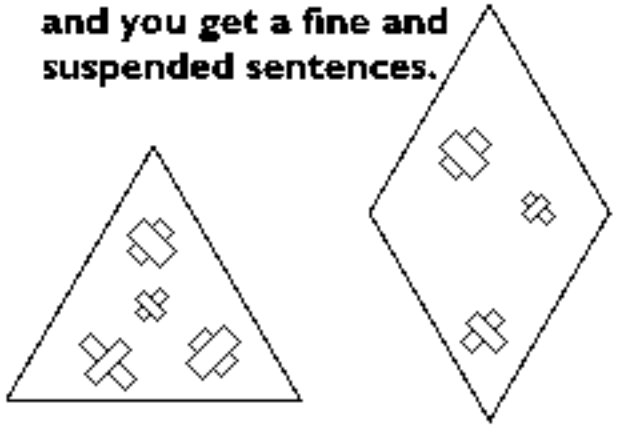
And his brother, who's an even bigger billy goat, is crossing the bridge just behind him, am I right?

Now that's one hard boiled ass stant DA



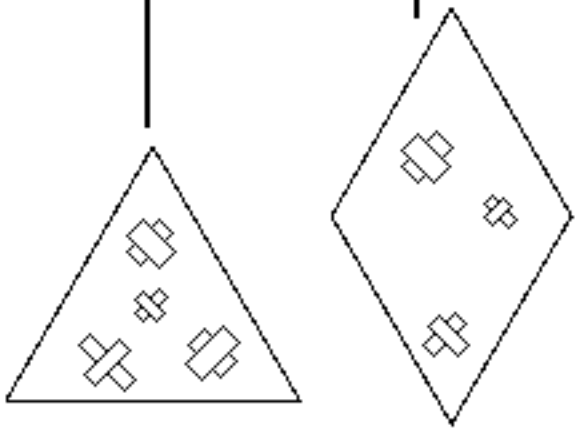
Triangle and Robert

Final offer. You point us to your employer AND help us catch him AND testify against him in court, and you get a fine and suspended sentences.



Dea

Deal



What, no reluctant speech about the sacred duties of wacky scheme consultants to clients?

The thought of us defending professional ethics is hilarious

Triangle and Robert

We've got a crook to chase. How do we find him?

We have to assume he knows his plan went wrong

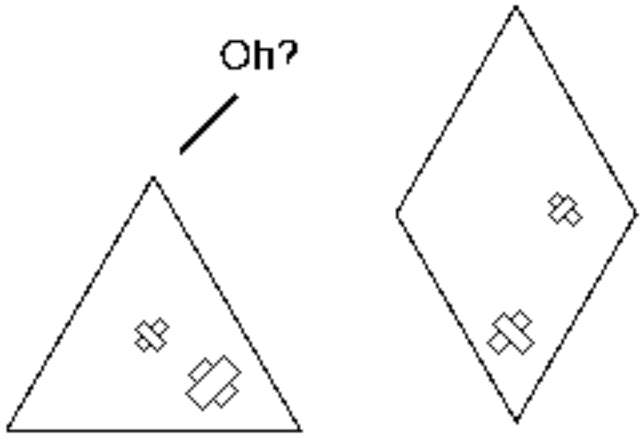
He'll want to cut his losses Some of the marb es must have made it past the fence into Mexico Maybe he'll try to p ck them up

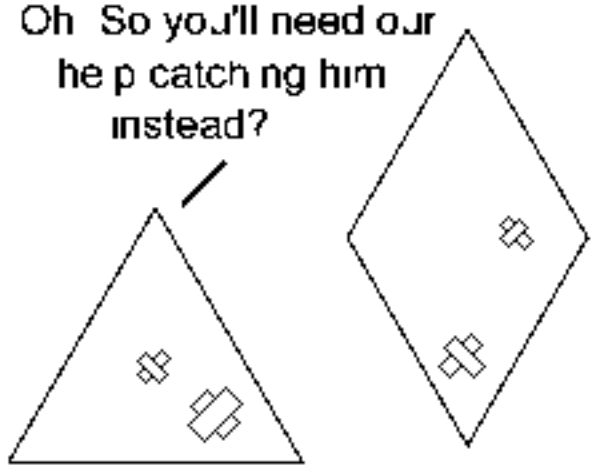
We can t leave the country until this is cleared up How do we intercept the pickup?

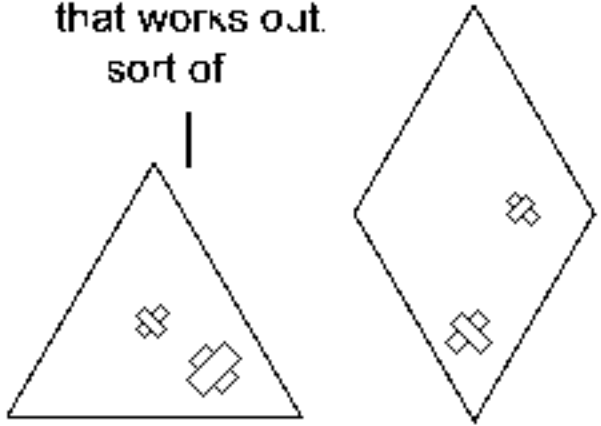
We don't want to intercept it we want to track it We don't need to go n person

Triangle and Robert

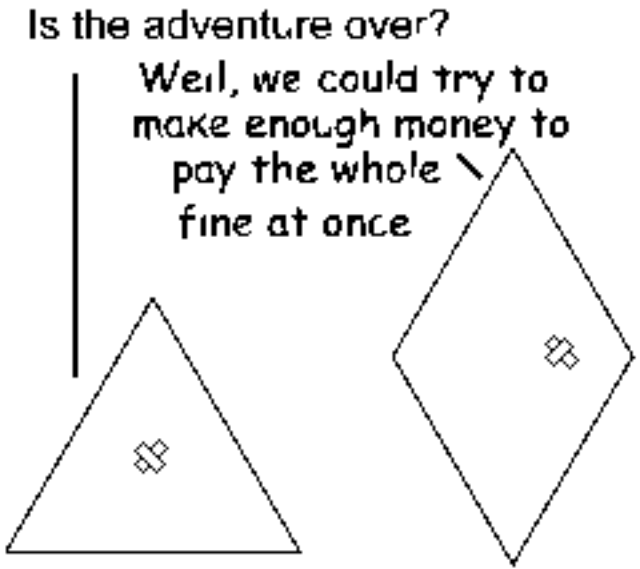
Triangle and Robert

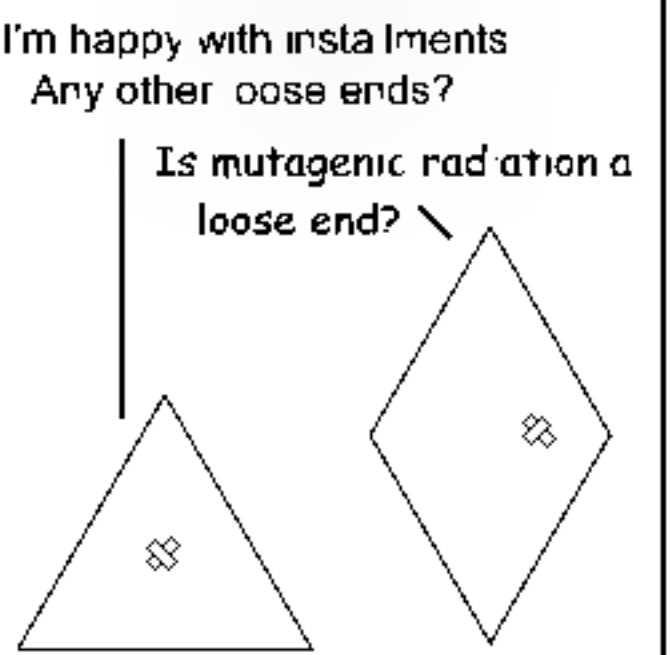


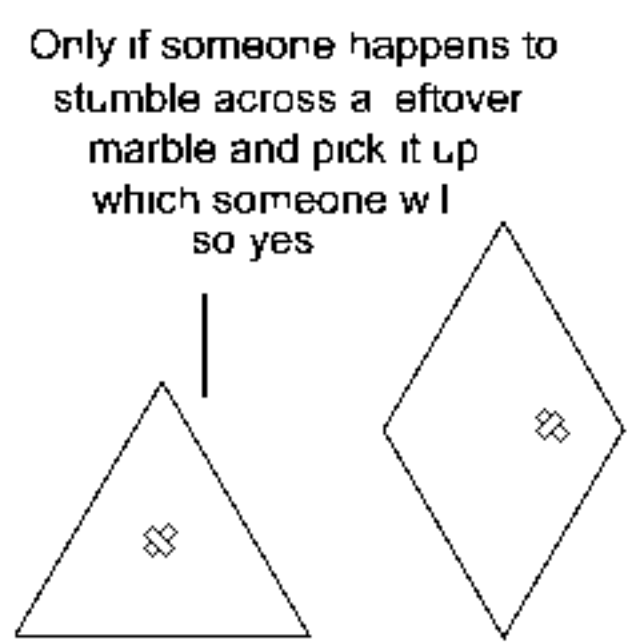




Triangle and Robert



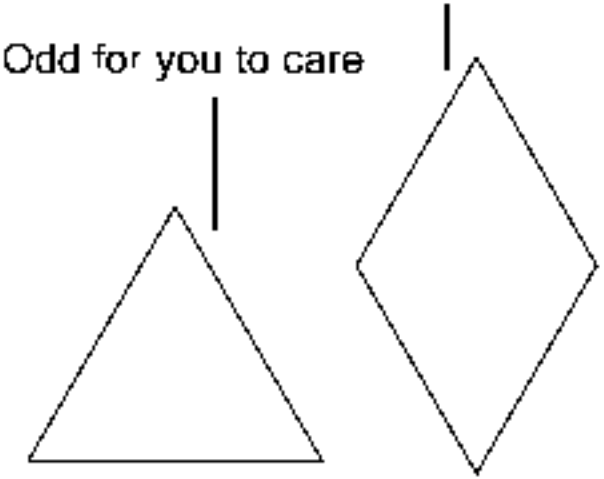




Triangle and Robert

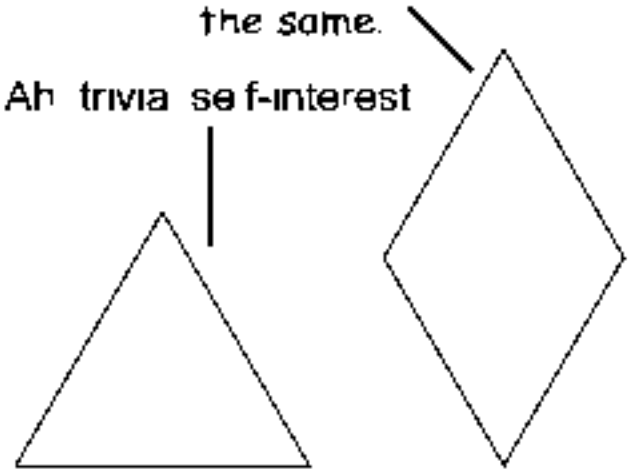
Still no word from the Sentries

Odd for you to care



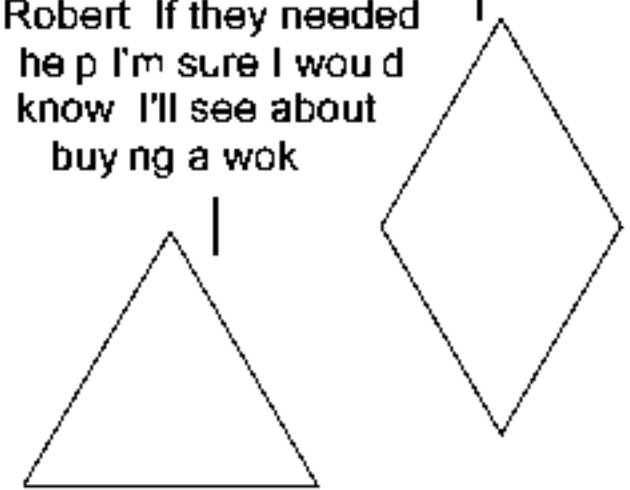
I've been craving Chinese food, and Mr. Disease's stand-in chef just isn't the same.

Ah, trivia, self-interest

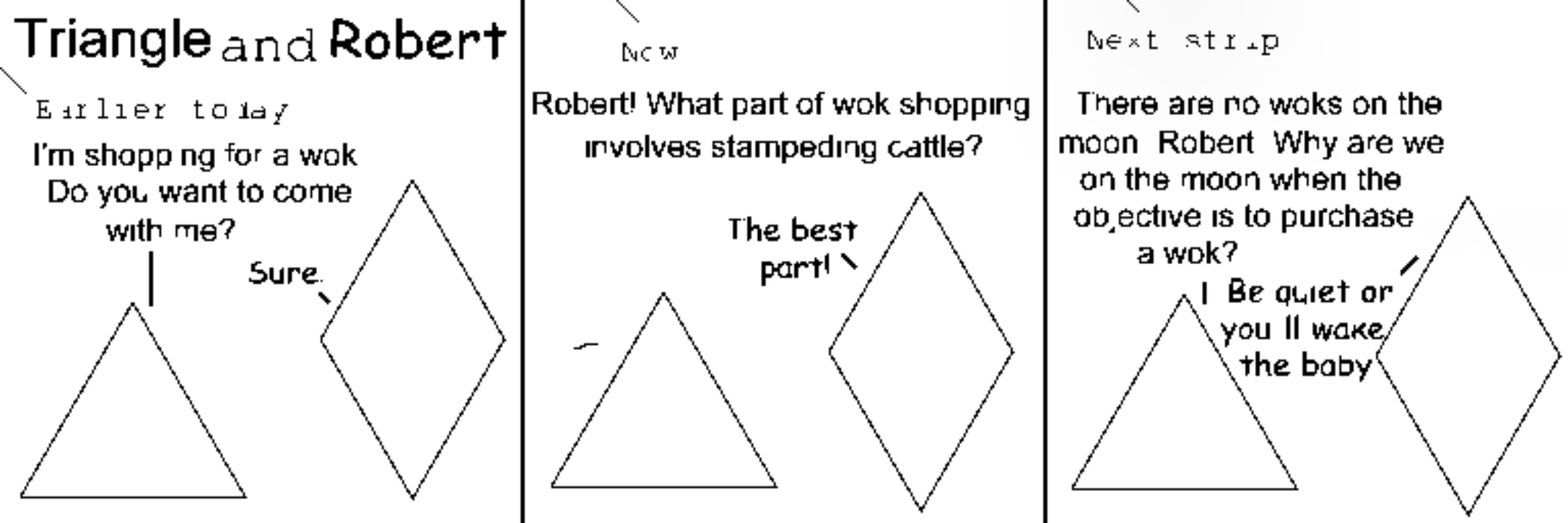


Plots have been founded on less

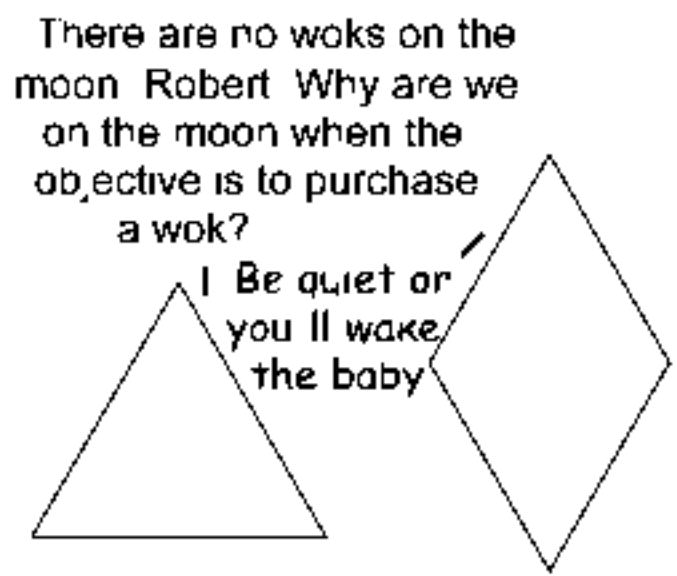
The Sentries are fine, Robert. If they needed help, I'm sure I would know. I'll see about buying a wok.

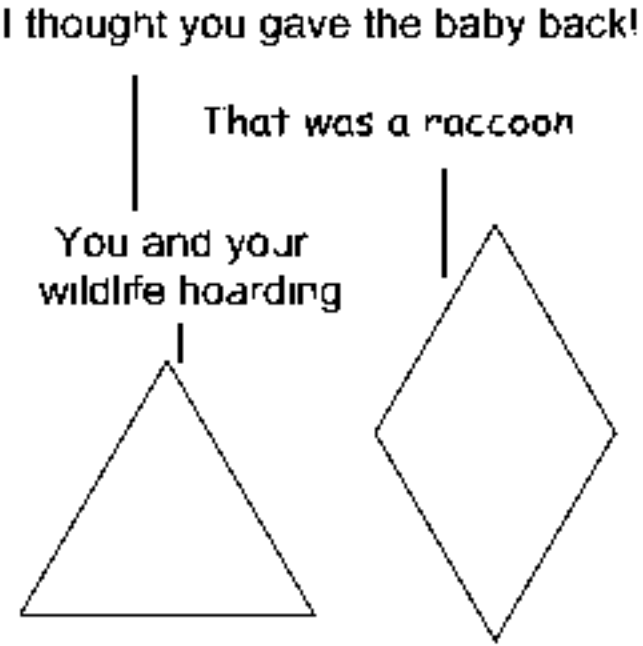


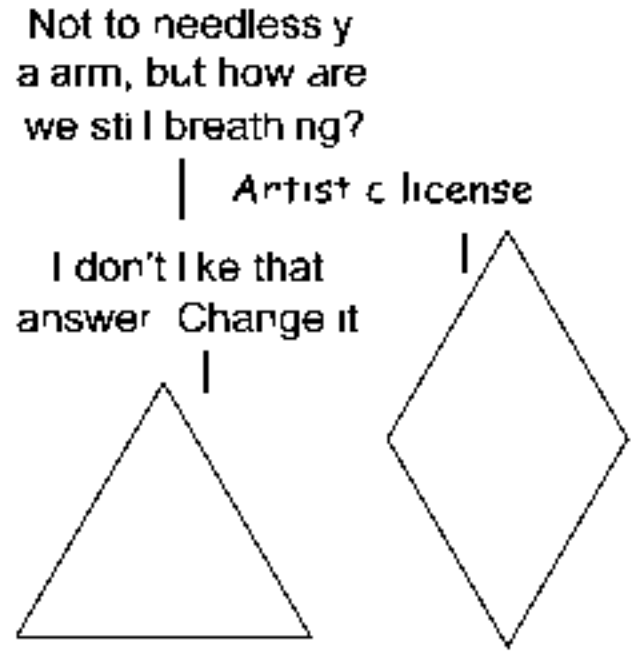
Triangle and Robert



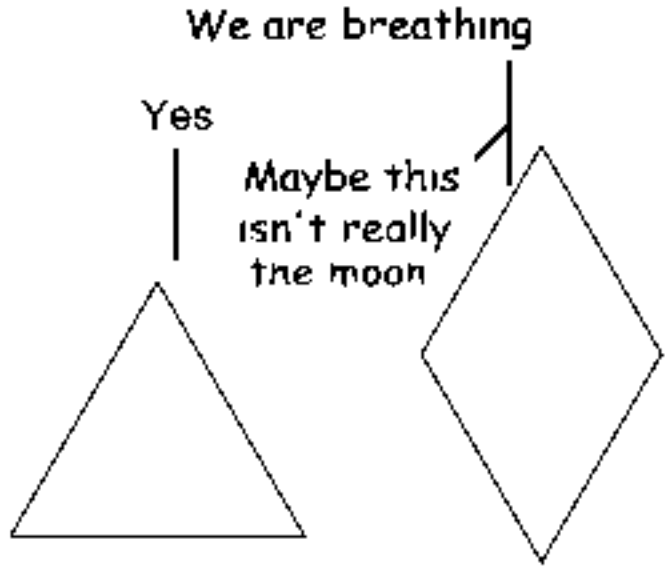
Triangle and Robert

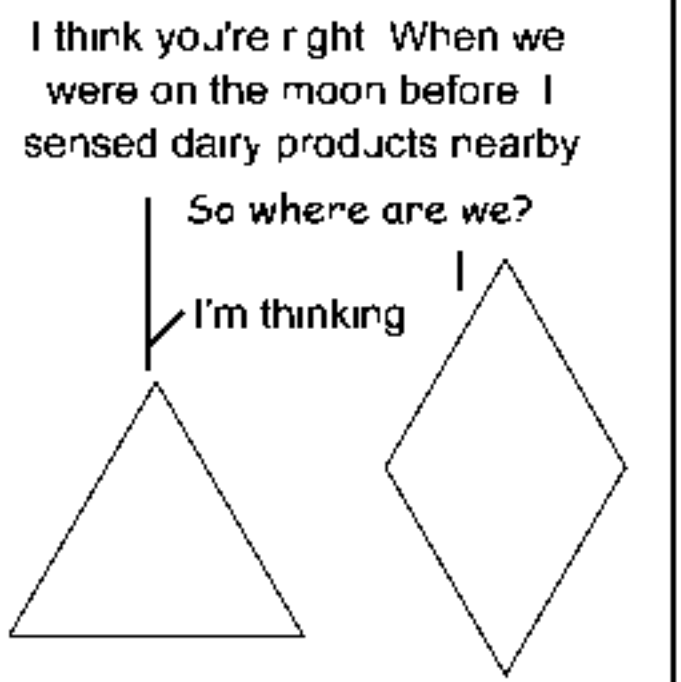




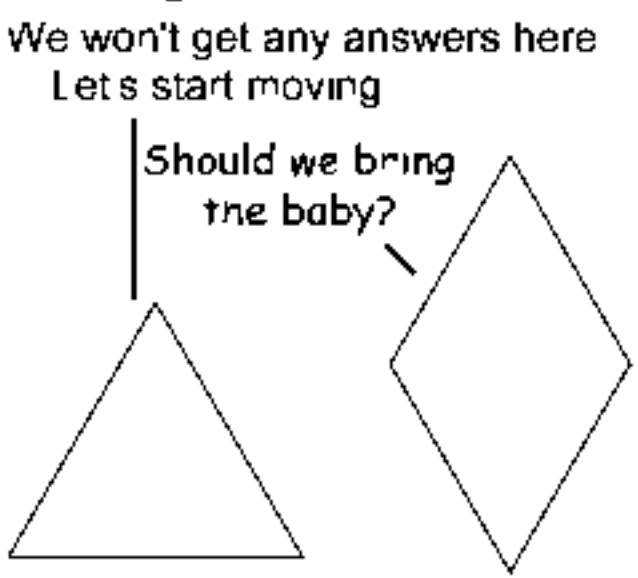


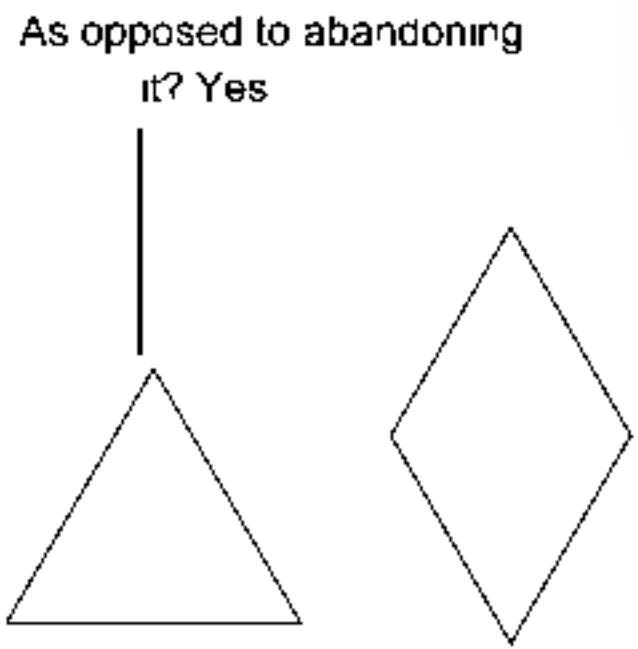
Triangle and Robert

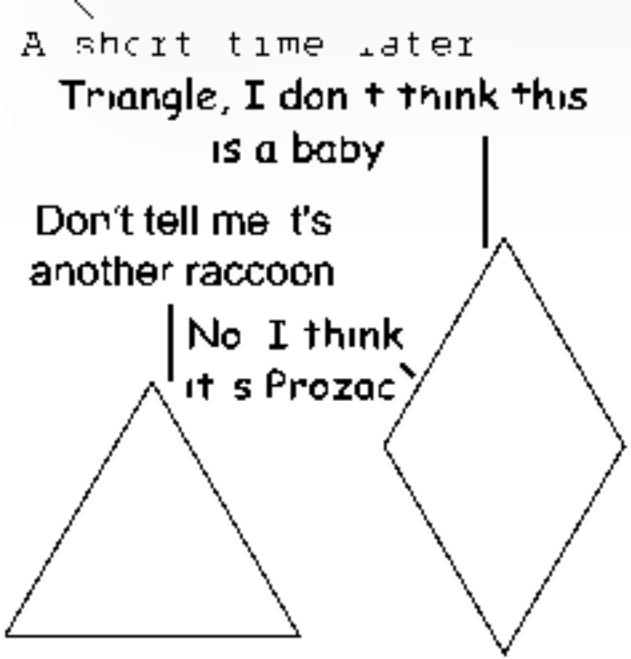




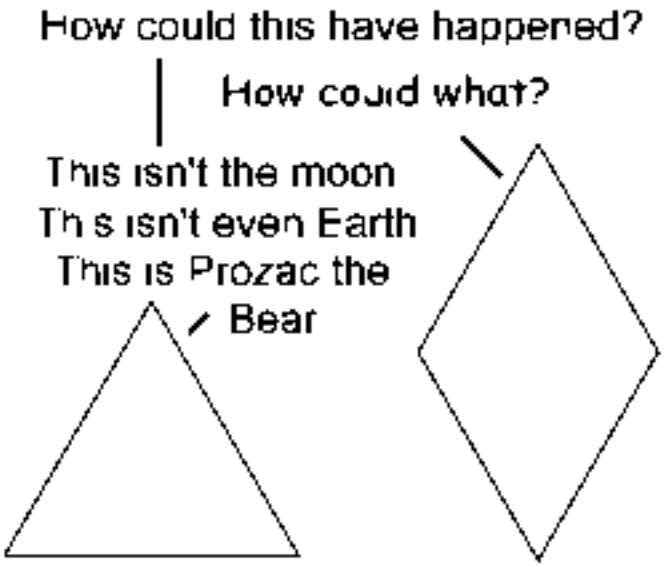
Triangle and Robert

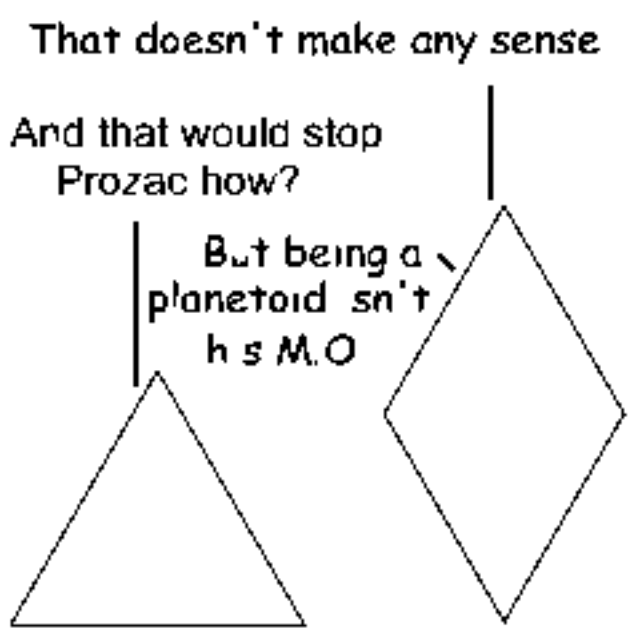


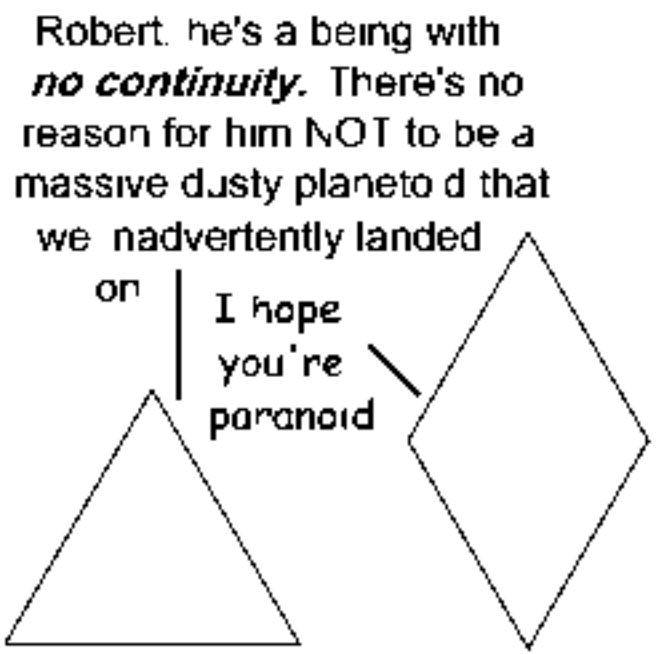


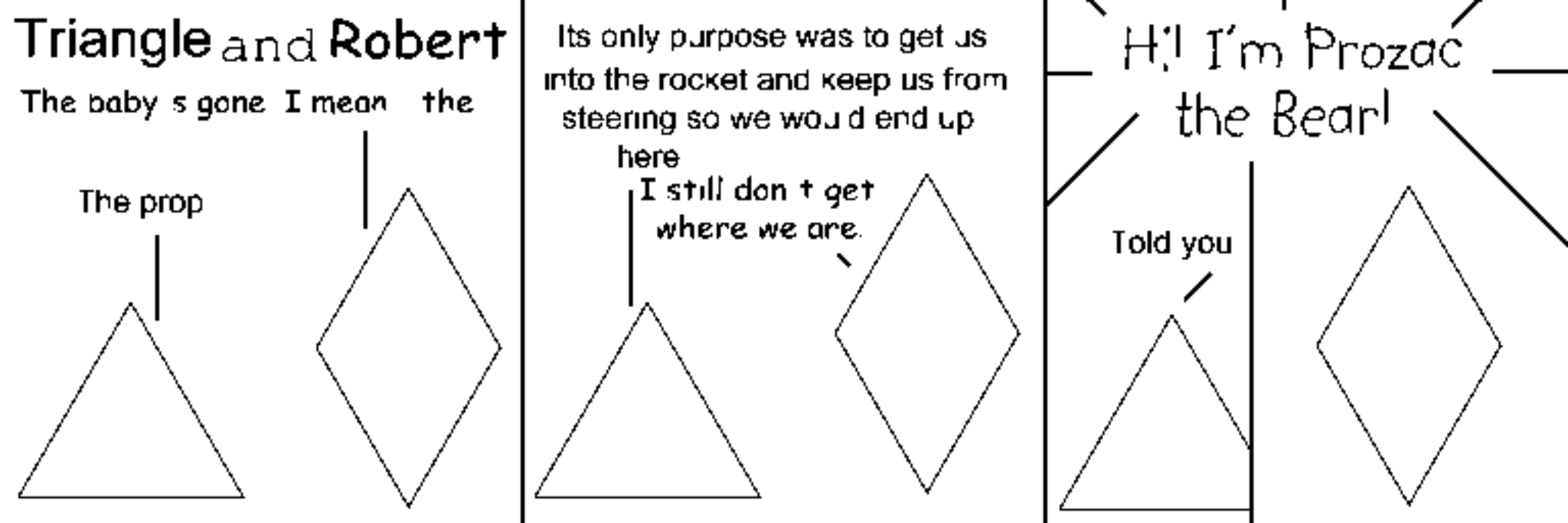


Triangle and Robert

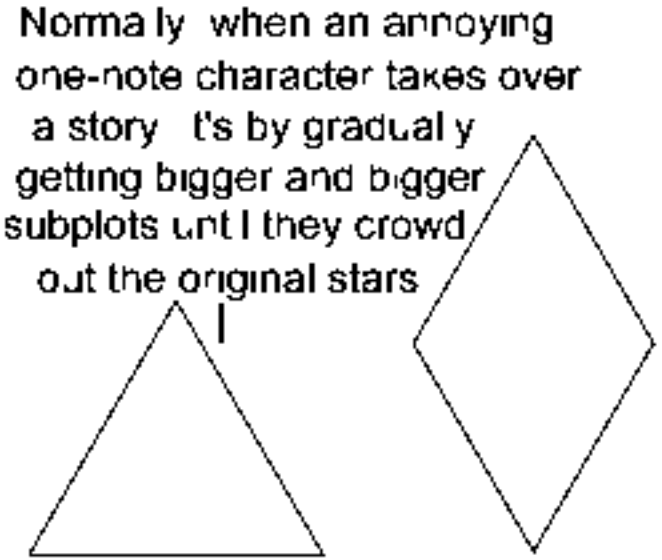


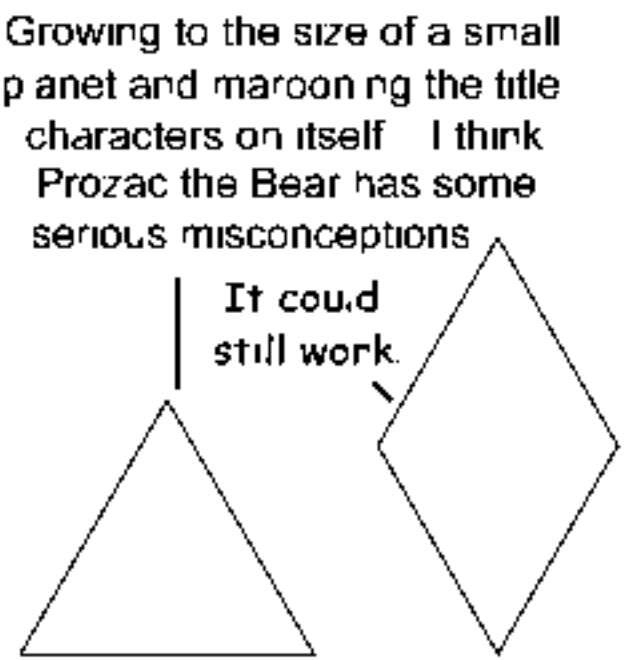


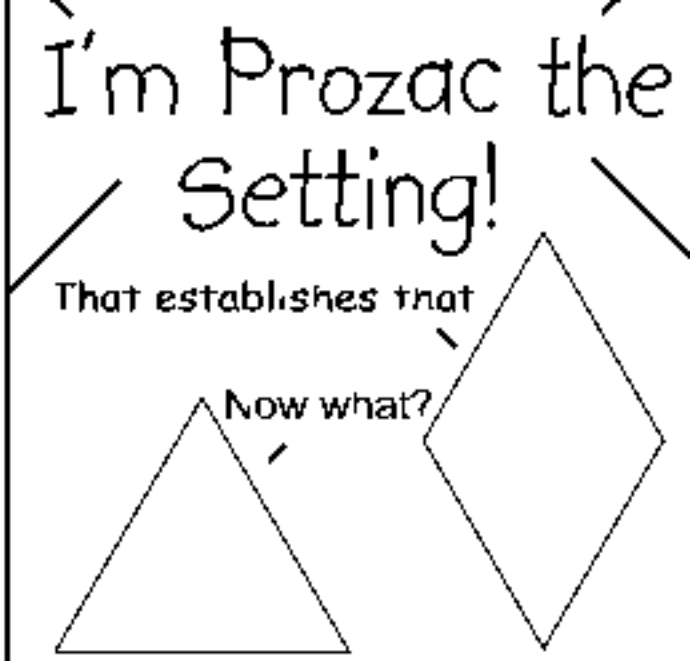


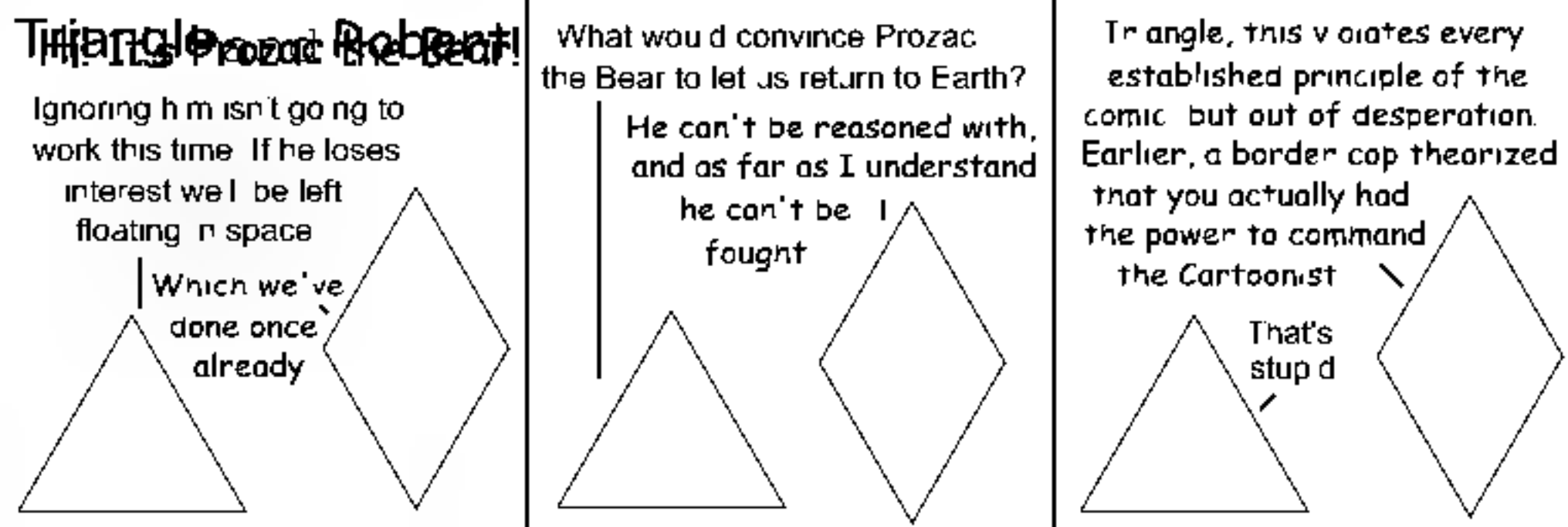

Triangle and Robert
The baby s gone I mean the
The prop
Its only purpose was to get us into the rocket and keep us from steering so we wou d end up here
I still don t get where we are.
H!I I'm Prozac the Bear!
Told you

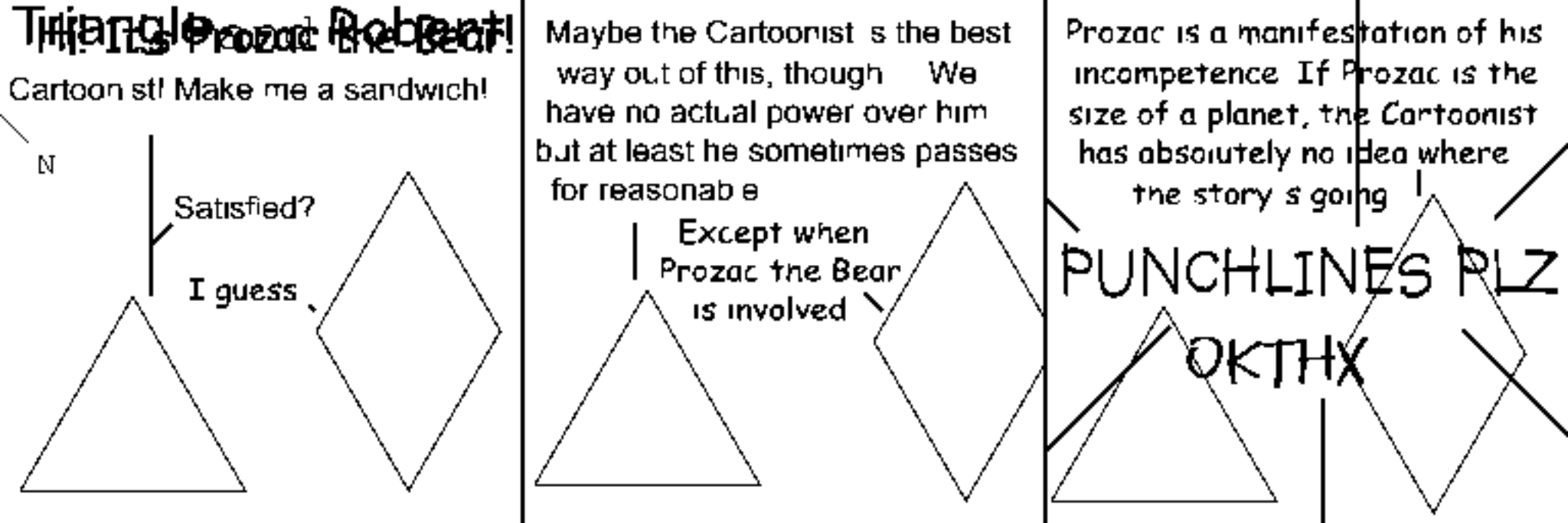
Triangle and Robert





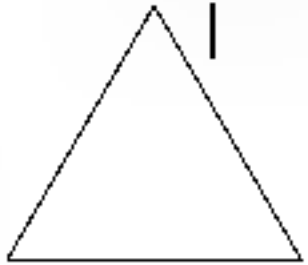


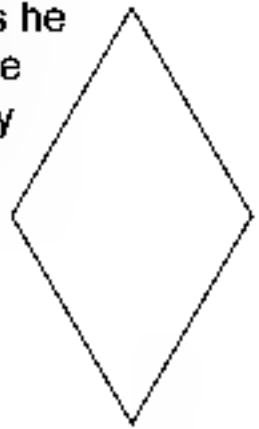

Triangle and Rhombus!
It's Prozac the Bear!
Ignoring him isn't going to work this time. If he loses interest we'll be left floating in space
Which we've done once already
What would convince Prozac the Bear to let us return to Earth?
He can't be reasoned with, and as far as I understand he can't be fought
Triangle, this violates every established principle of the comic but out of desperation. Earlier, a border cop theorized that you actually had the power to command the Cartoonist
That's stupid


Triangle Robert!
It's Prozac the Bear!
Cartoon st! Make me a sandwich!
N
Satisfied?
I guess
Maybe the Cartoonist s the best way out of this, though We have no actual power over him but at least he sometimes passes for reasonab e
Except when Prozac the Bear is involved
Prozac is a manifestation of his incompetence If Prozac is the size of a planet, the Cartoonist has absolutely no idea where the story s going
PUNCHLINES PLZ
OKTHX

Triangle and Robert
Hi! It's Frozde the Bear

The Cartoonist has to write us
say ng th ngs. so in theory we can't
give him any ideas he
d dn t a ready have
But we can stil try

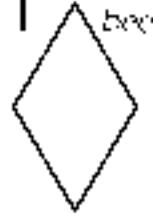




Maybe he writes our dia ogue
from a different part of himself
than he uses for p otting

Maybe he knows exactly what
he's do ng and this whole
plotless twist is to make a
del berate point

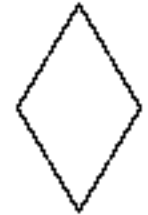
Maybe I know that she s
been cheating

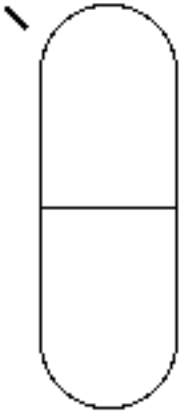


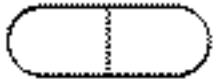
What?

Maybe I know that
she s been untrue
bu t what can I do
ooo?

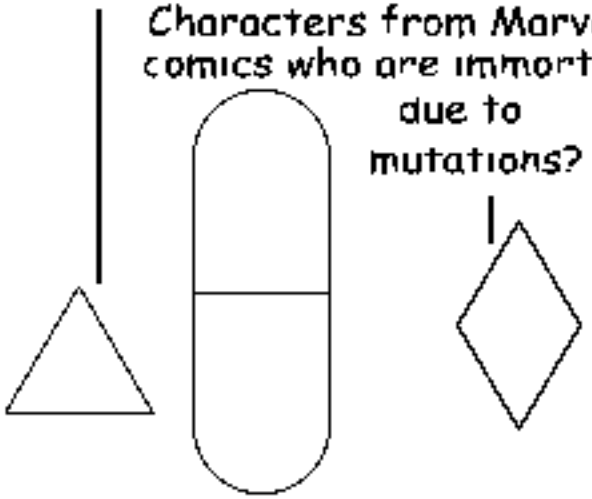
Now scaling
issues?

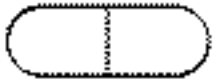




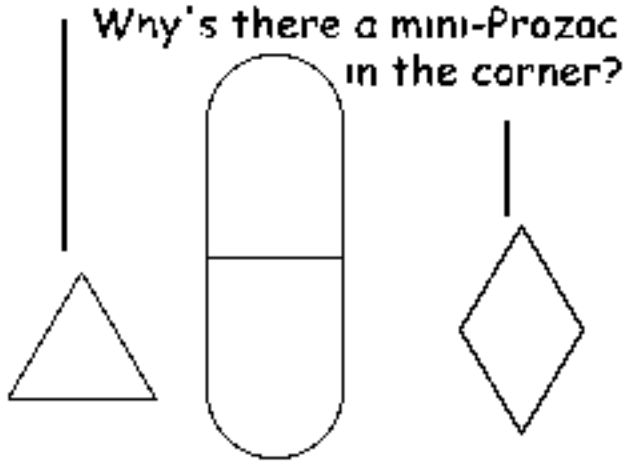


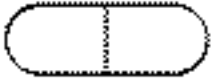
Perhaps external help wi l arr ve



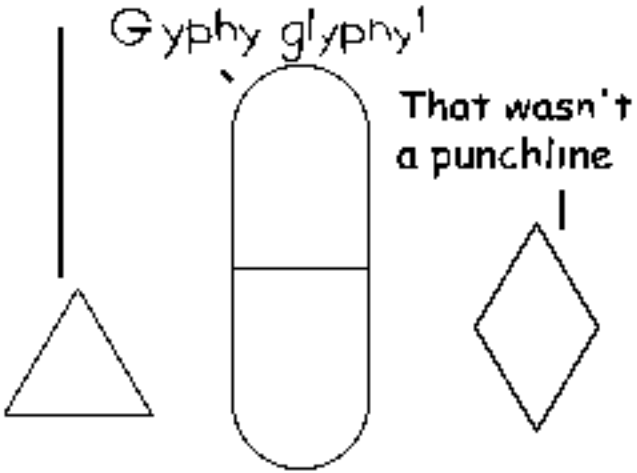


No was thinking more ike the Sentr es





We rd 'd assumed that was ust a glyph rep acing the tit e



So, guys what do you want to do?

To do? You re real y that ob vious aren't you?

You aren't one of us Prozac You never can be.

Of course I can I m the most pop. ar character n the com c!

The universe is not the com c. I guess you're too much a comic-bound being to grasp that

IS the universe more than the comic?

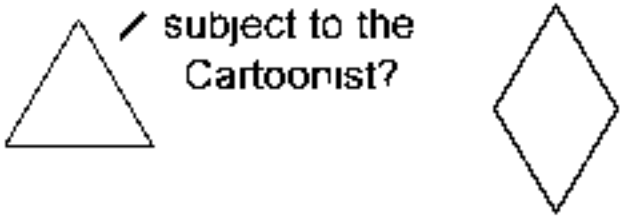
Robert?

What if the com c is all there s and the notion of an independent universe it intrudes on s just an invention of the Cartoonist? What f Prozac is as real as anything else we know?

I think it'd be more in-character for me to ask those quest ons Can I take over?

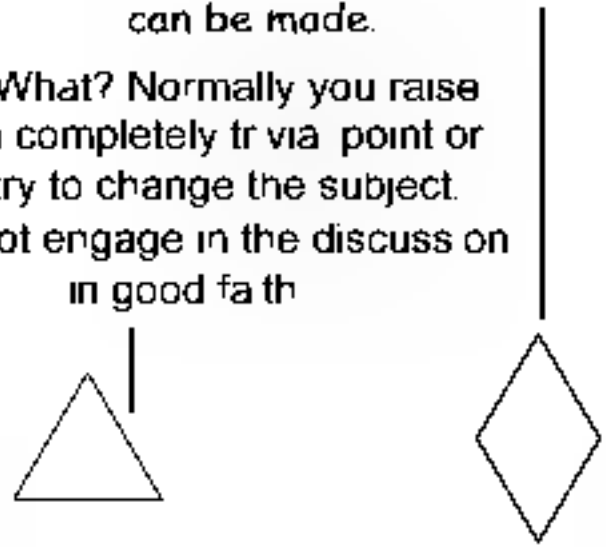
Triangle and Robert

The com c makes the claim that things constantly happen off-panel between strips, and without be ng referred to at all What reason do we have to accept this claim given that our own memor es are subject to the Cartoonist?



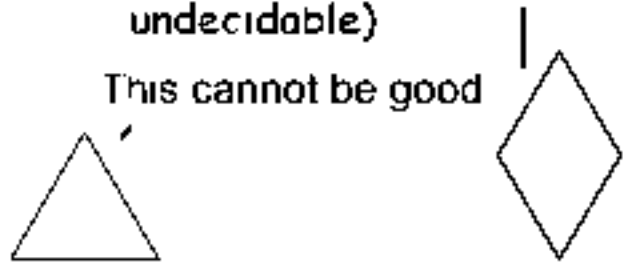
From only the current state, no induct ons whatsoever can be made.

What? Normally you raise a completely tr via point or try to change the subject. not engage in the discuss on in good fa th

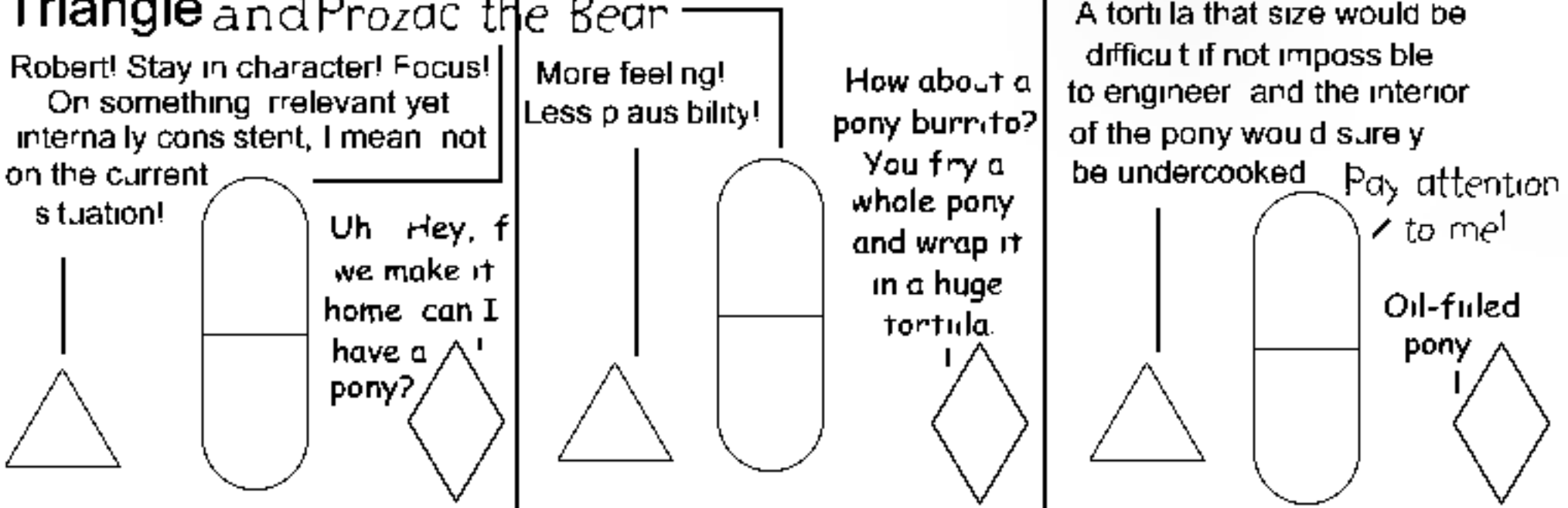


You re right My characterizat on is off This could be expected, g ven the sustained proximity of Prozac the Bear (although the question of whether Prozac is the cause or a symbol of the cause is open and possibly undecidable)

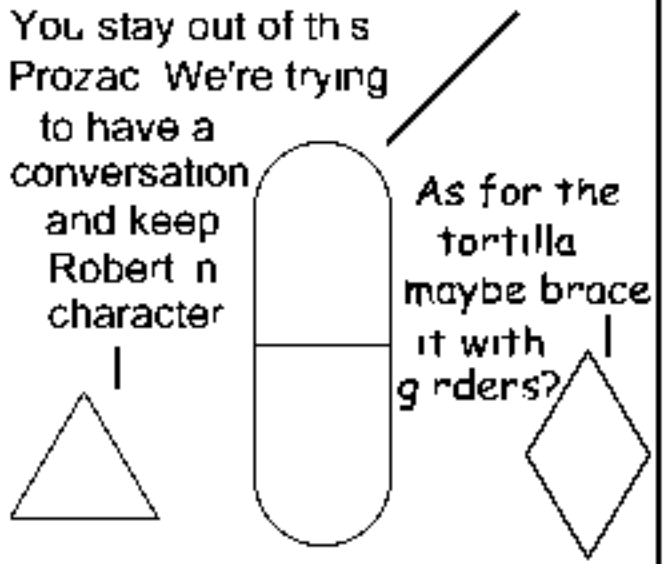
This cannot be good

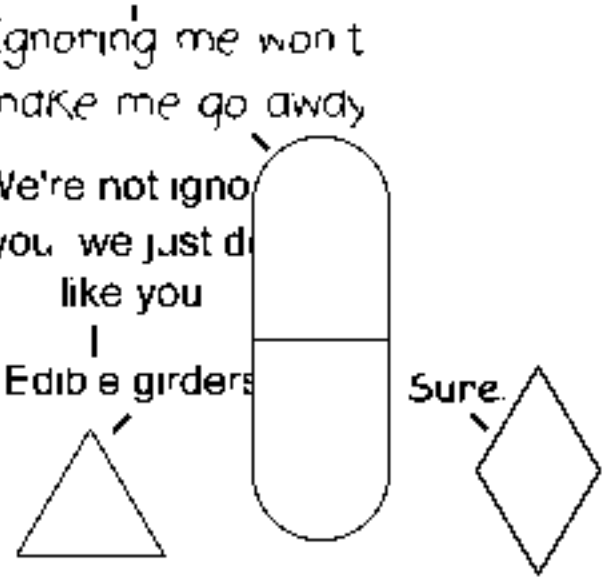


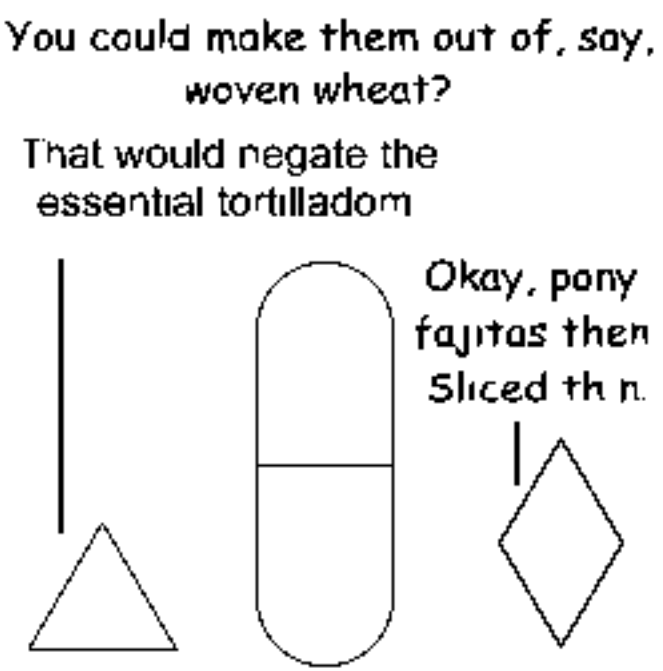
Triangle and Prozac the Bear



Triangle and Prozac the Bear

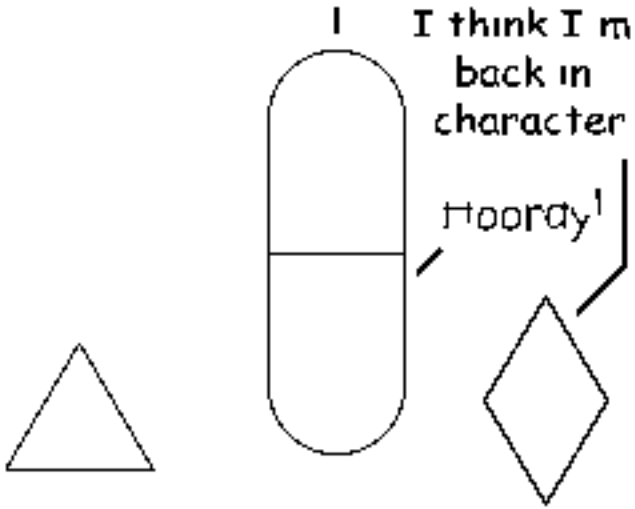


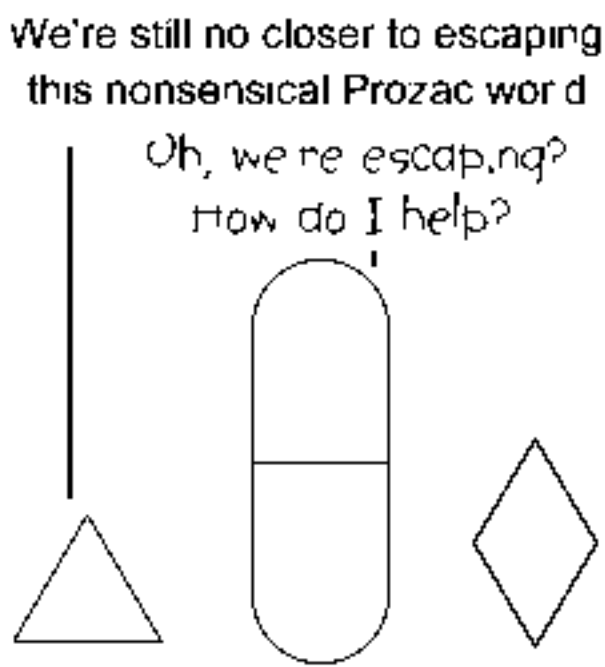


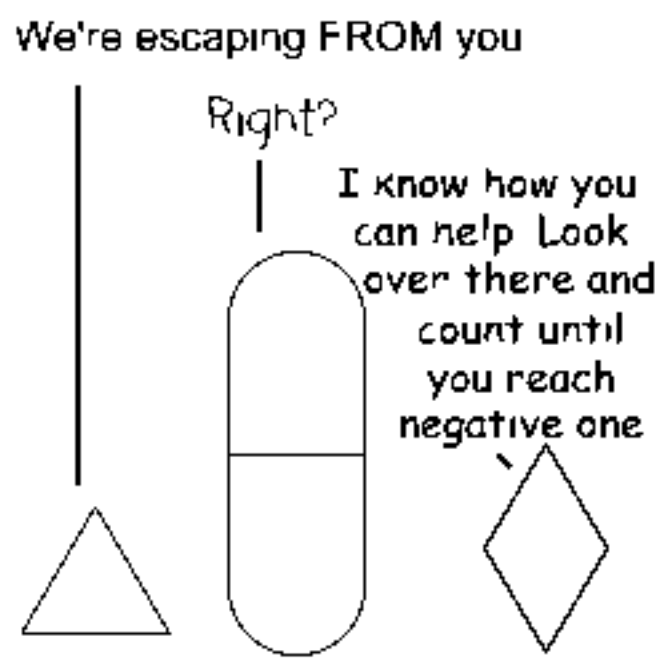


Triangle and Robert

and Prozac the Bear!

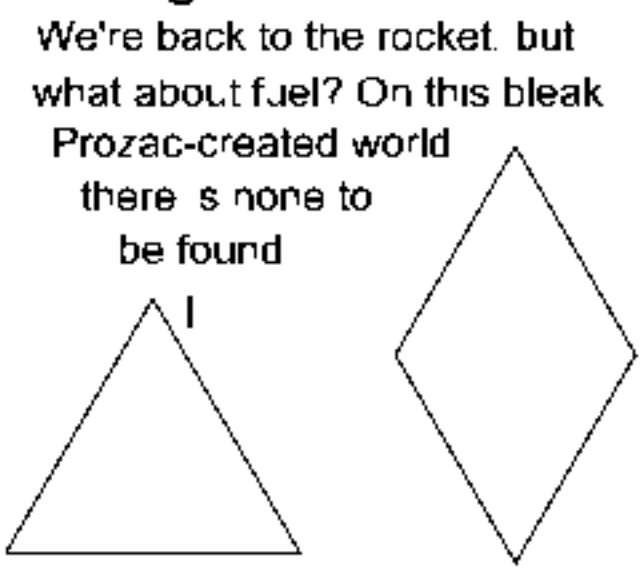


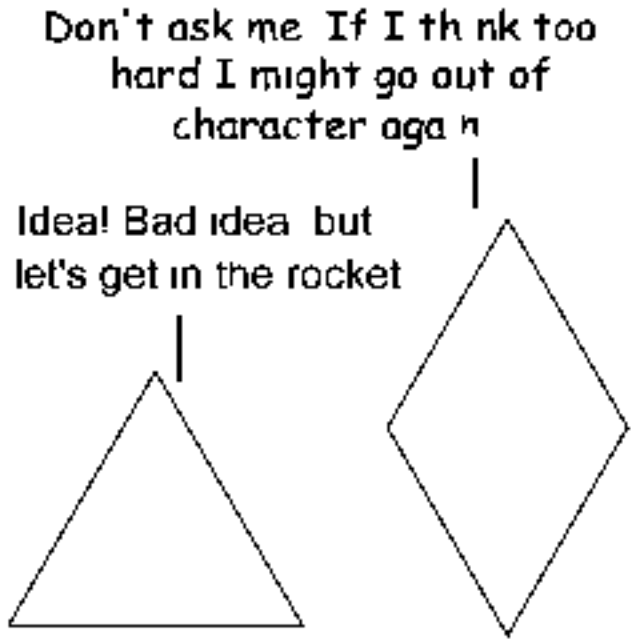


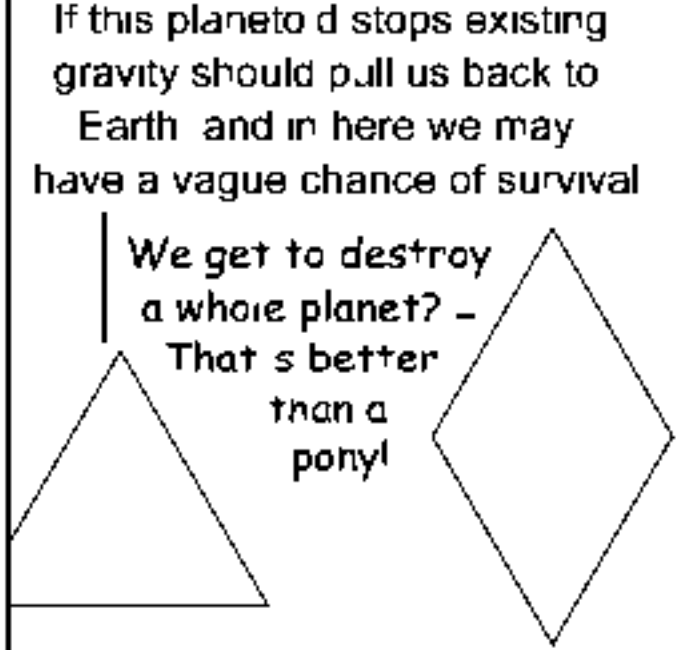


Triangle and Robert

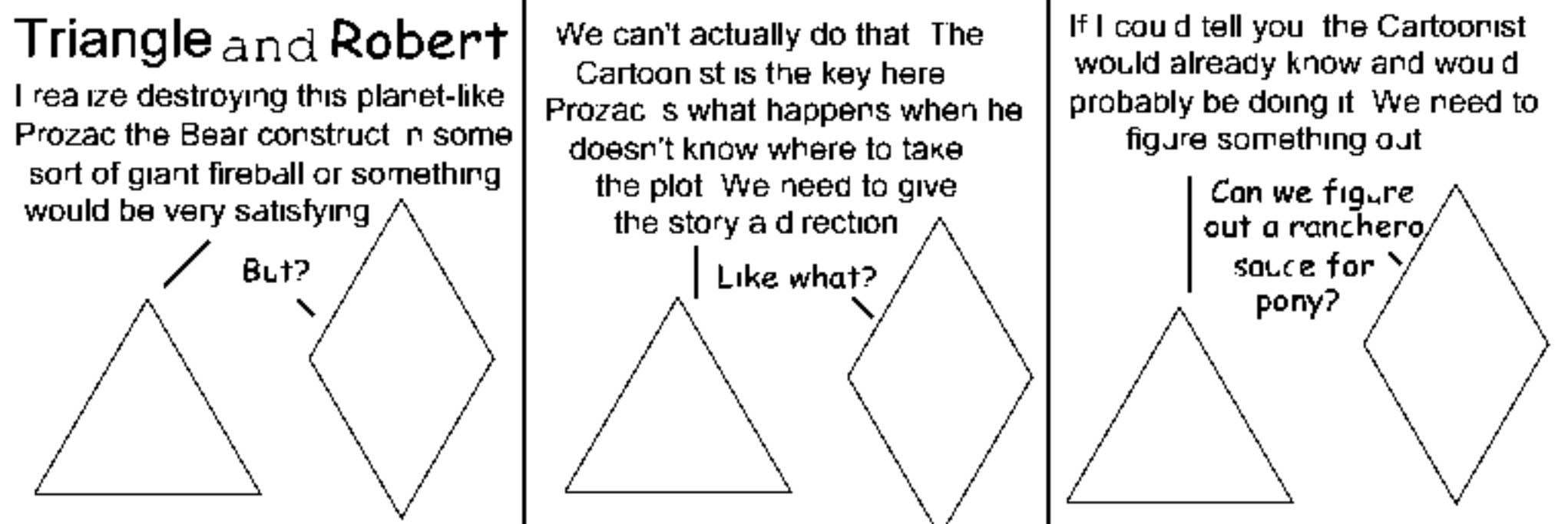
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



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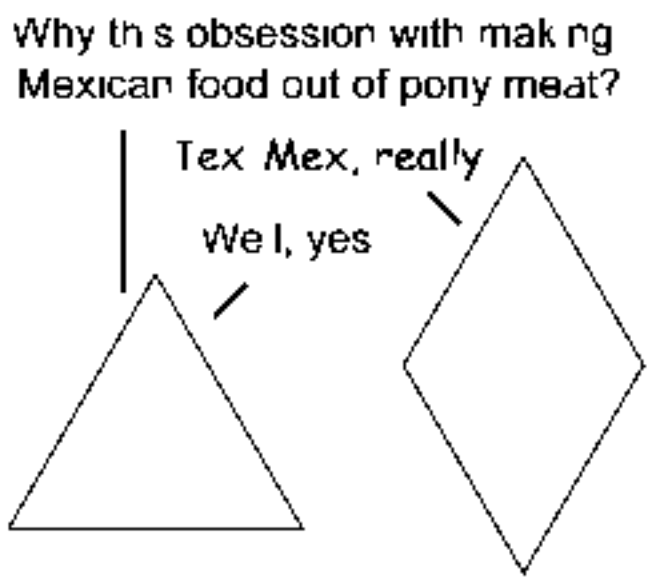
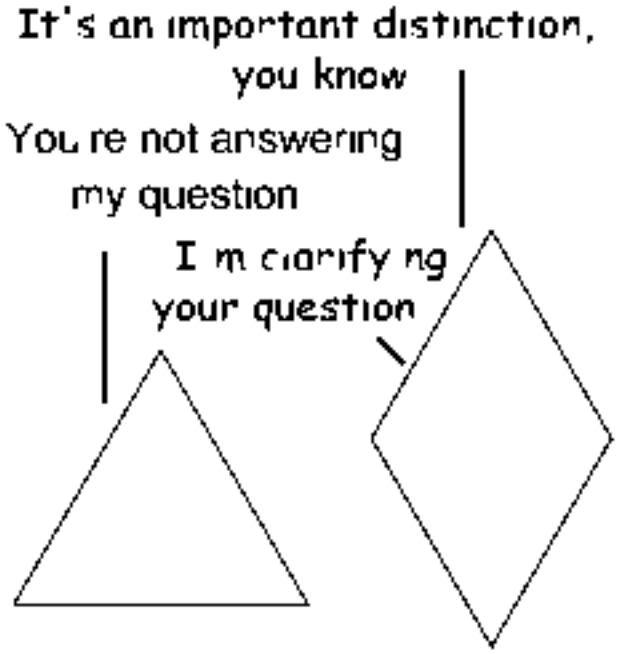
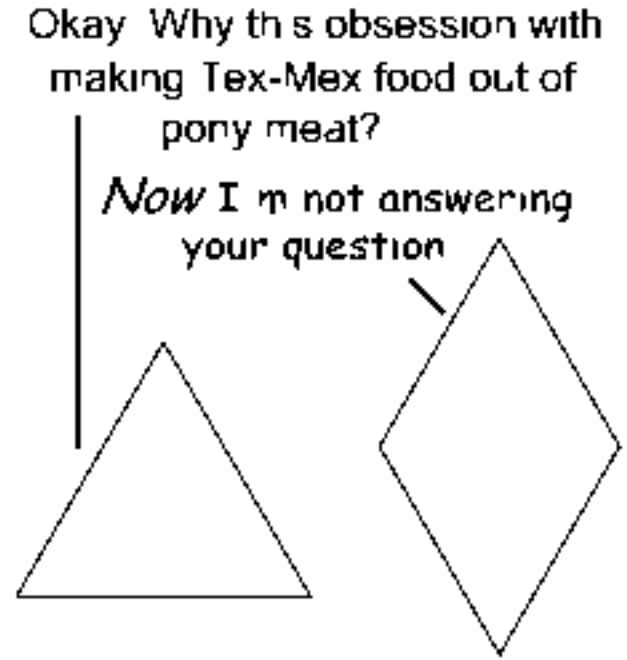
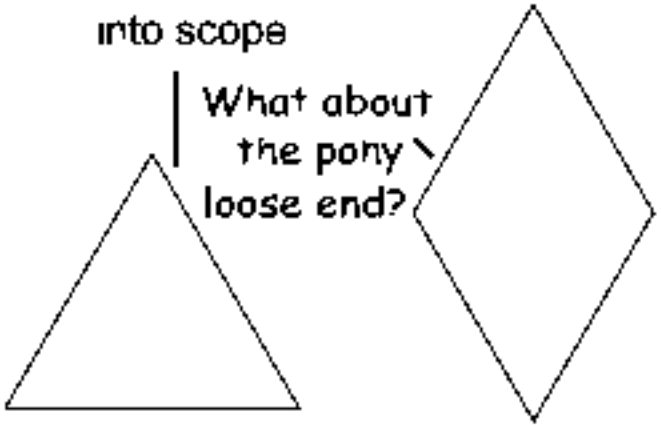
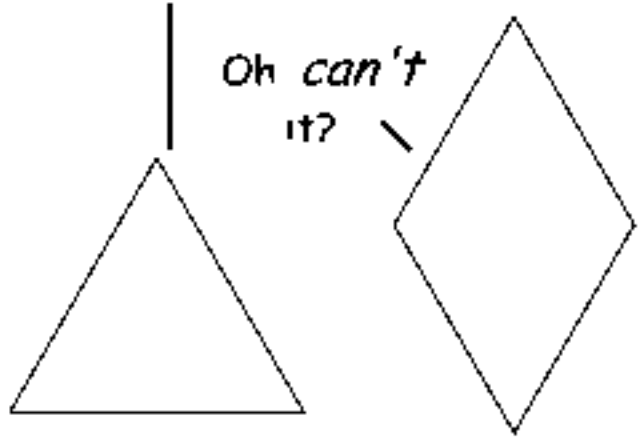


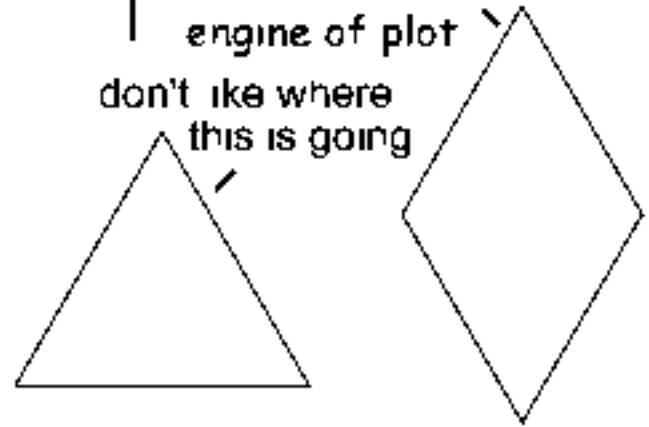




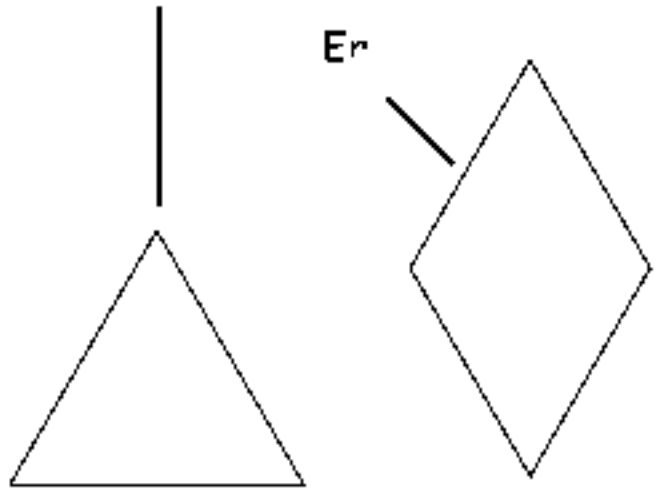
Triangle and Robert

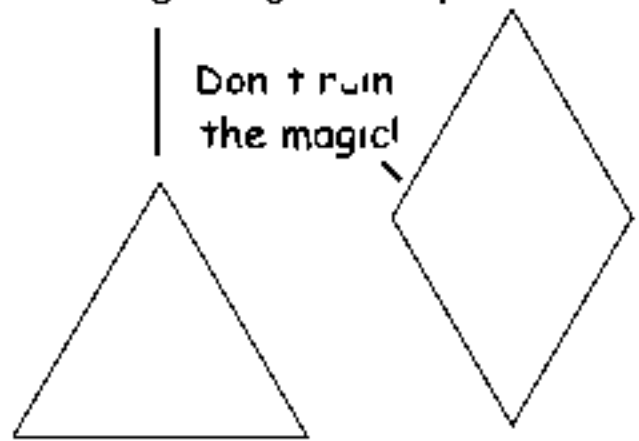






Triangle and Robert





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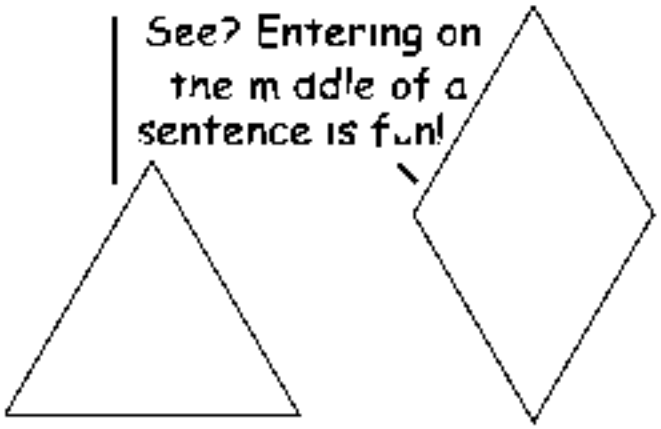
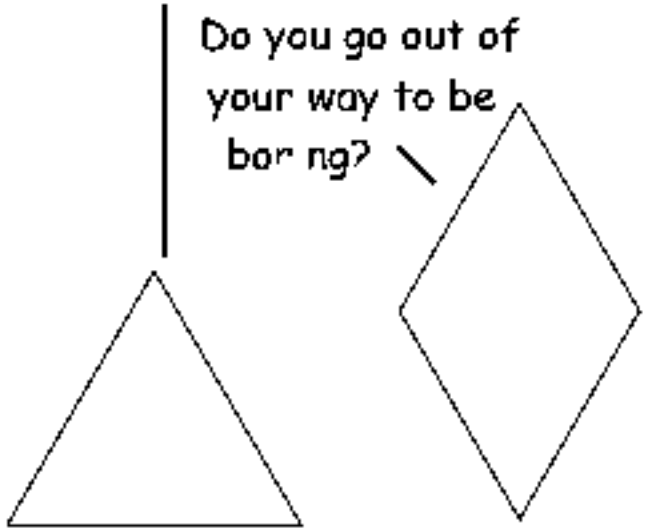
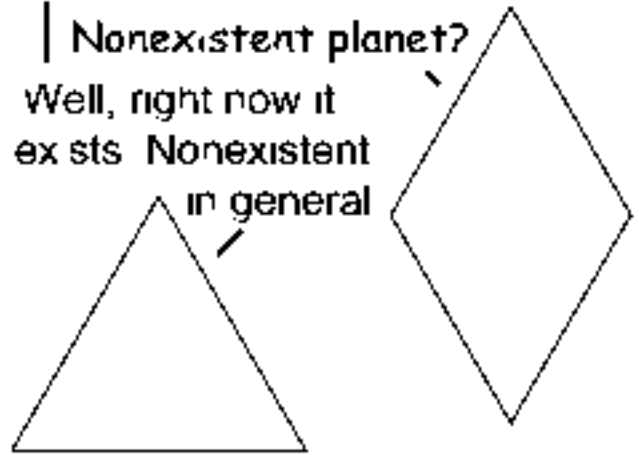
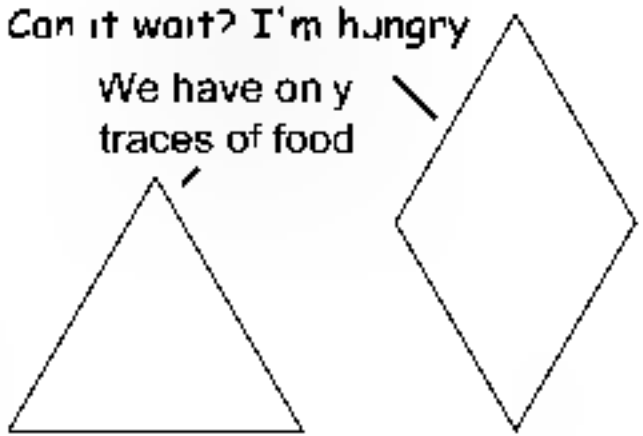
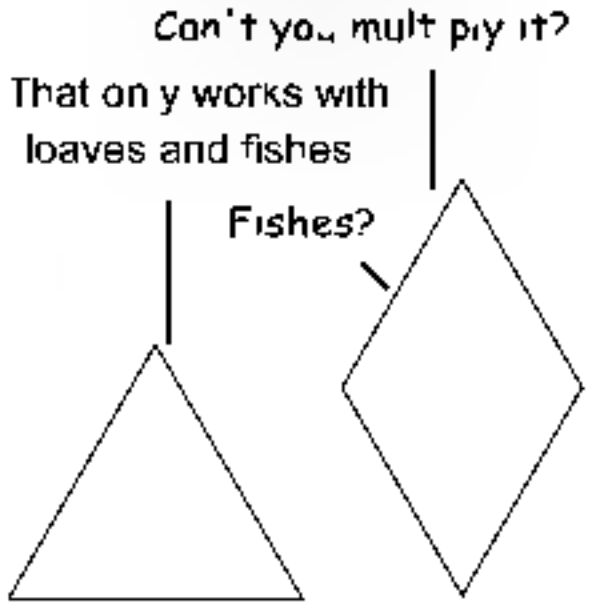


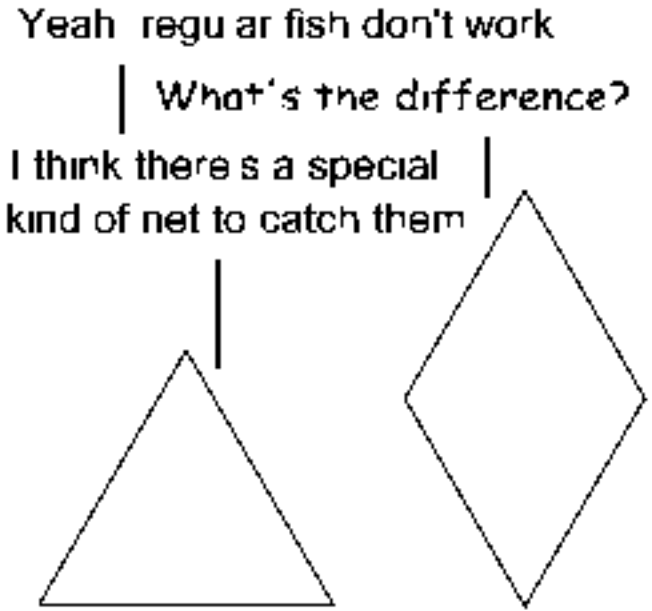




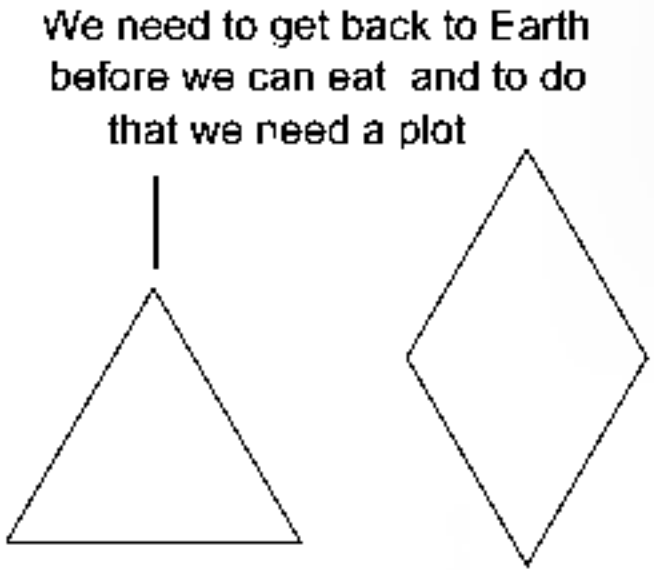
Triangle and Robert

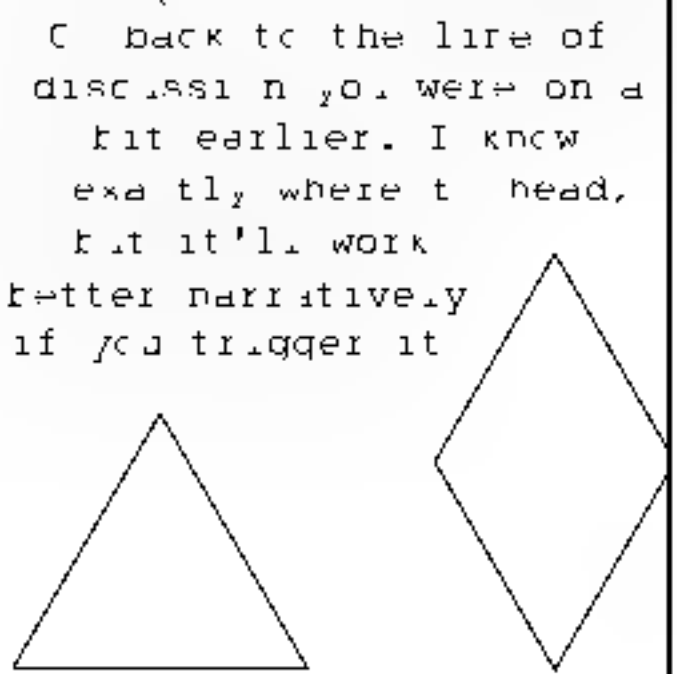


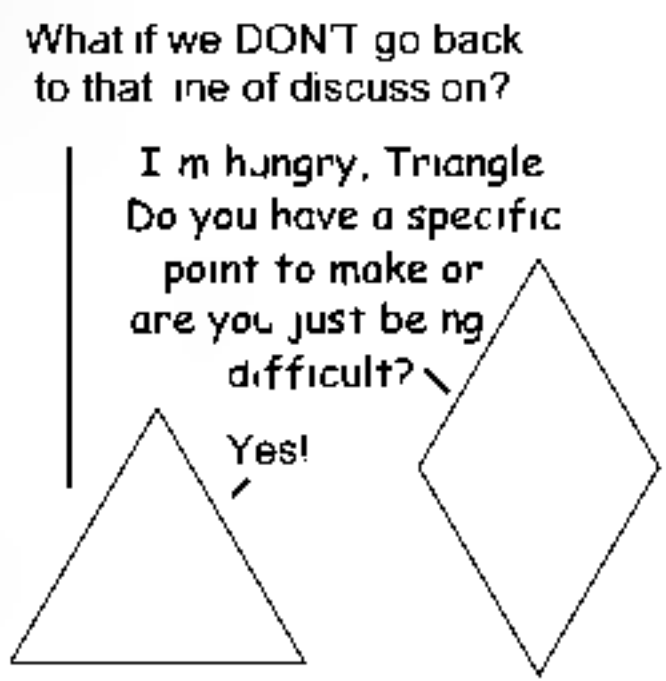




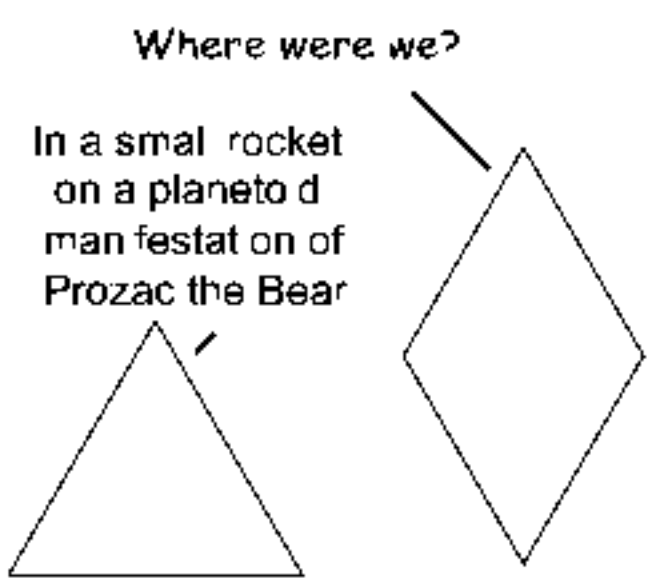
Triangle and Robert

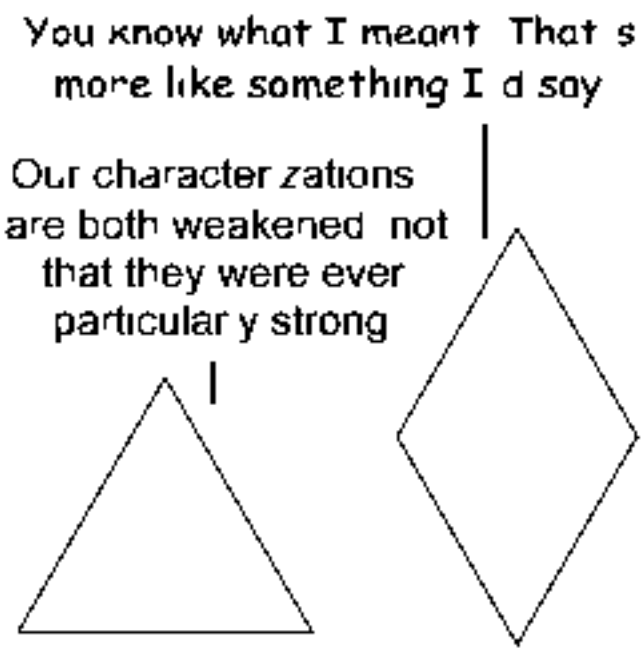






Triangle and Robert



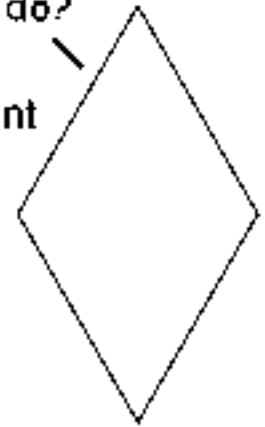


Triangle and Robert

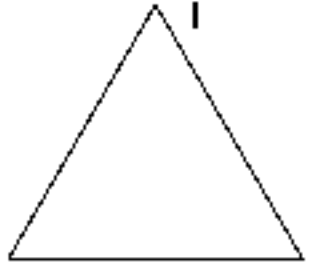
Having defined the problem we now take a more positive tack

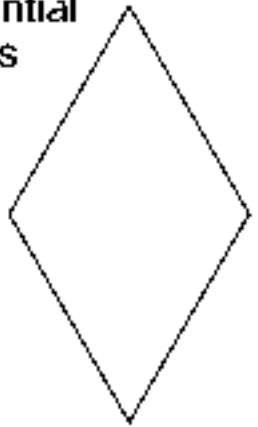
We do?

Well, I do guess you make interm ttent comments



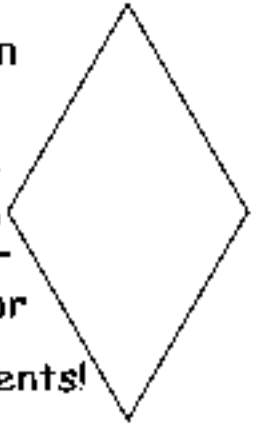
If we accept that what s direct y represented by a strip s true then the question may be asked Given the comic's tendency toward minimal and referential representations is there any real





d stinction between events dep cted and events referred to? It would appear that n the case of explicit references, there can be none

Hey! Leave some room in the — panel for my comments!



Triangle and Robert

Three problem categories exist
Some events are mentioned n the str p but at a ower level of deta l than needed to actua ly define them

Semicolon

some events are imp ied with no description at all, and some time gaps exist for which no events are g ven

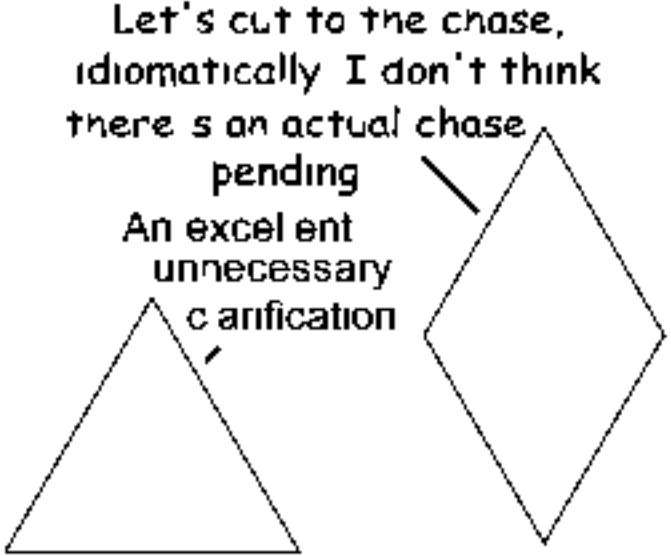
One might posit that the first two of these cases involve a sort of superposit on of rea ities

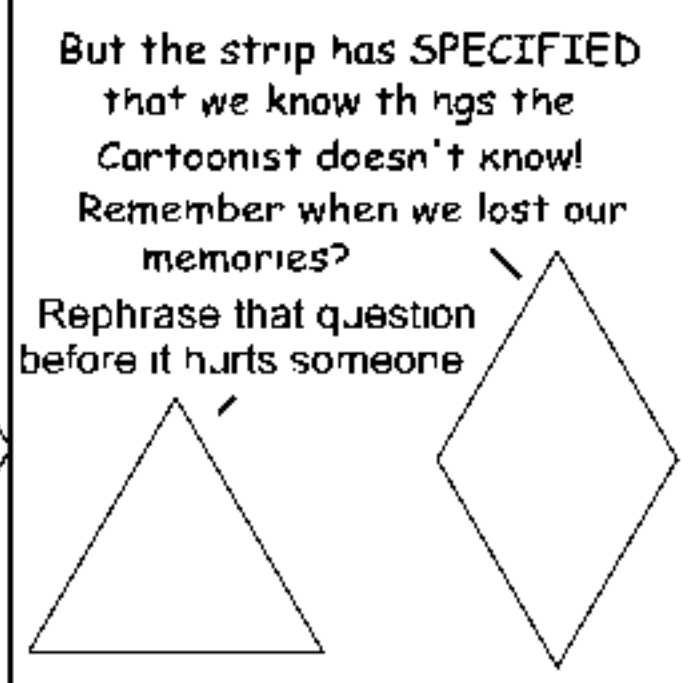
ellipsis,

however one might a so posit that the events have n fact occured in a specific fashion which has simply not been po nted out How best can this issue be resolved?

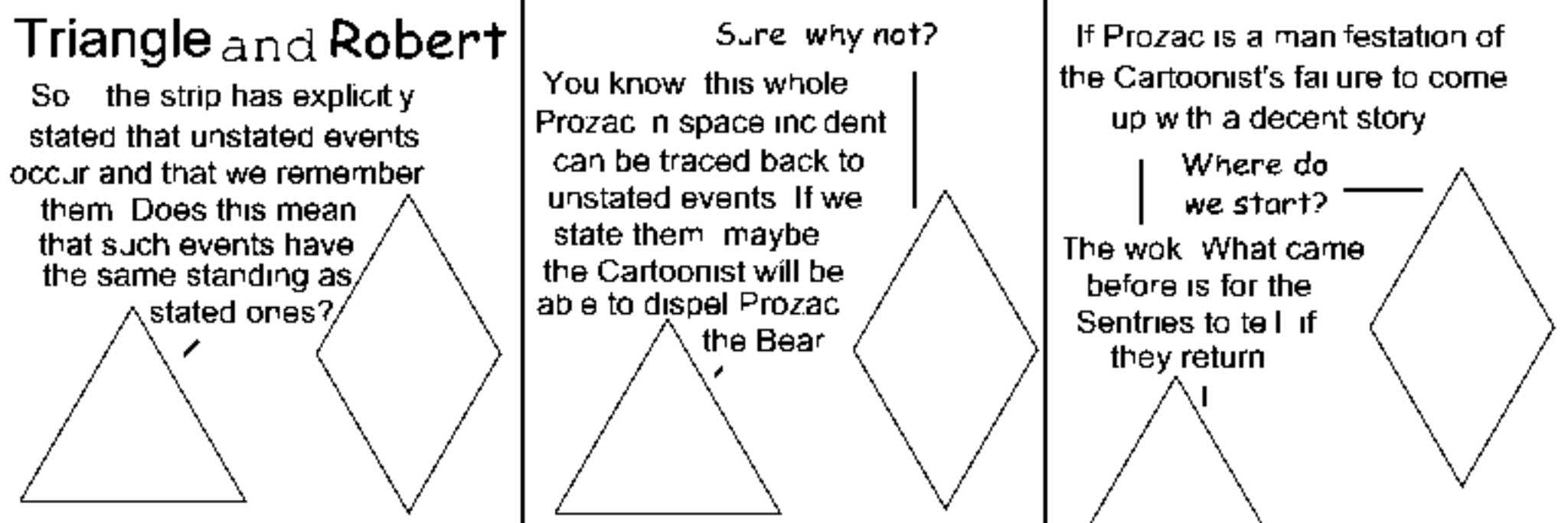
I was hungry, now I'm bored and hungry

Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert



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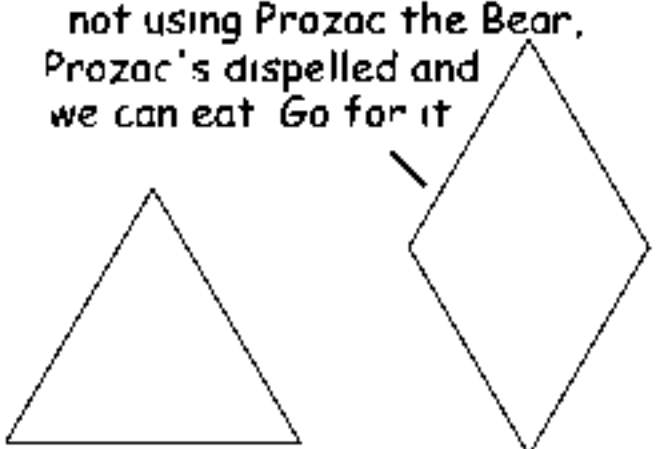
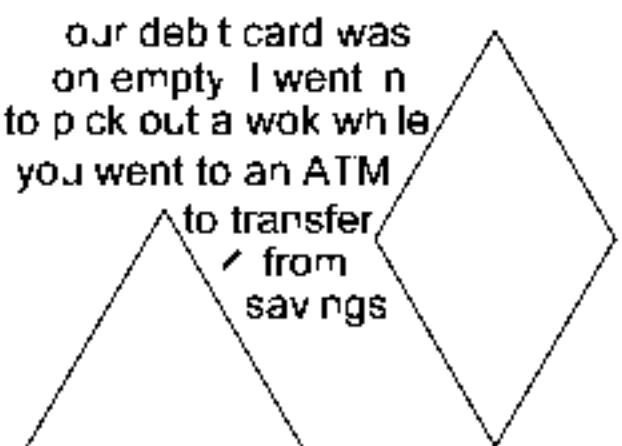
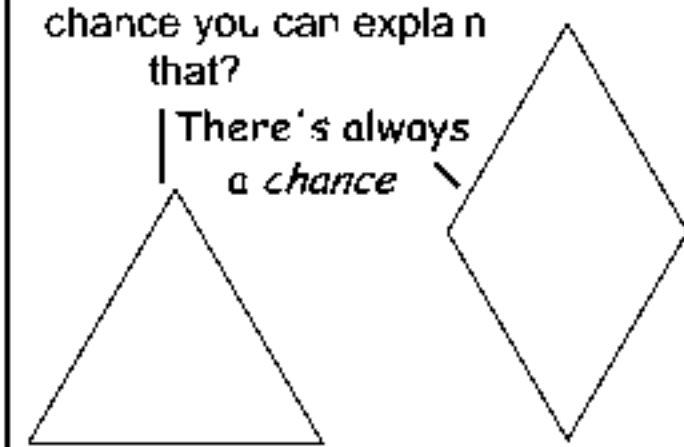
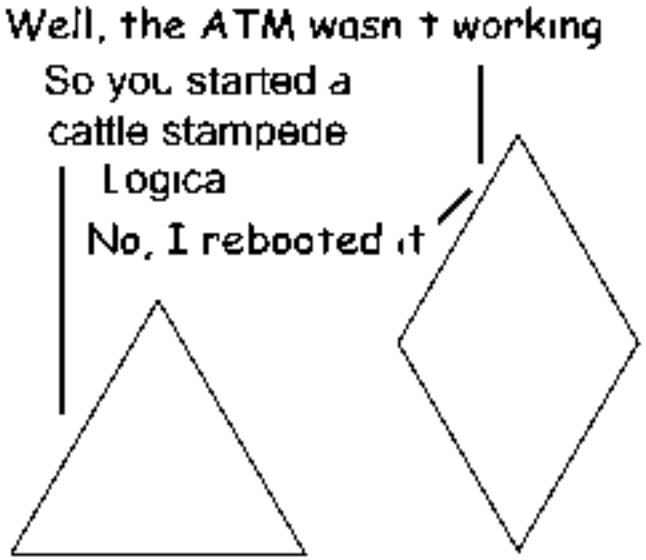
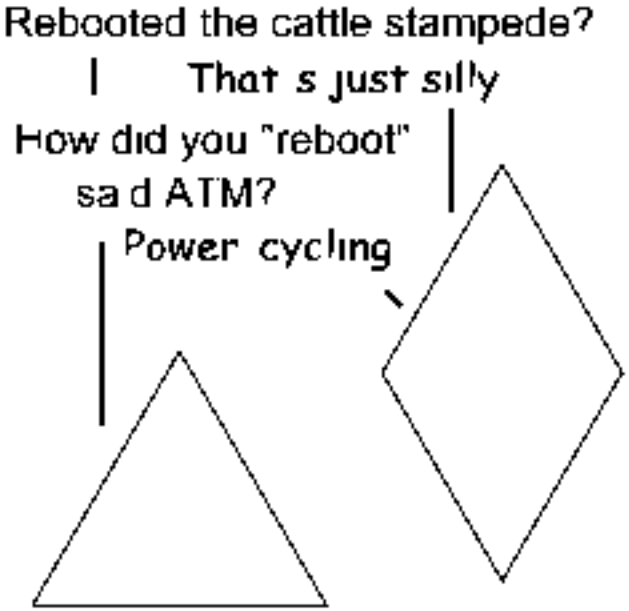


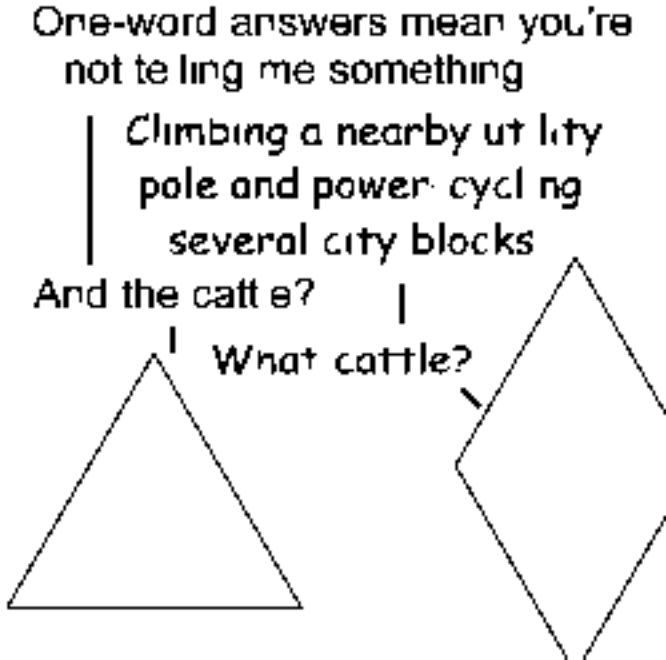




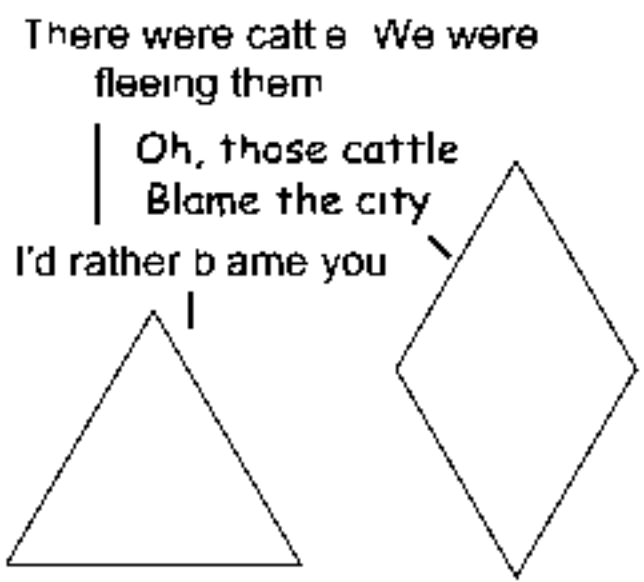
Triangle and Robert

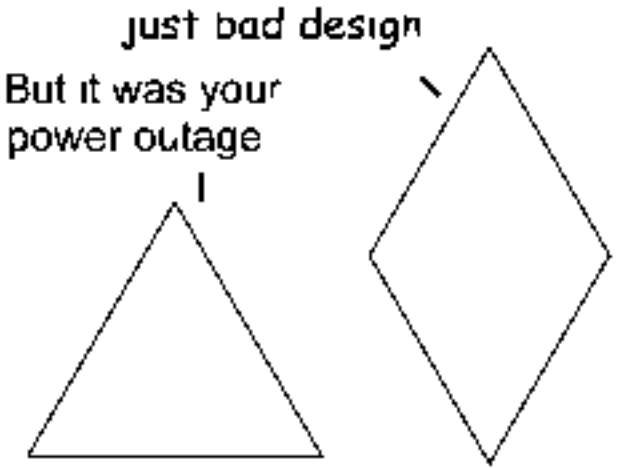


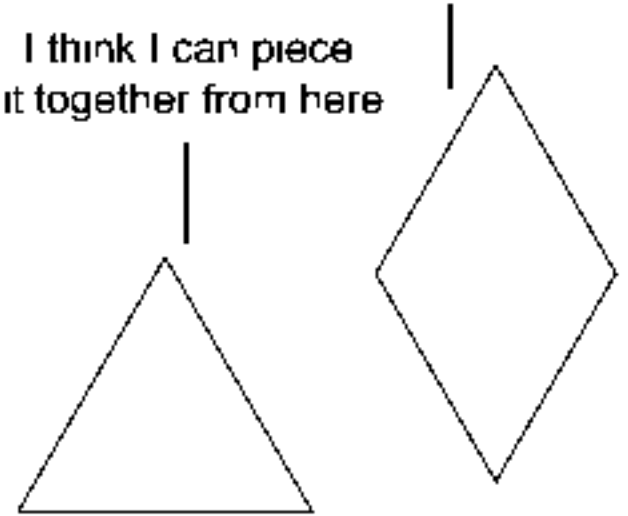




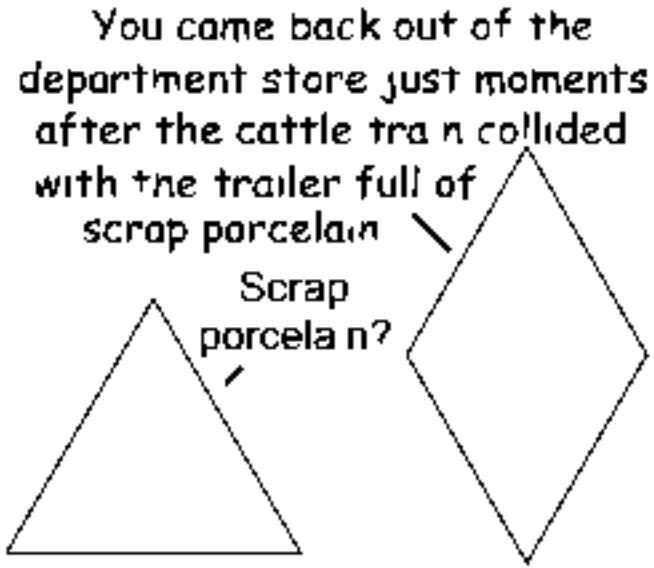
Triangle and Robert

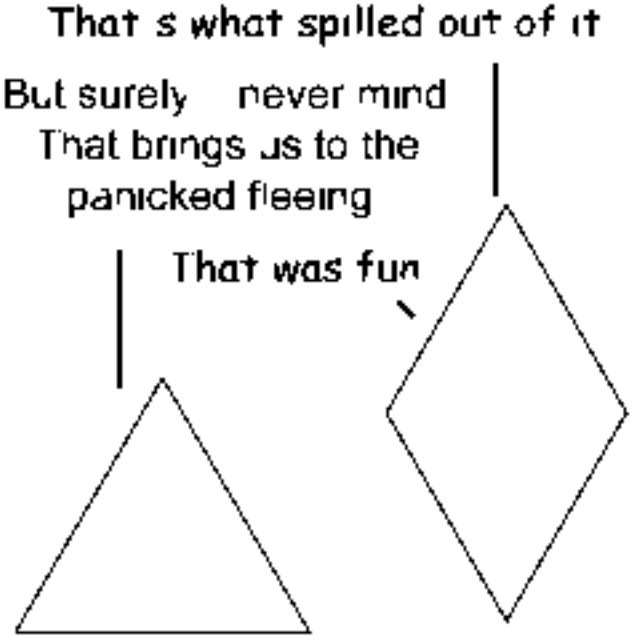


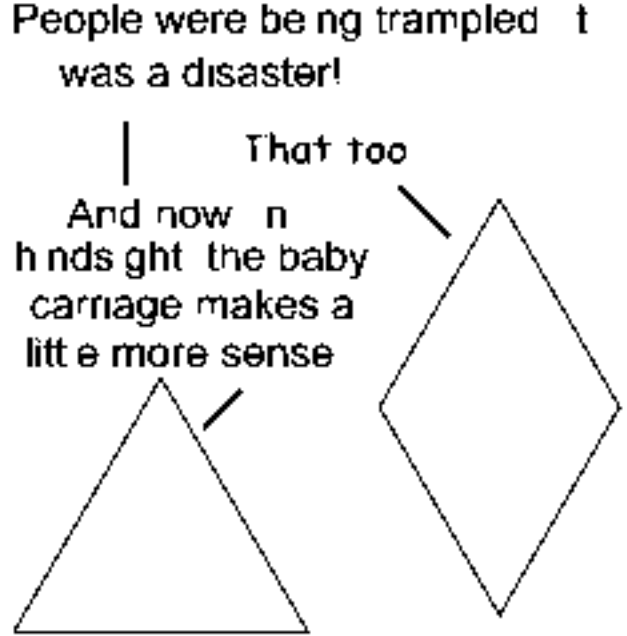




Triangle and Robert



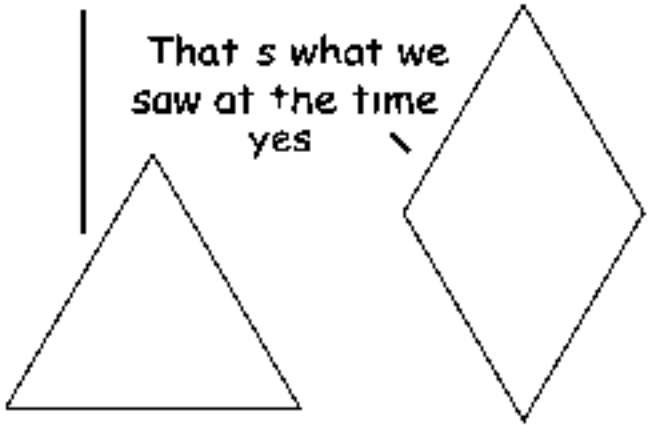




Triangle and Robert

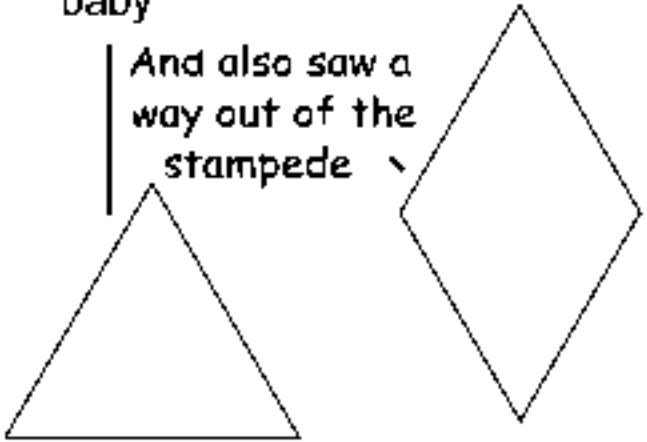
F ee ng the cattle as part of a large crowd we saw a couple abandon a baby carriage

That s what we saw at the time yes



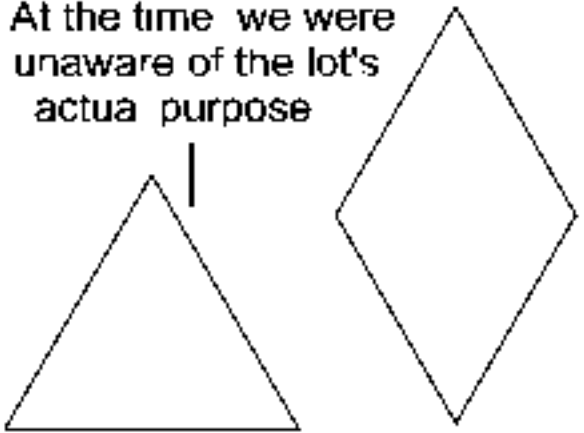
The carriage slid to the side of the road Worried about the possible baby therein, we ran to it and saw within what did appear to be a baby

And also saw a way out of the stampede

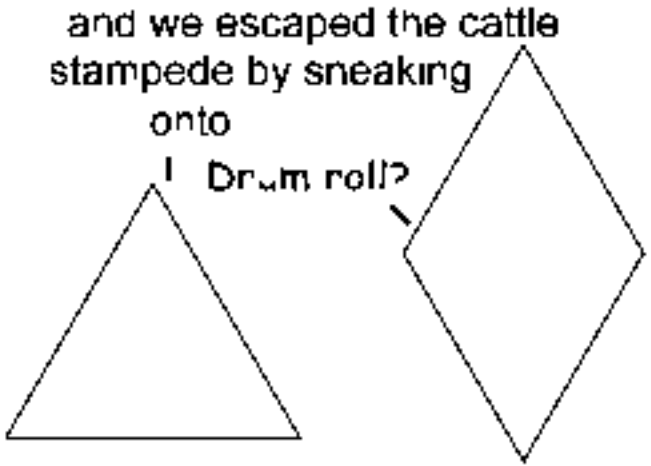


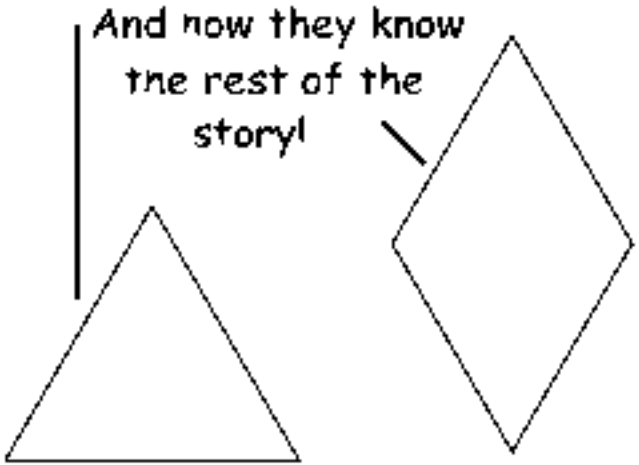
Yes Some sort of large indeterminate lot was fenced off and the baby carriage was right next to a hole in the fence

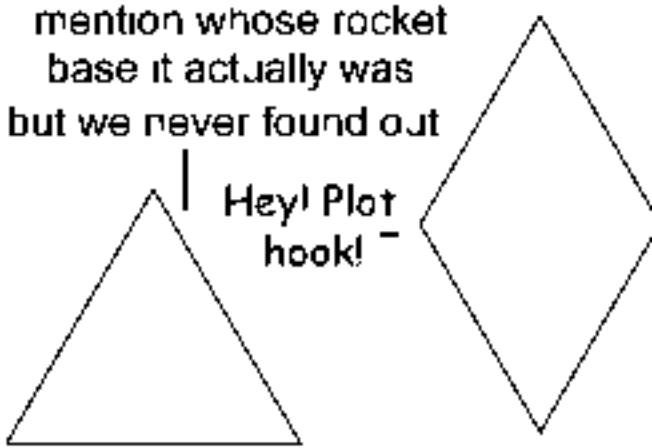
At the time we were unaware of the lot's actua purpose



Triangle and Robert







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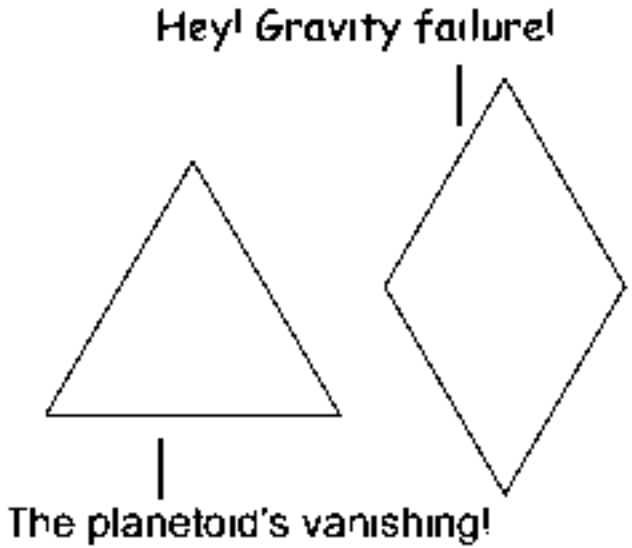
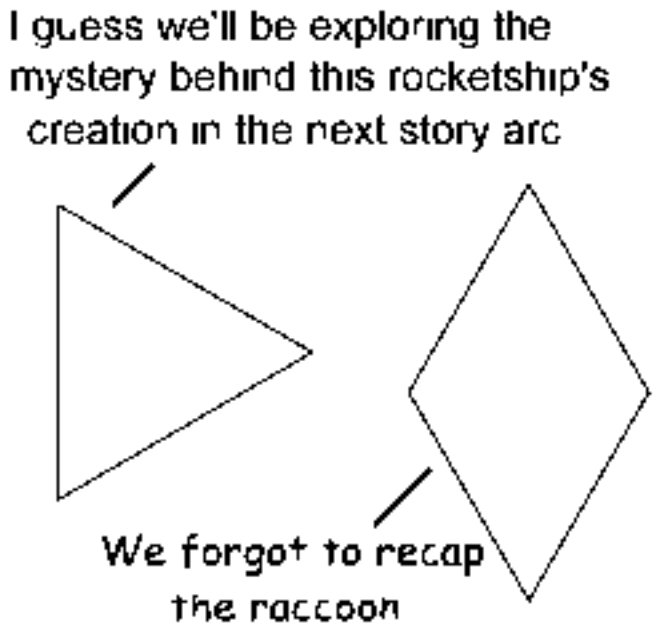
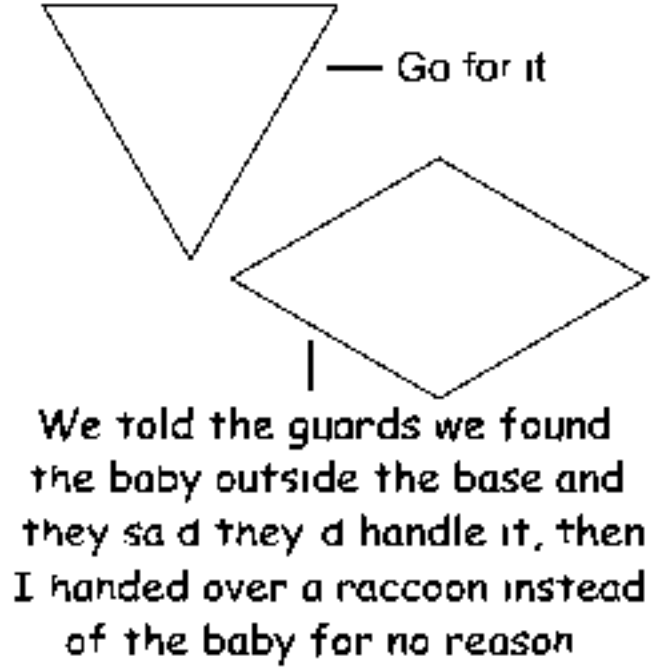






I'd prefer not burning

What sort of radial search
[illegible]

Anagram

How many letters
[illegible]

I think the Surfaceth
negative sig [illegible] as
"spiral" is a [illegible]

Truth Stalking, full file radial
[illegible]

It wasn't really a
serious suggestion.

Use gaussian function
where was the lecture?

Double Long Angular

Computational skip coding
up bong the Fourier transform

Is anyone following
the [illegible]?

Lagrange like
problem [illegible]
[illegible]

In case of [illegible]
explosion

Your full line a [illegible]
is anything?

I hope not

Hello?

[illegible]

[illegible]

We're not the real [illegible]. We were only a great many of mistaken identity. We just pretended to be the [illegible]. [illegible] the ground [illegible] wouldn't [illegible] on.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

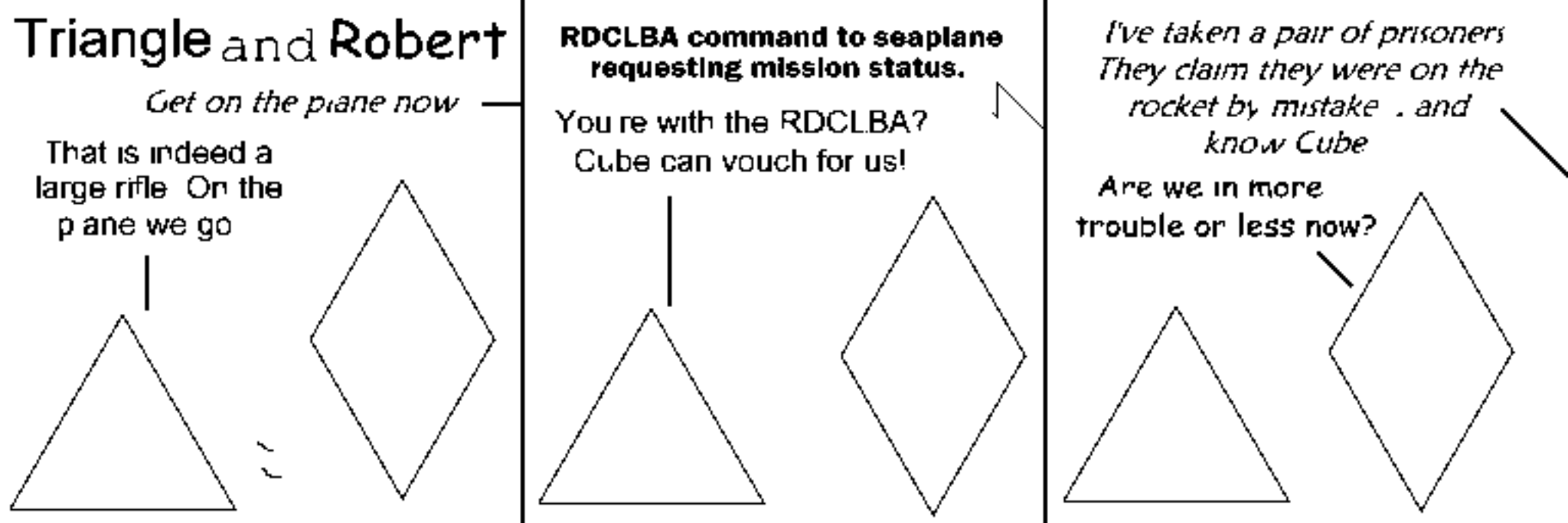
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Triangle and Robert



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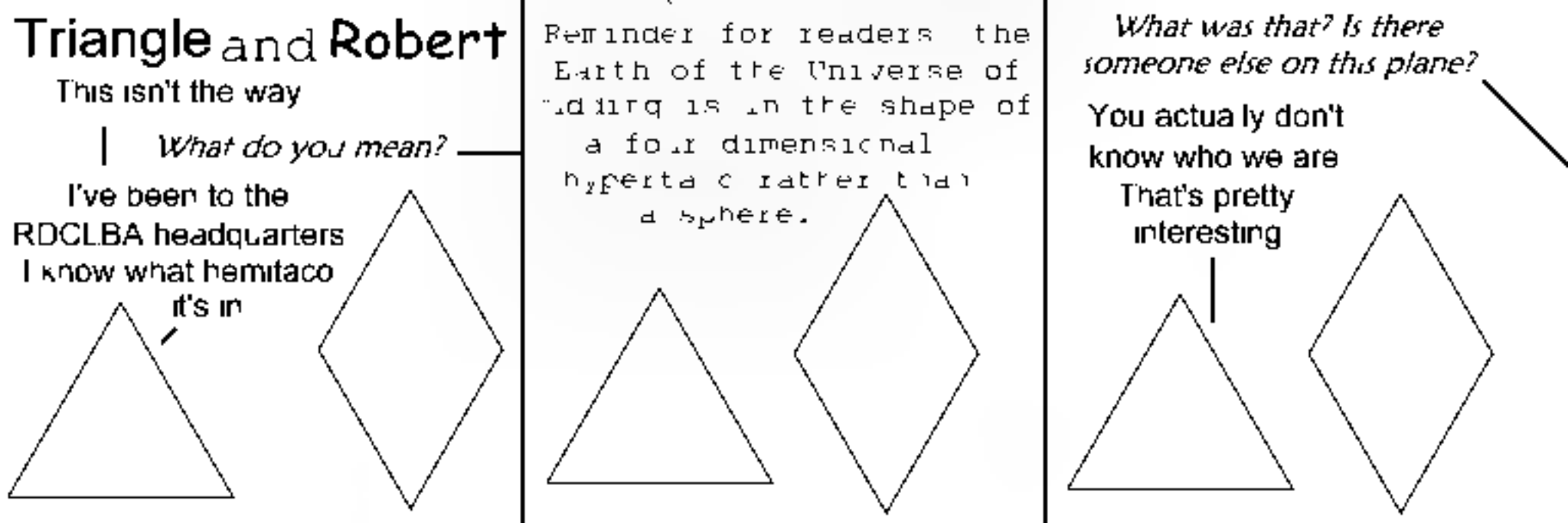

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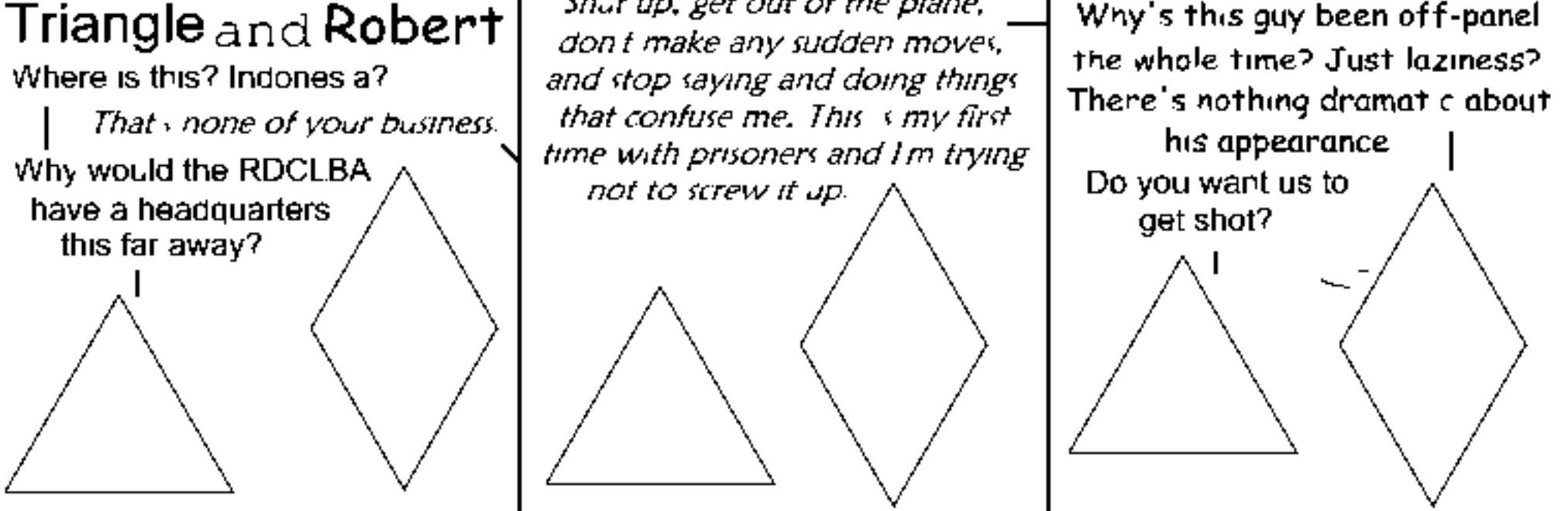

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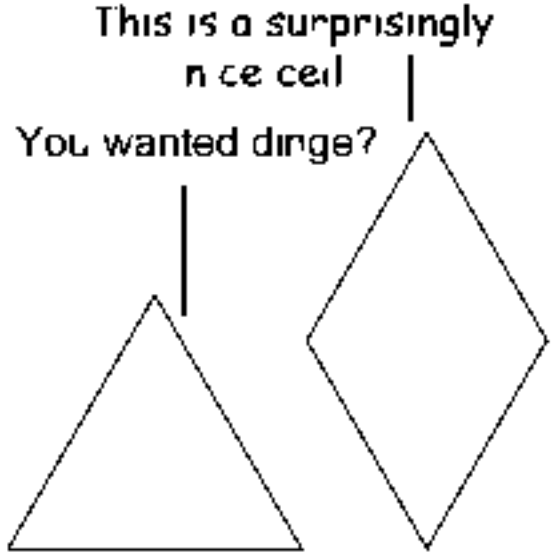

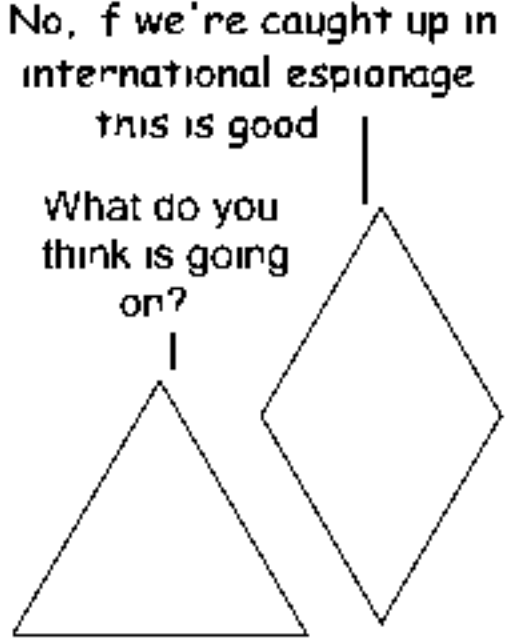

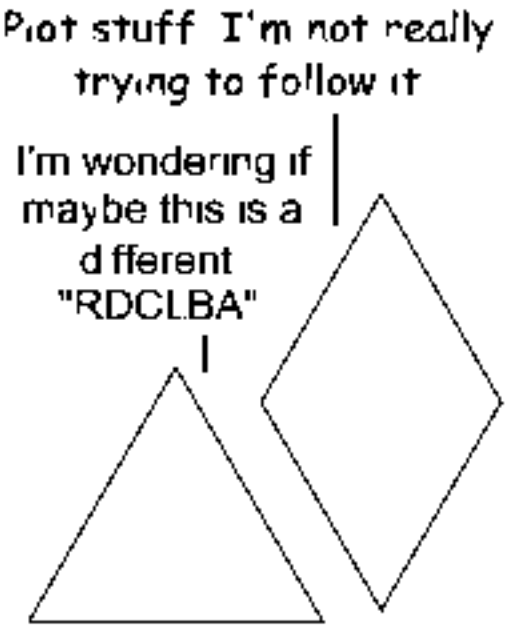

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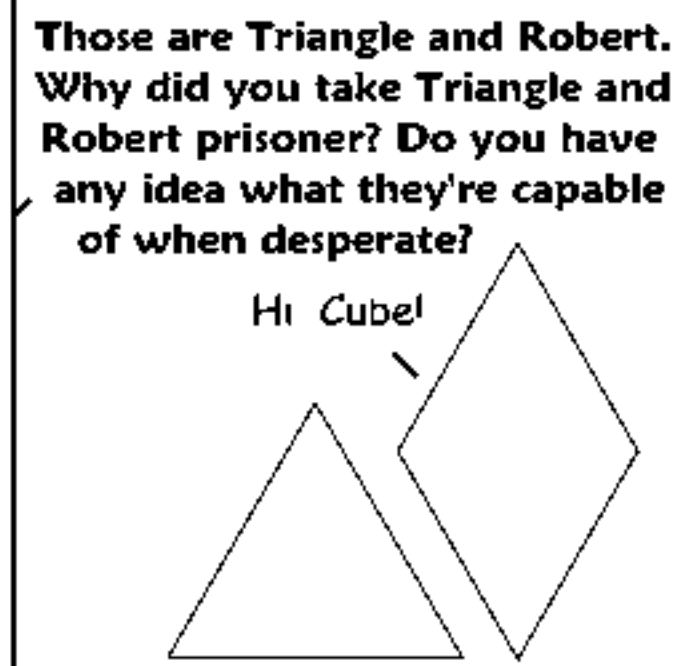

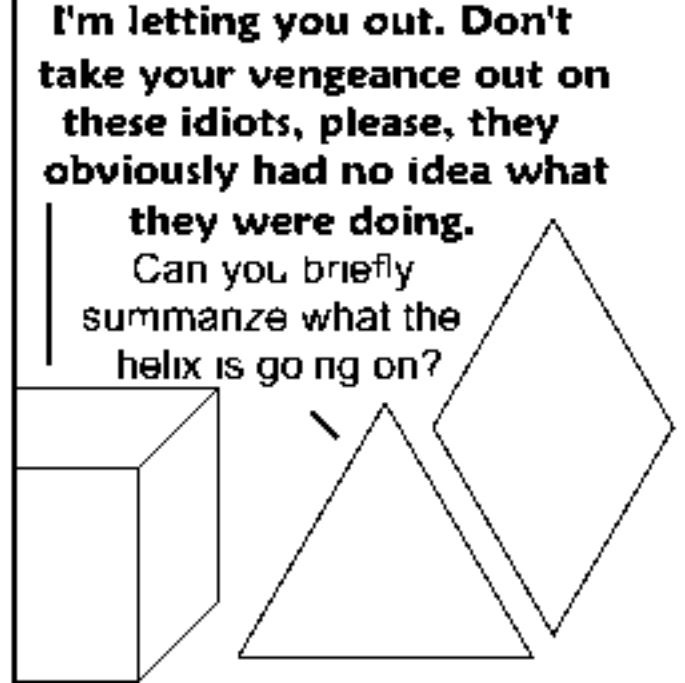

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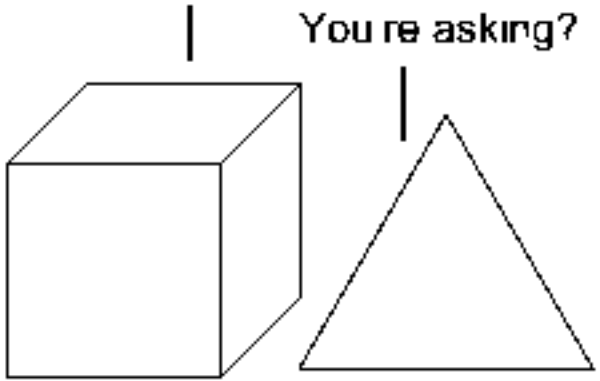
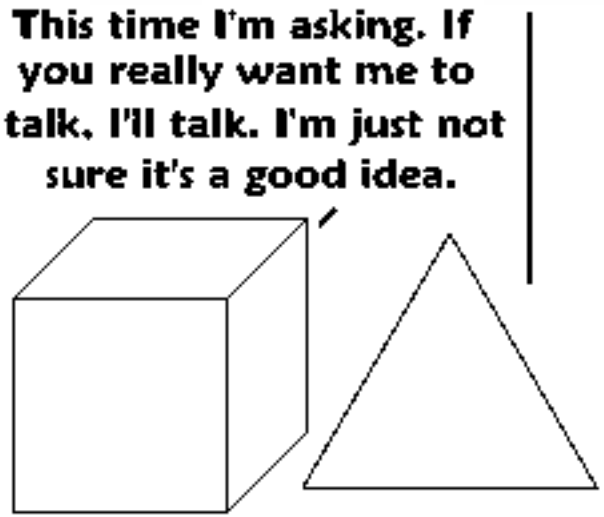
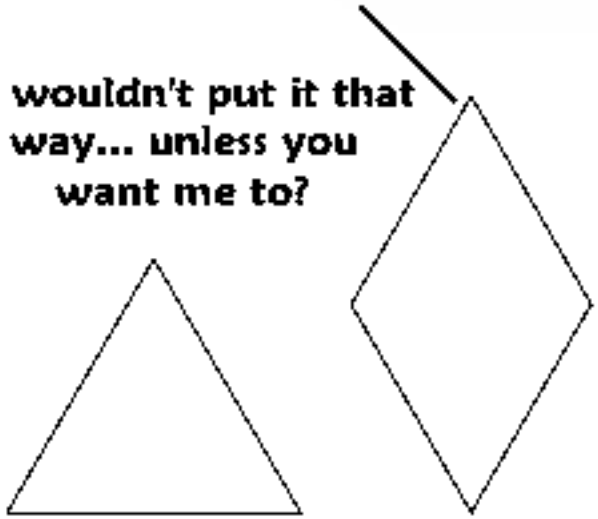
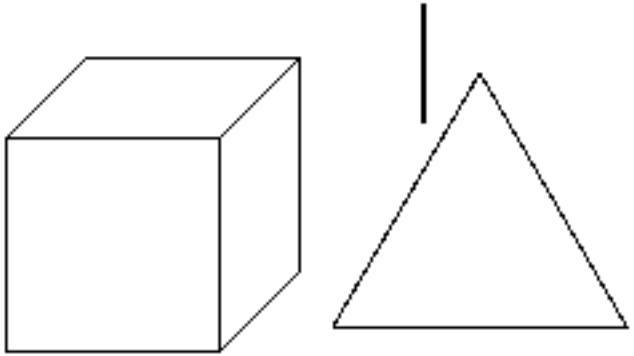






Triangle and Robert

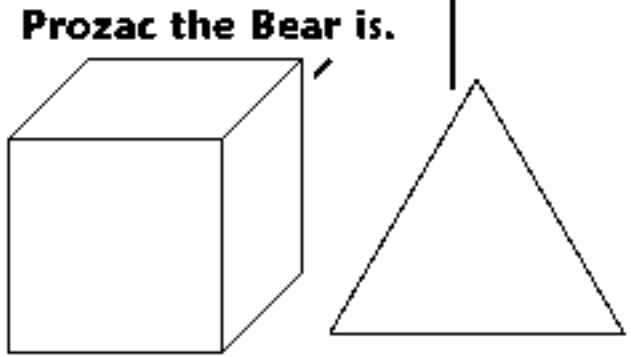
Cube, whatever reason you have to be afraid of us not tell ng us what that reason is can only possib y make it worse What's go ng on?



You won't get mad?

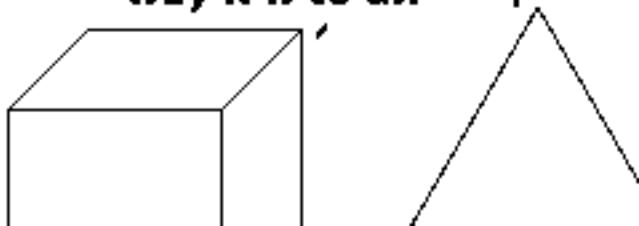
I won t get AS mad as if you don't te l me

Well... you know how dangerous Prozac the Bear is.

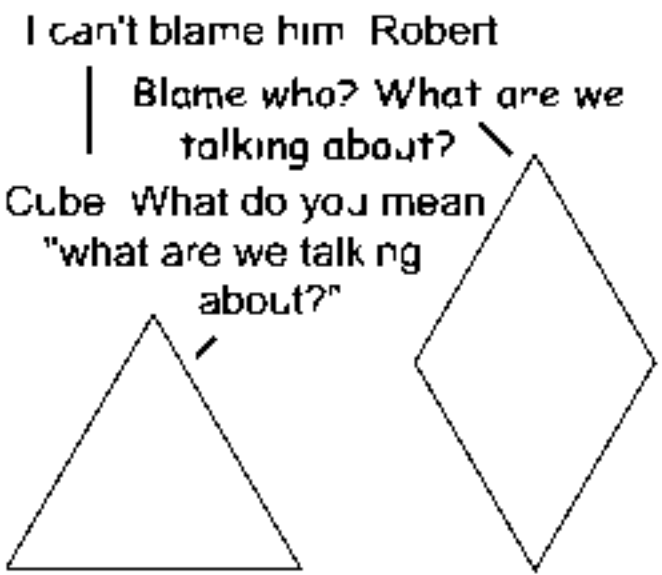


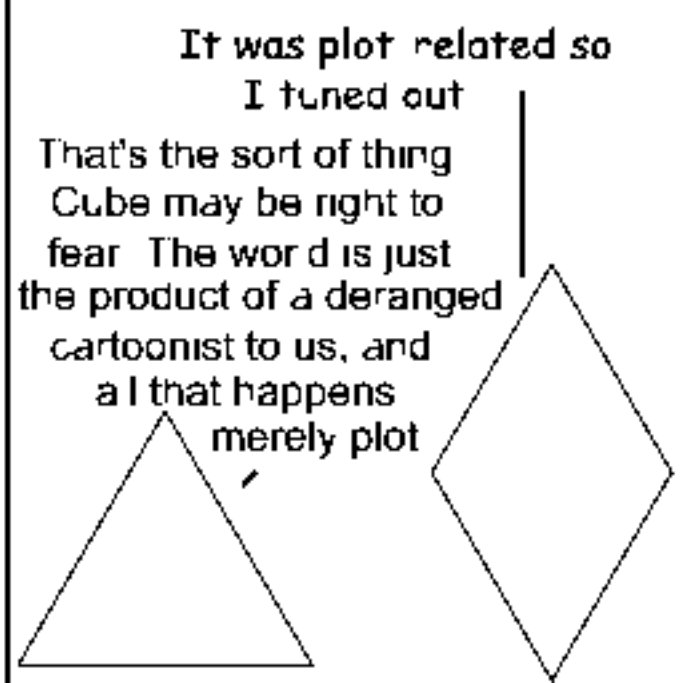
And we were created by the same Cartoon st and on occasion we through Cartoonist intercession tr gger simi ar bendings of rea ity

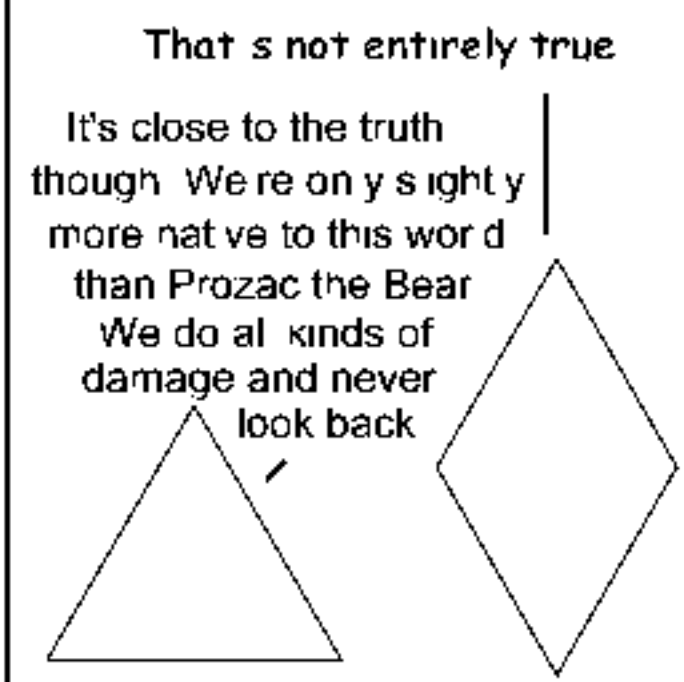
Right. And you've never seen the world as it was before the Cartoonist. It's not real to you the way it is to us.



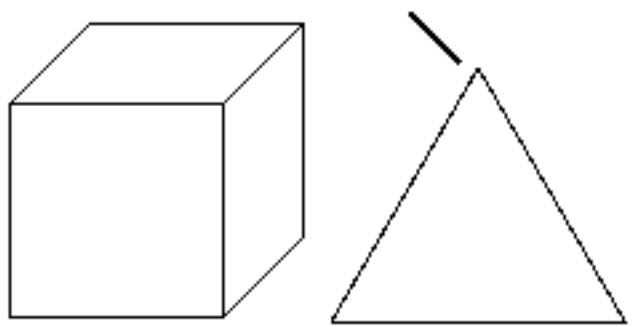
Triangle and Robert

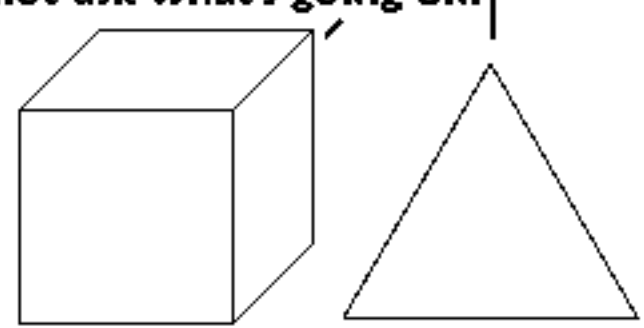


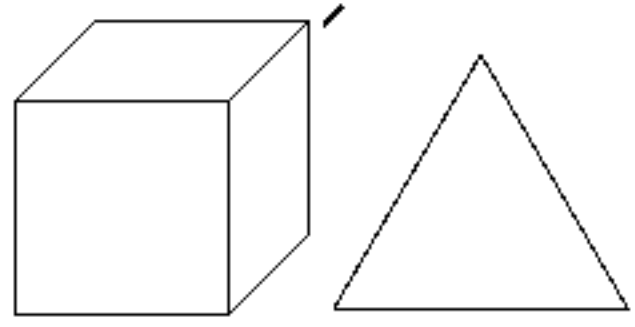




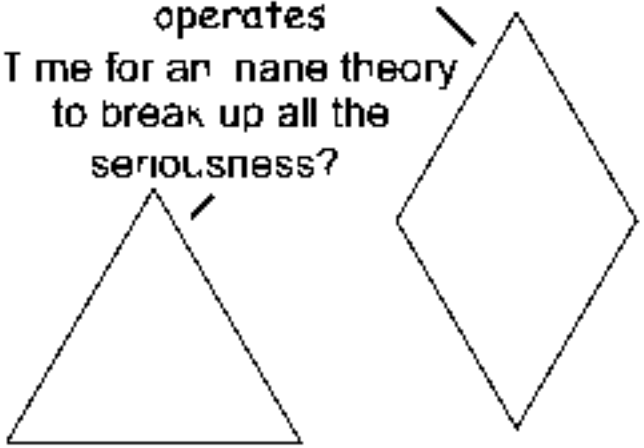
Triangle and Robert

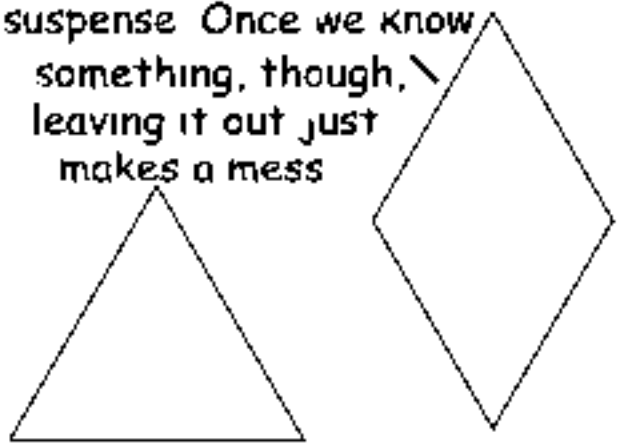






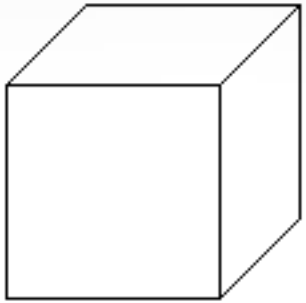
Triangle and Robert





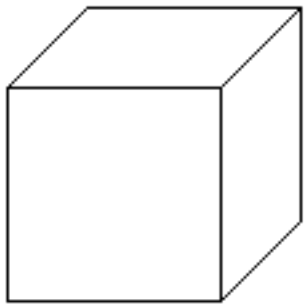
Triangle and Robert

Robert is, unfortunately, right. There are already a culinary magical adventure and an elaborate media conspiracy going on that I'm leaving out of the strip



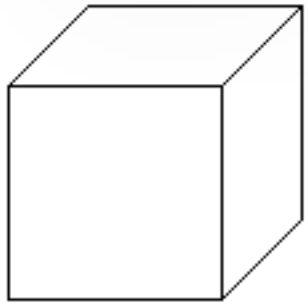
Any more understated event and things are going to get unstable.

Be fair. Letting them know how much the RDCLBA knows is plainly going to hurt the RDCLBA.



By "they" you mean the nameless shadow agency which has silently stepped in to fill the mandate of secret research abandoned by the RDCLBA

You know exactly who I mean.

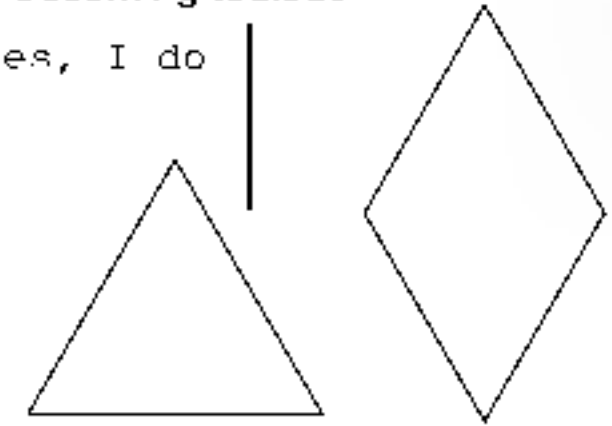


Triangle and Robert

Cube, too, has a point

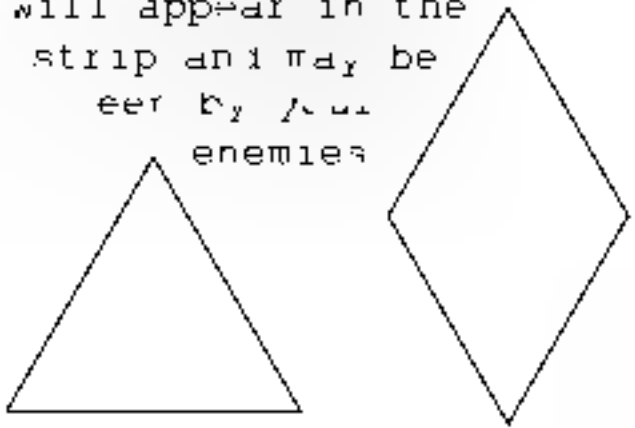
Don't you think this is becoming tedious?

Yes, I do



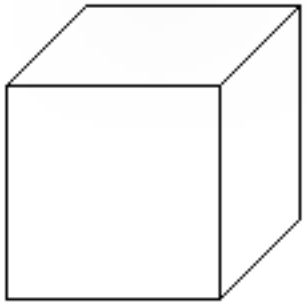
So what's it gonna be?

If you explain what's going on to Triangle and Robert, that explanation will appear in the strip and may be seen by your enemies

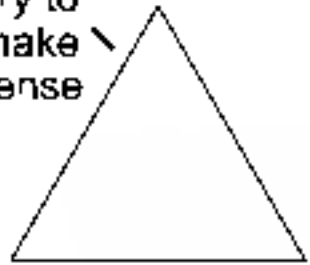


However, any information they uncover as a result of becoming entangled in your conflict will also appear in the strip

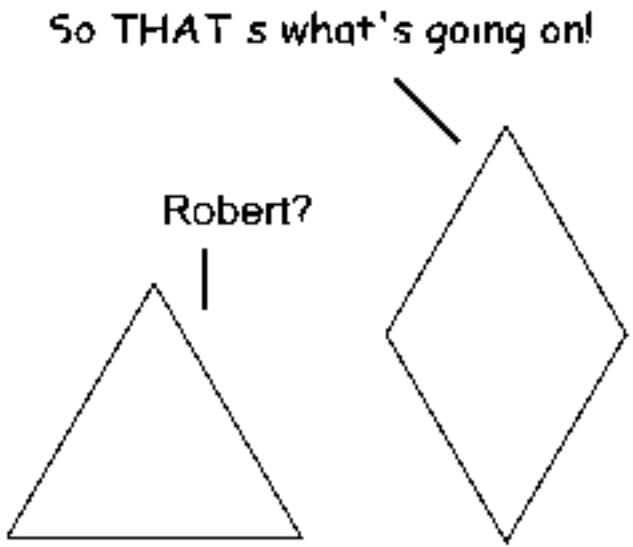
I'll tell them enough to get started.

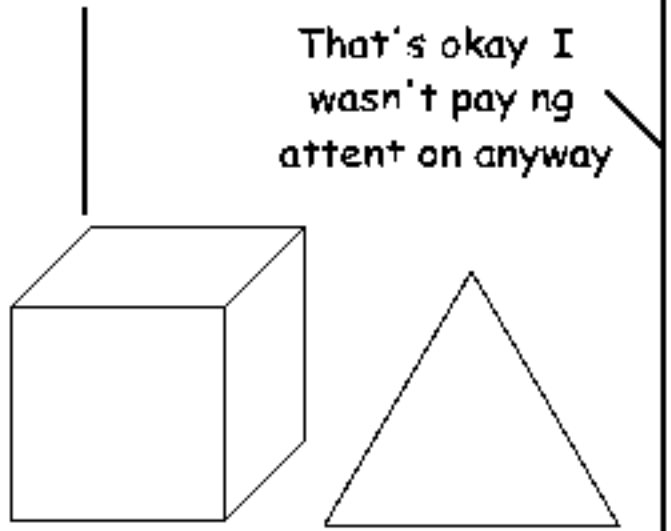


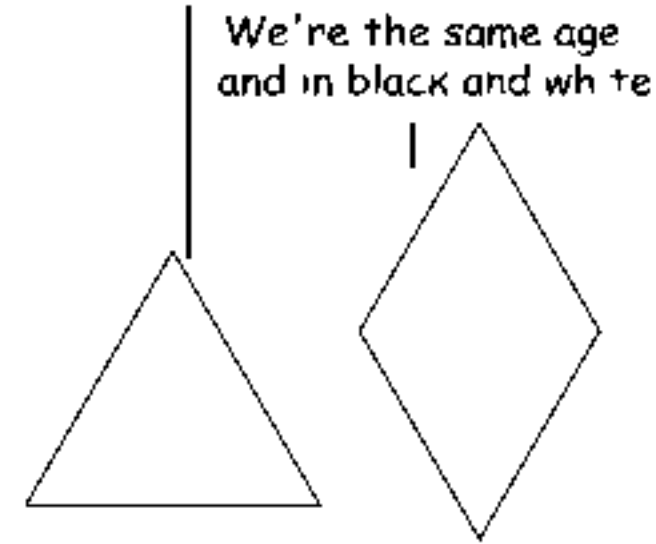
Try to make sense



Triangle and Robert



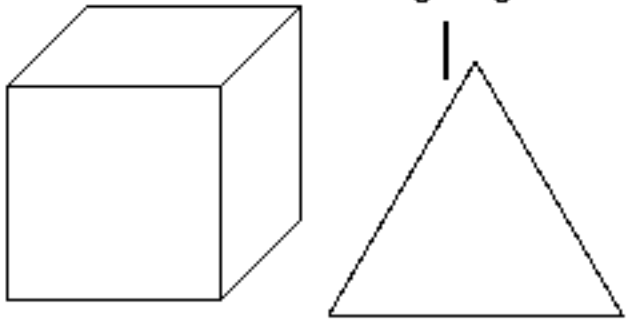




Triangle and Robert

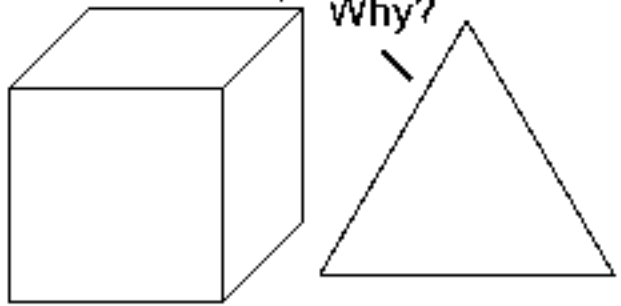
Will those VCR instructions really keep him busy?

Until he's done eating them. Now, what exactly has been going on?



There's another agency picking up where the RDCLBA left off. They're doing all kinds of secret research into Fourth Race technology. It turns out they're the reason the RDCLBA is still getting funding, oddly.

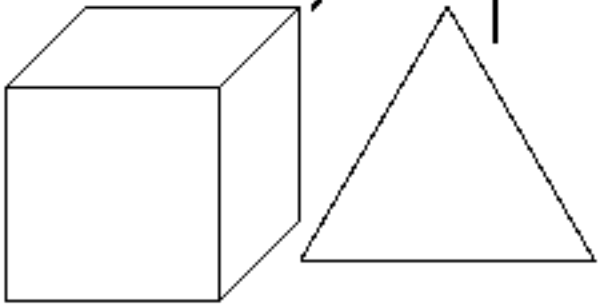
Why?



If the government cut the budget of the RDCLBA, they wouldn't have a hole through which to funnel money to this new shadow agency.

I don't follow.

It's a complicated piece of bookkeeping.

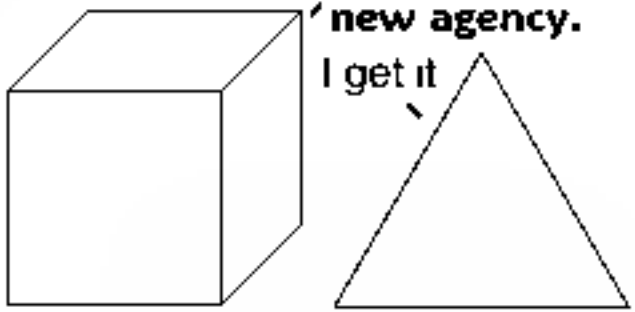


Triangle and Robert

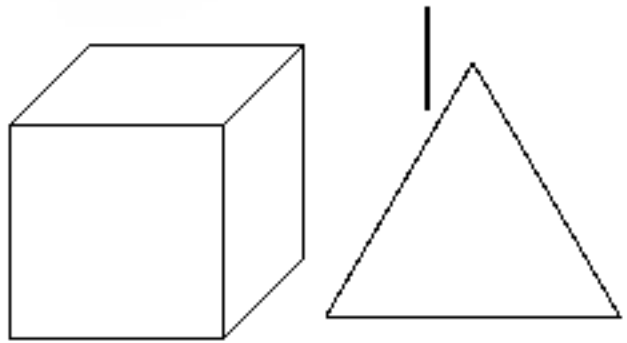
One complicated piece of bookkeeping later

See? If they closed the RDCLBA, then they'd have to explicitly allocate funds for the new agency.

I get it



Not that it explains anything. Why was there a secret rocket base? Why did an RDCLBA operative want the pilots? Why is your headquarters in what appears to be Indonesia now?



Can I start with the last question?

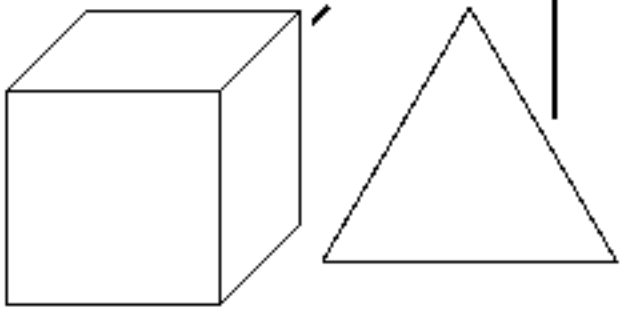
Go in any order you like

The old headquarters was built for secrecy, not for defense. What's going on now could lead to open warfare. We can withstand a siege here in the island base.

Triangle and Robert

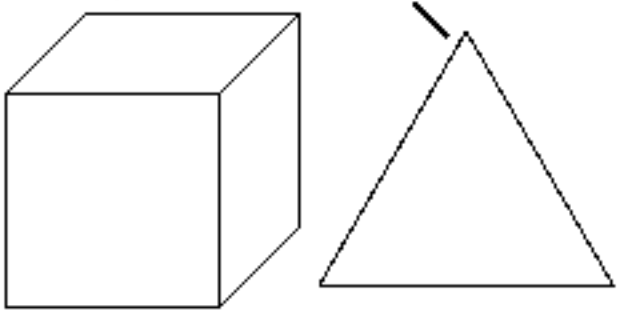
Warfare?

The RDCLBA turned its back on its charter. Where once we fought to bury secrets, now we fight to shine light upon them.

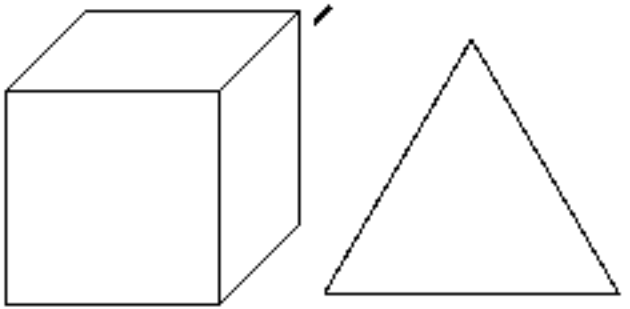


Obviously, we stand in direct opposition to our mysterious successor agency. Sooner or later, the conflict will become a deadly one.

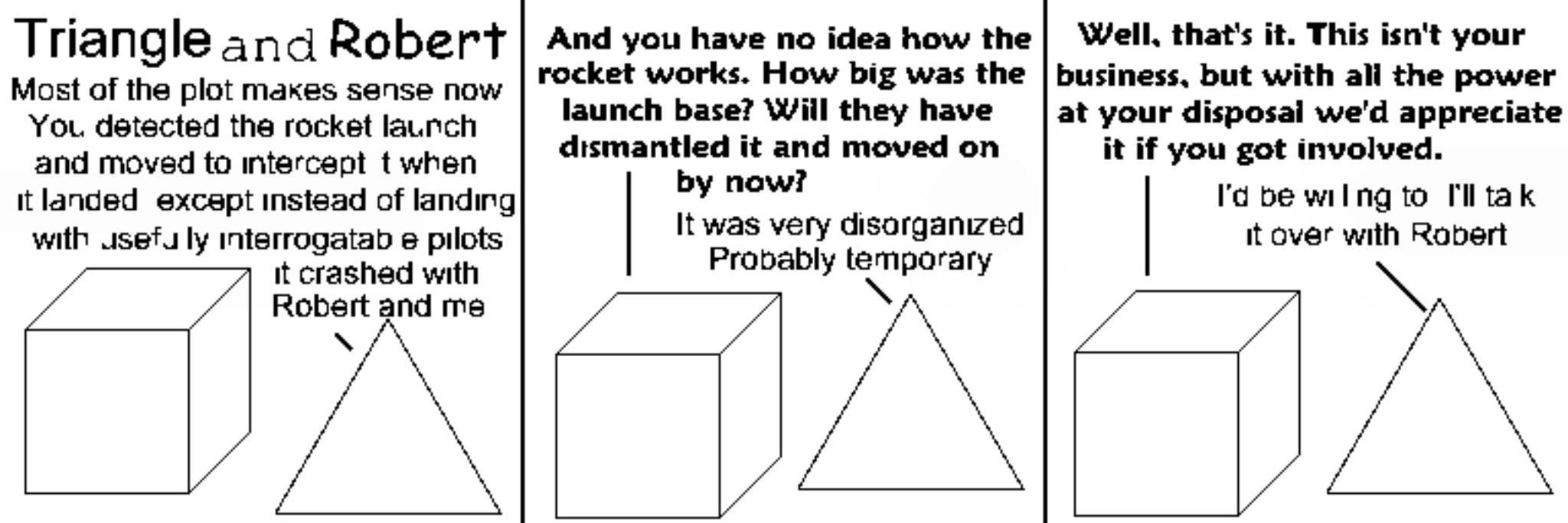
I see What about the rocket?



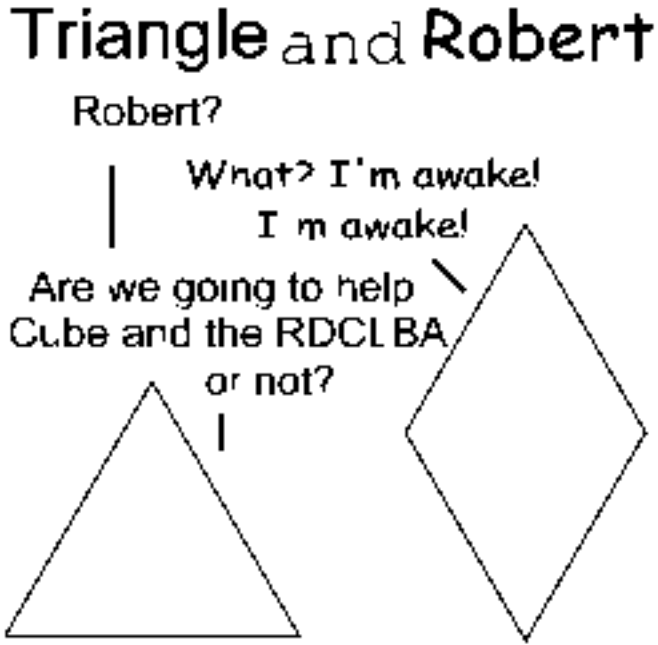
The unnamed new agency has been experimenting with a lot of Fourth Race tech, things the RDCLBA has never seen in working order. We want to know what it is, where it came from, and most of all how it works.

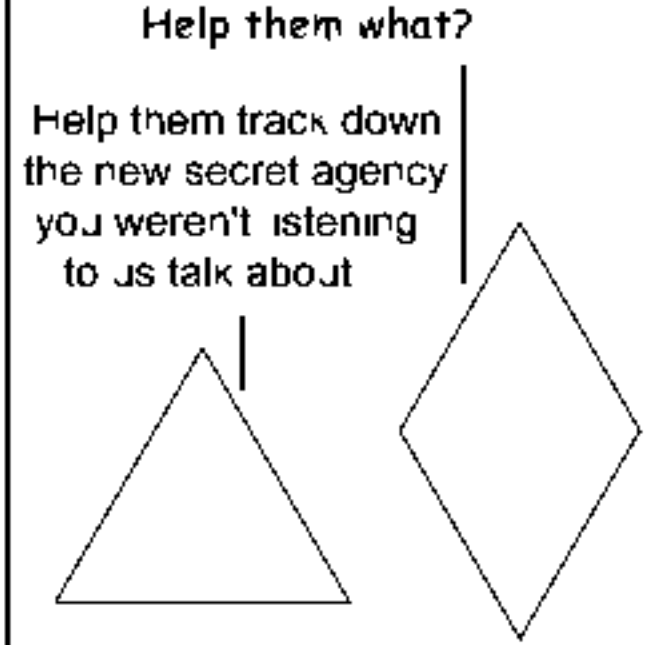


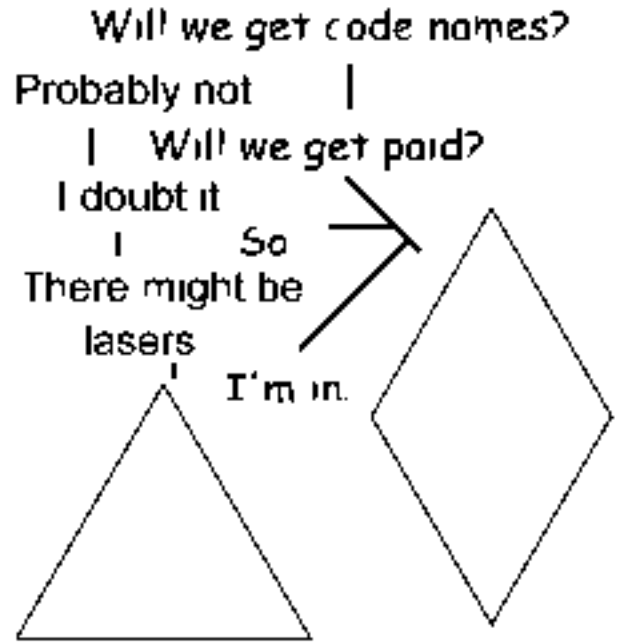
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert





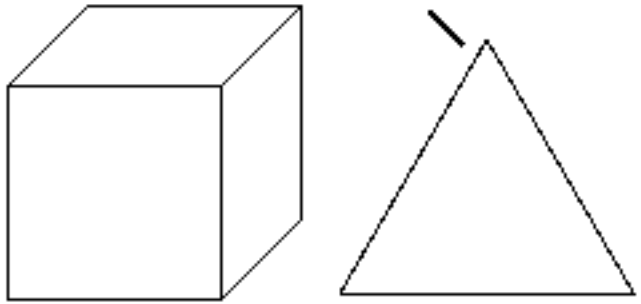


Triangle and Robert

We seem to be will ng to he p Cube Do you have any leads or do you want us to wander around at random and engage a p ot event?

The rocket base was in the same city as the RDCLBA's old headquarters. There's got to be more you can dig up there.

So go back to where we live and where al the other p ot happens

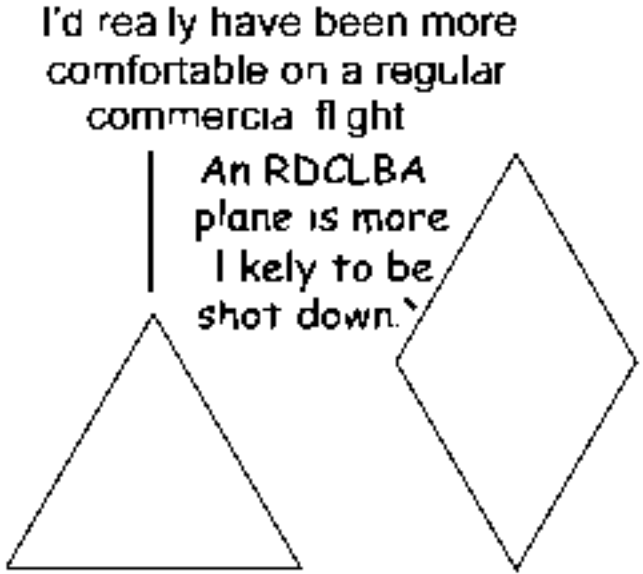


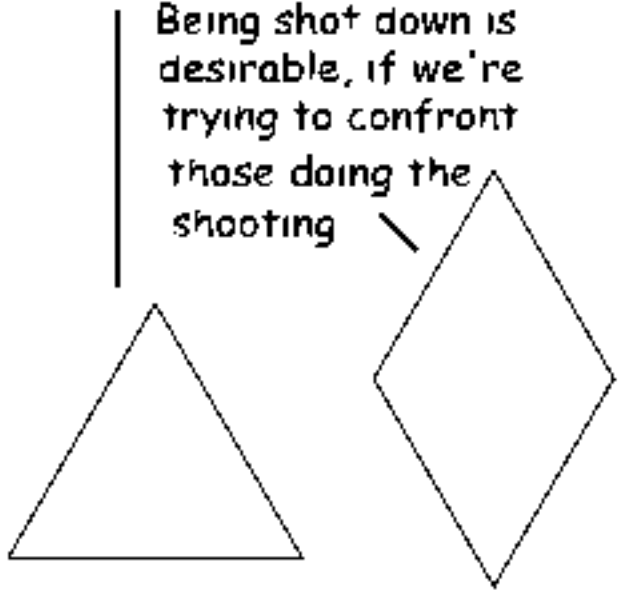
In context I guess it's not really important as a lead.

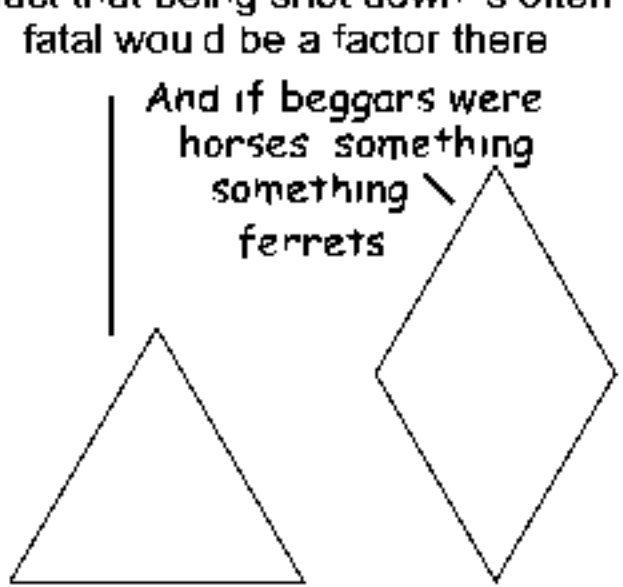
Can we fight some wandering monsters before we go home?

I think this is a non-combat area

Triangle and Robert



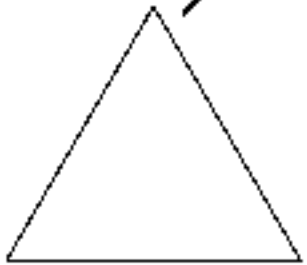


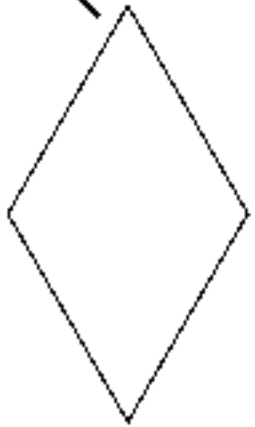


Triangle and Robert

What do you know no one even tr ed to shoot us down

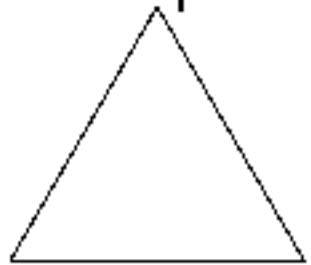
I'm used to your inappropriate disappo ntment

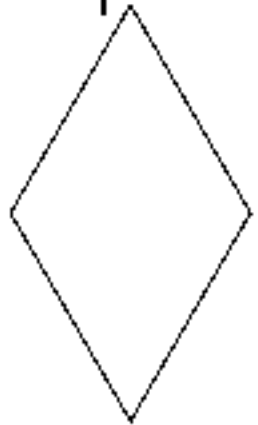




That sentence needs quantif ers

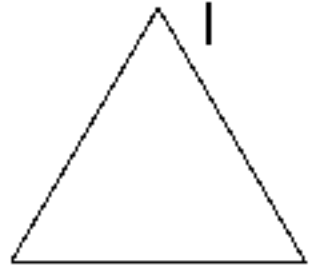
It needs a lot of th ngs Are we really prepared to give them to it?

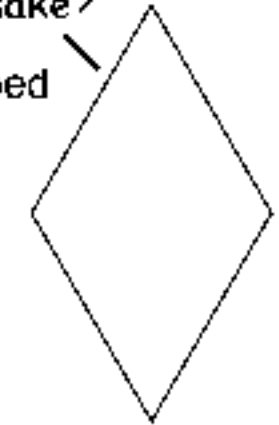




Has the conversation completely passed me and is prepar ng to overtake me again for a one lap lead or are you being random for variety s sake?

I want to go to bed





Triangle and Robert

Triangle, you can't go to sleep yet! We st l haven t bought a wok! I haven t eaten!

— I don't care Get a pizza or something

I can't go on a disastrous pizza getting journey alone!

Go on a non-disastrous one Eat the resulting p zza Let me sleep

Triangle?

I guess he's really — asleep already

Being chased by attle, stranded in spa e, a d captured by ex government operatives tires me pe ple.

Triangle and Robert

You're right, we've had more than a day's worth of adventure since last sleep. Why am I awake?

No, [illegible] dreams.

I think it's to create the opportunity for a standard [illegible] housemate conflict.

So I should try to keep him awake?

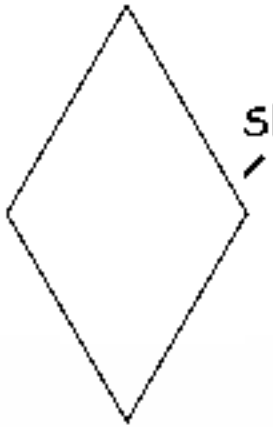
No, [illegible] should try not to wake him and have difficulty doing so.

Almost equivalent. I'll call for the loudest delivery food I can think of.

There's a difference between [illegible] and passive aggressive.

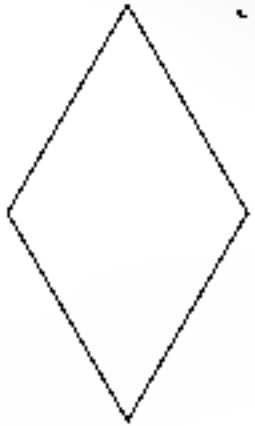
Triangle and Robert

Did someoay crash a PIE?



Shush My roomie s asleep

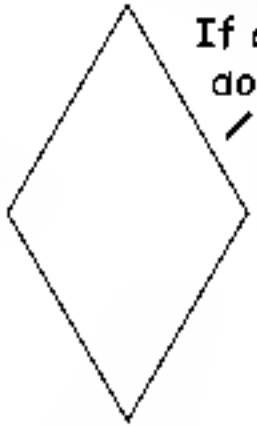
Sorry, sir The customer is always right



HONK

HONK

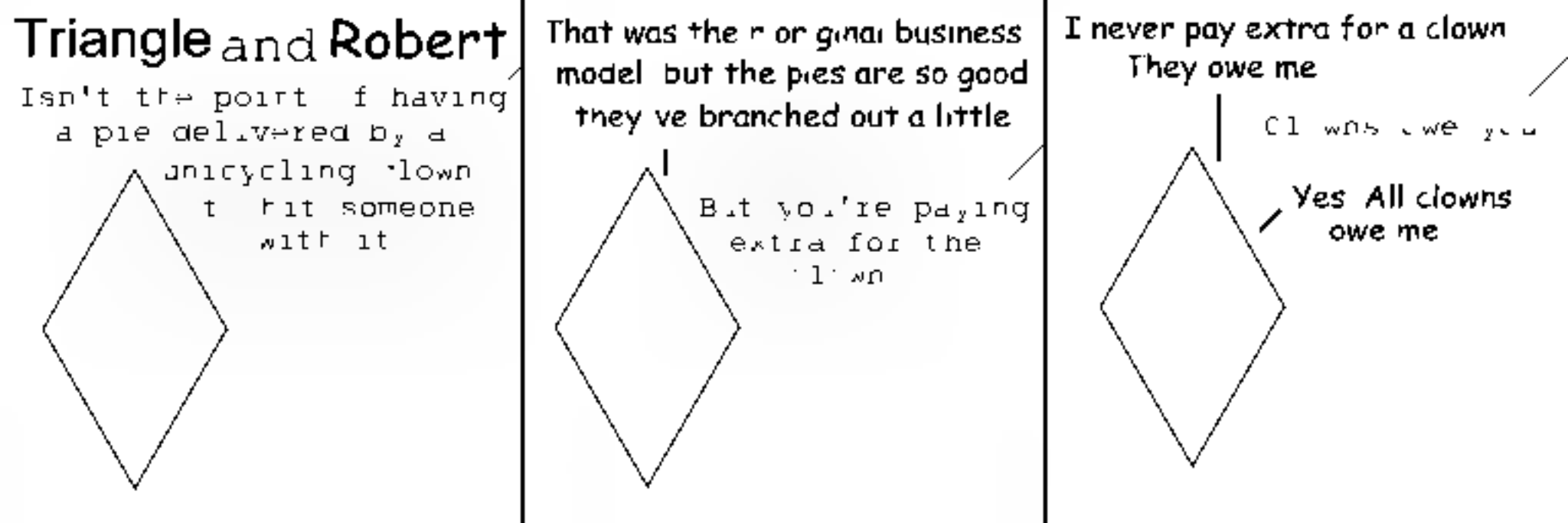
I am impressed I didn't know clowns delivered After midnight. On unicycles



If a thing s worth doing, it s worth un cycling

HONK

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

It all started when I acquired

No, we don't need to know why clown we [illegible] fealty.

But it's about patent law! Everyone loves patent stories!

Not really.

Your rulings on what to include in the comic seem arbitrary

I agree, but it's the best narrative arrangement I can come up with

So if I can't kill time with a clown flashback, what can I do?

Maybe you should try to sleep.

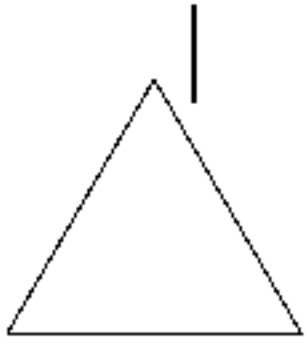
Good idea. Let me make some coffee first

Perversely setting obstacles for yourself isn't funny, Robert.

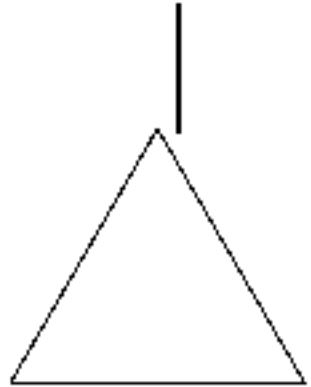
Triangle and Robert

I guess it's time to get up

Robert never even went to bed? This is unlikely to be something good

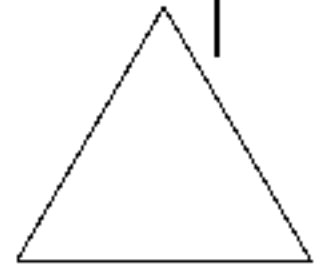


Robert! Are you home? What's this mess? Were you cooking? Feathers?

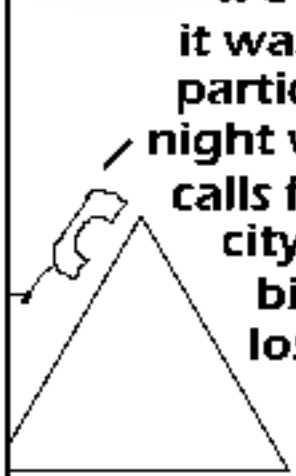


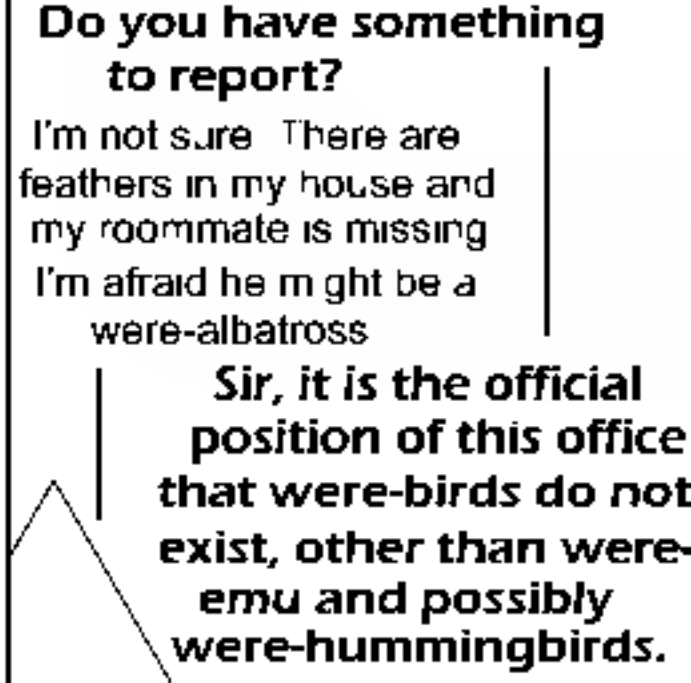
He didn't go to bed he apparently either cooked or battled a large bird, and

Albatross

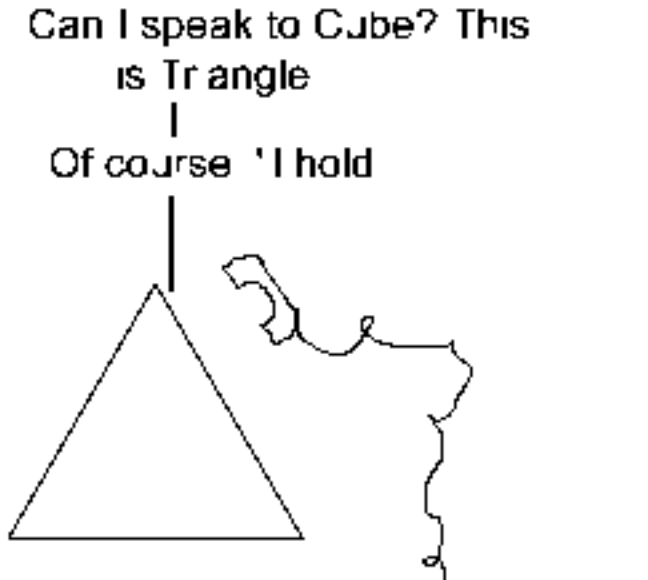


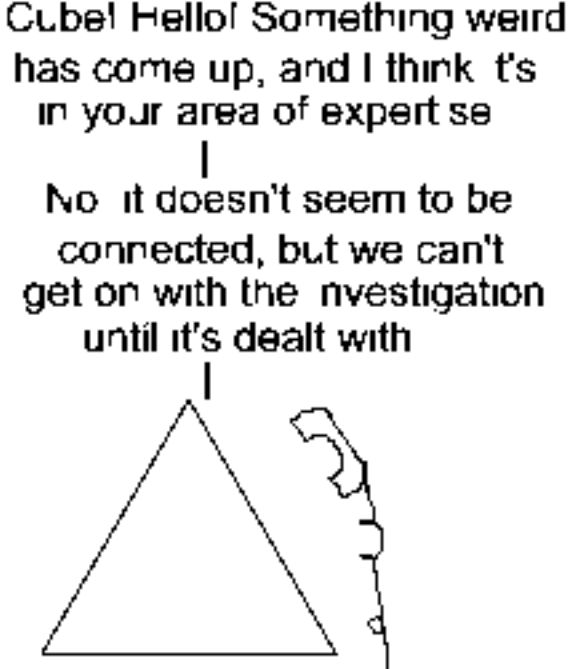
Triangle and Robert

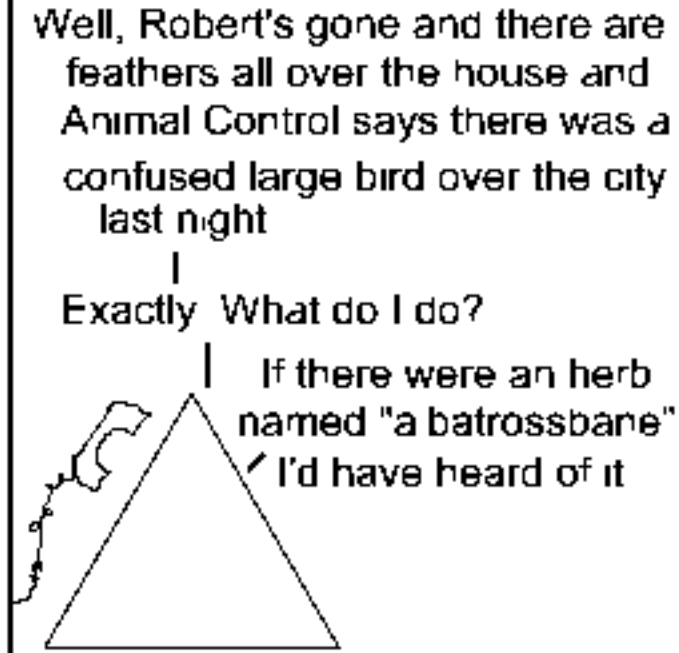




Triangle and Robert

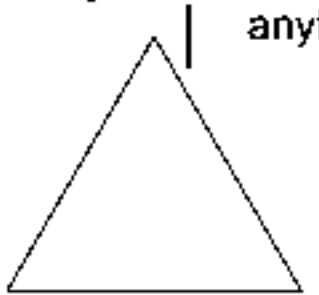




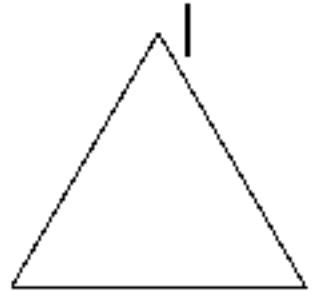


Triangle and Robert

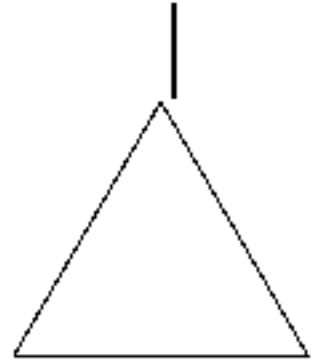
If I were like most polygons I'd have a ways thought the curse of the albatross was a mere legend but I've seen too much in my short life to say that about anything



I don't know when Robert fell victim to its strange work ngs but at some point he must have killed an a batross and set n motion what passes for fate's wheel in this inept wor d

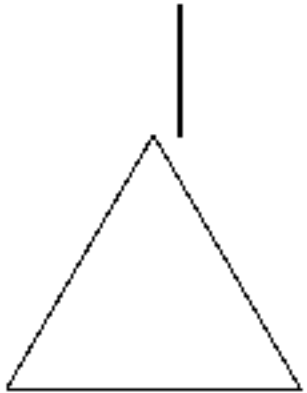


Apparent y the only way to break the curse s for Robert to be bitten by a wo f That'll be the easy part If I were an albatross and Robert where would I go?

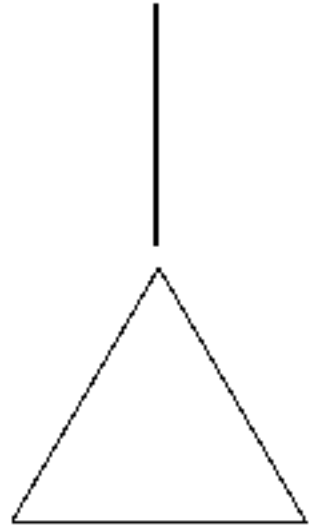


Triangle and Robert

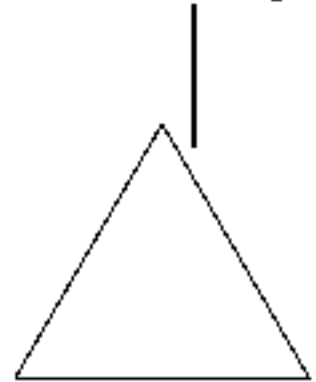
The best place to ook for an
a batross would be on the coast.
and atop some sort of tower



To the lighthouse!

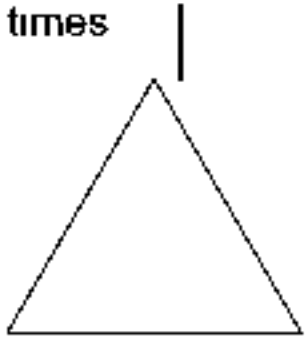


The prev ous panel should not be
construed as an endorsement of
Virgin a Woolf I hope I never ever
have to so much as ook at one of
her novels aga n

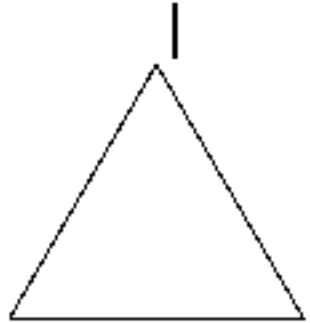


Triangle and Robert

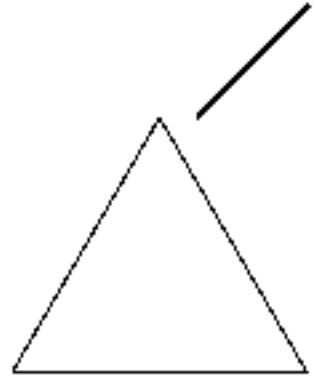
Why stop at a lighthouse when I could fly? We've got jetpacks after all. I doubt they'll be nearly as haywire as the last few times



And if there's a malfunction maybe it'll duplicate Robert's erratic albatross flight and lead me right to him. That's dumb enough to work, right?



Usually Robert handles the things that are dumb enough to work. I hope I don't screw this up in a non-useful manner



Triangle and Robert

What was thinking?

These jetpacks are NEVER safe!

Whoa leveled out I think 'm actua ly steer ng! I don't see any likely p aces for a were-a batross yet

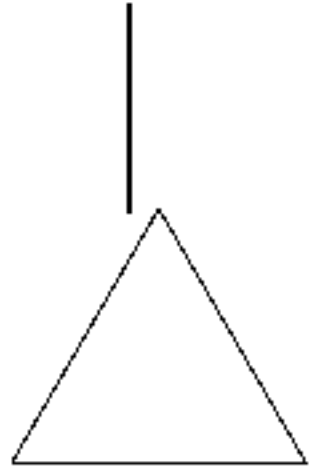
Do ma e albatrosses nest? "Albatrosses" Is that the right plura ? "Albatri"? Why am I talk ng like I m oxygen depr ved?

Oh poopie

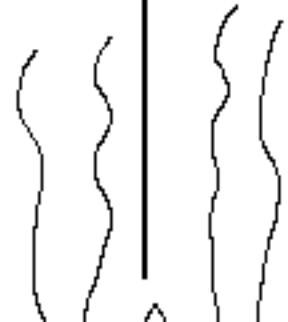
Triangle and Robert

Stay ca m, Tnang e stay calm
I ,ust need to fly a little lower
where there s breathable air

Okay Jetpack under control
I'm getting surprisingly good at



Right Fue



Triangle a ert

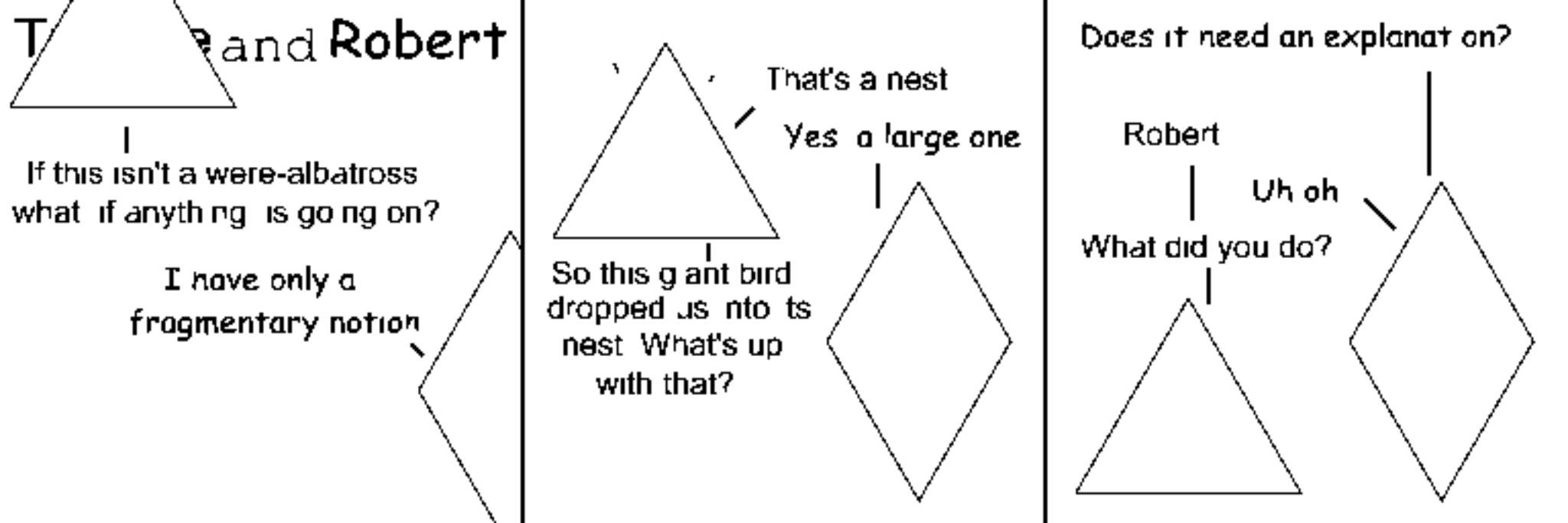
I must have blacked out
What am I dang ing from?
Talons

Robert! Robert, is that
you! Th s s Tr ang e!
Triangle! Can you
understand me?

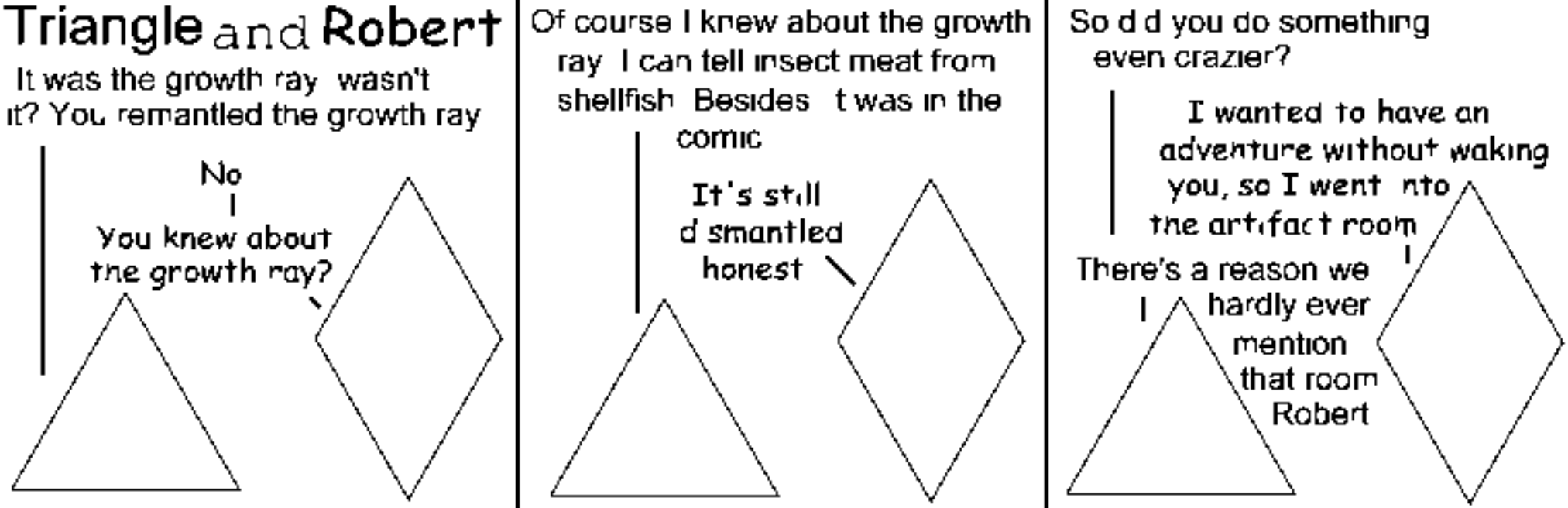
Tr angle, I m over here!
That s a bird you re
talking to!

If you're there then who's
the were-albatross?

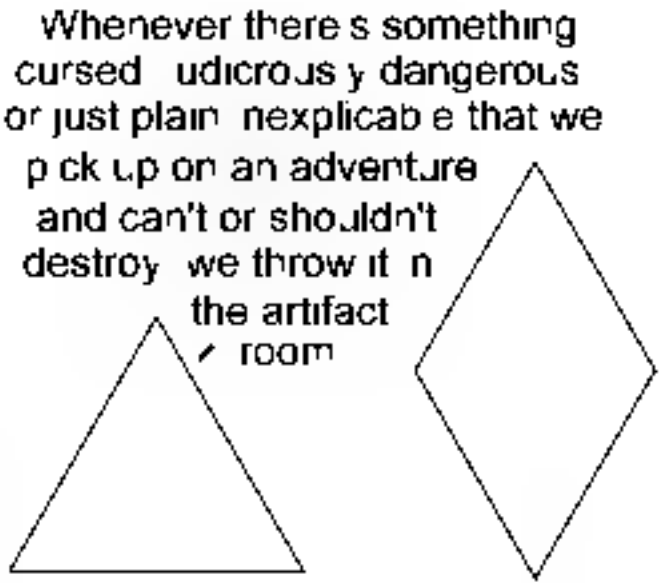
I have no dea what
you re talking about

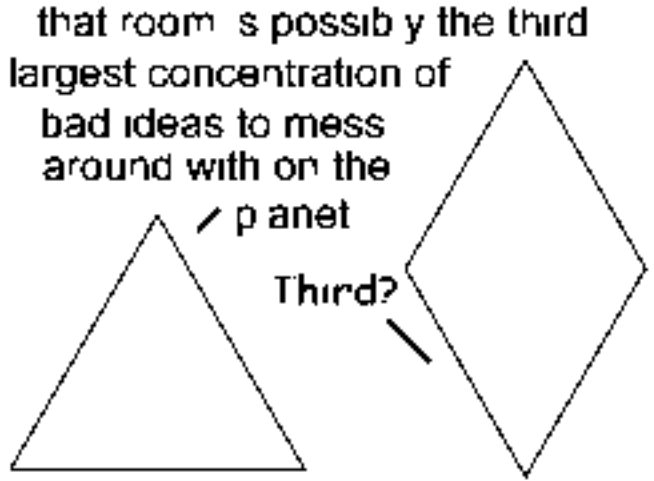

T and Robert
If this isn't a were-albatross what if anyth ng is go ng on?
I have only a fragmentary notion
That's a nest
Yes a large one
So this g ant bird dropped us nto ts nest What's up with that?
Does it need an explanat on?
Robert
What did you do?
Uh oh

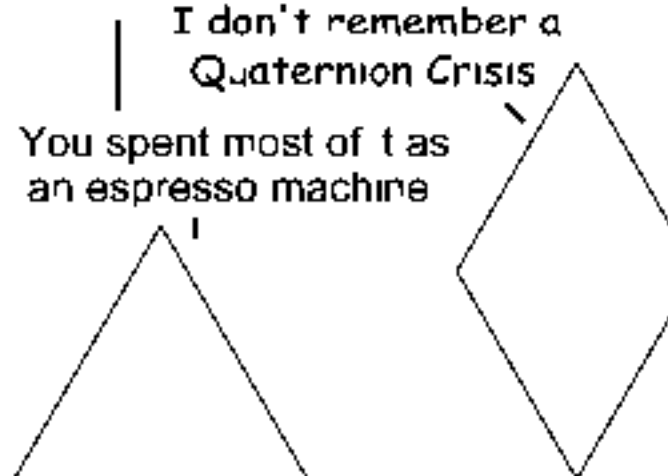
Triangle and Robert



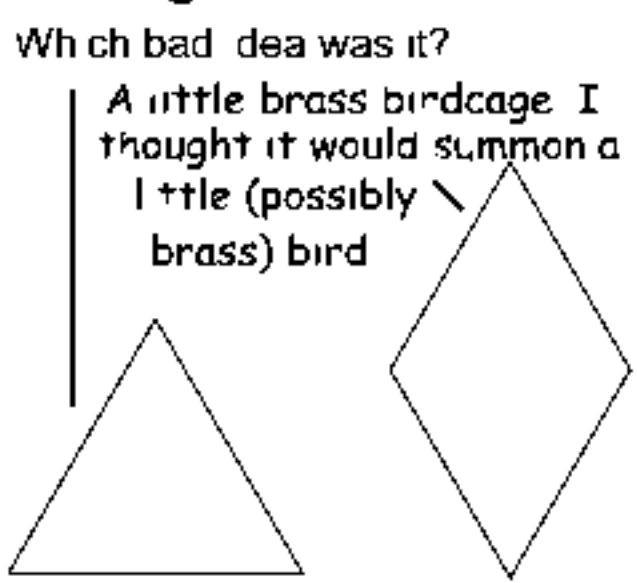
Triangle and Robert

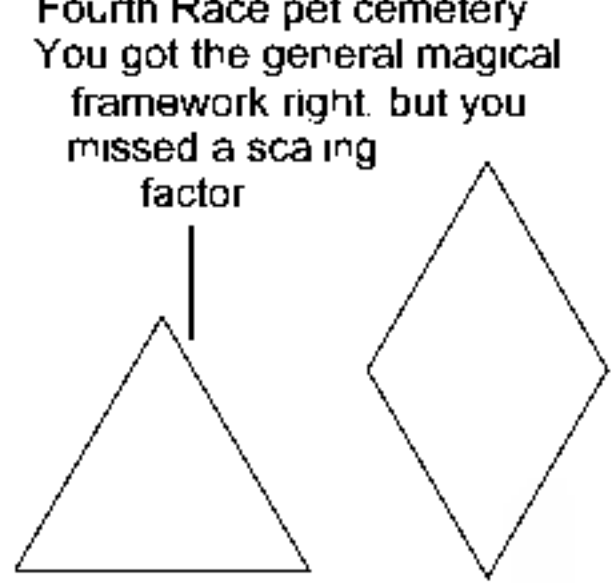


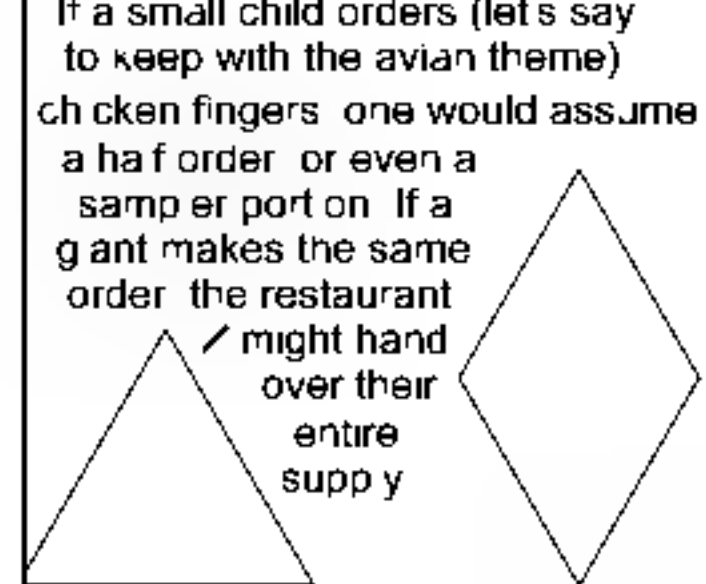




Triangle and Robert



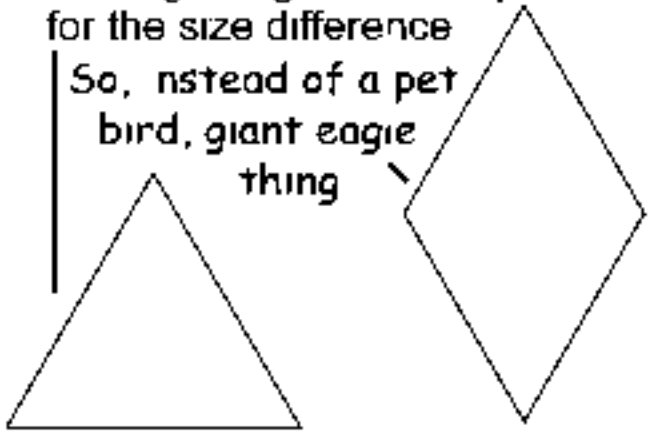




Triangle and Robert

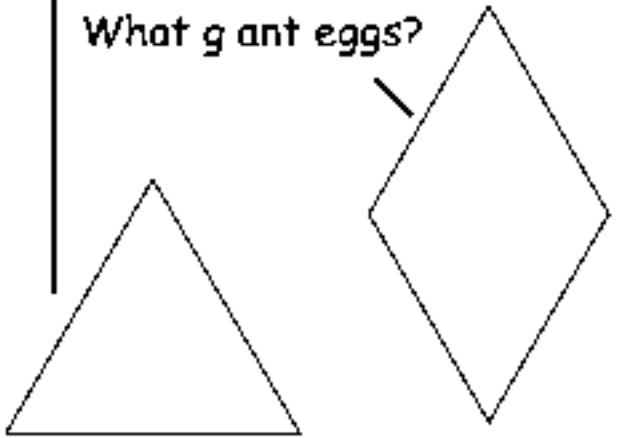
We're much larger than the Fourth Race ever were It's no surprise that magic might not compensate for the size difference

So, nstead of a pet bird, giant eagle thing



Instead of standing here discuss ng what went wrong let's try to get out of th s nest before the giant eggs hatch

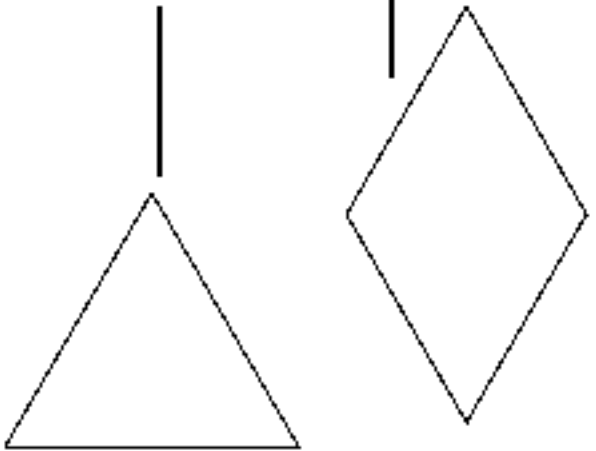
What g ant eggs?



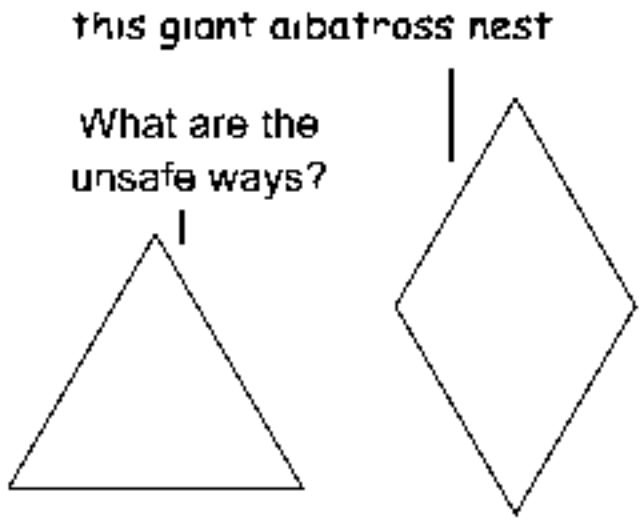
They're in the background

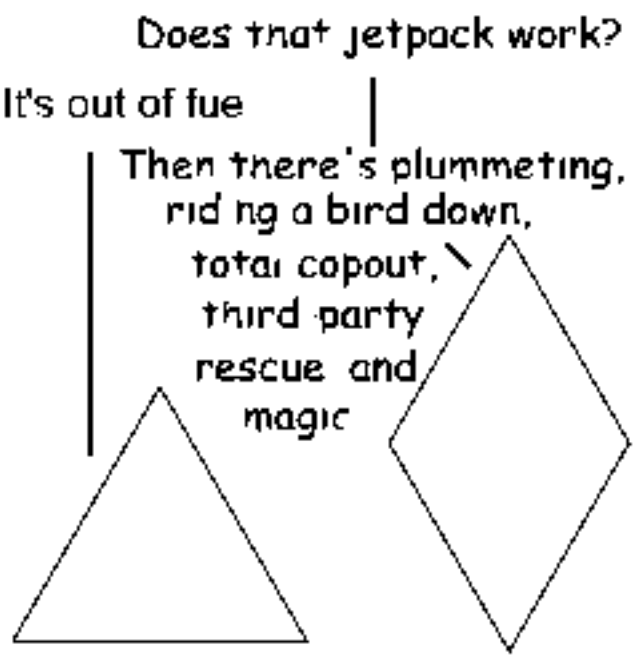
I did say "giant"

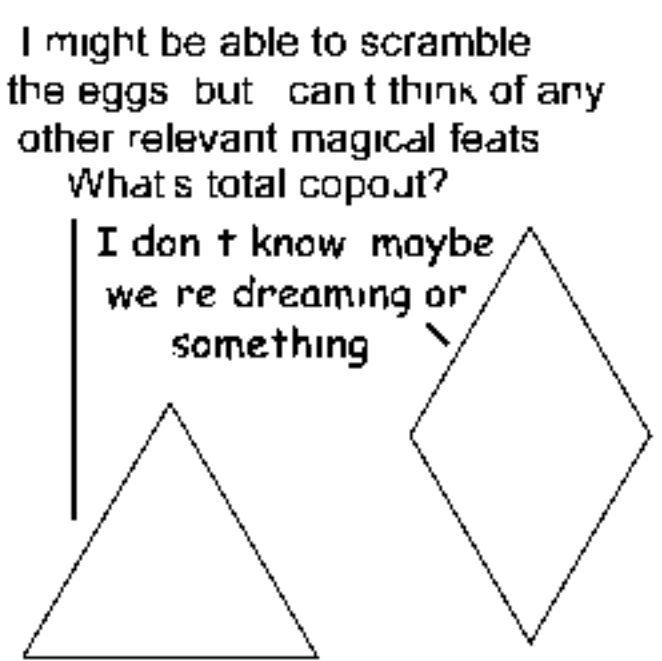
I just see wh te



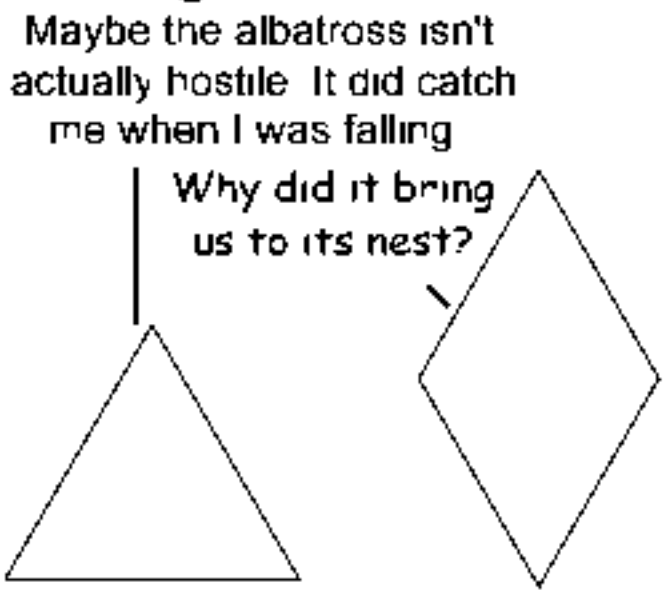
Triangle and Robert

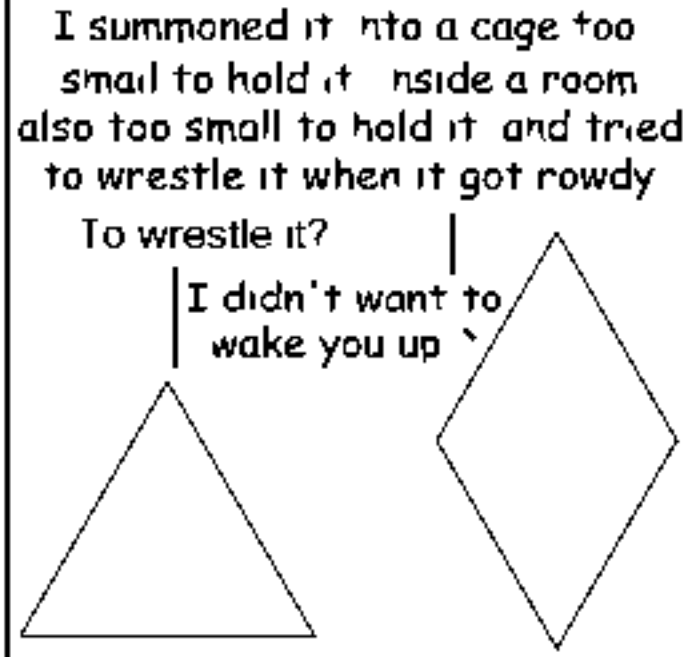




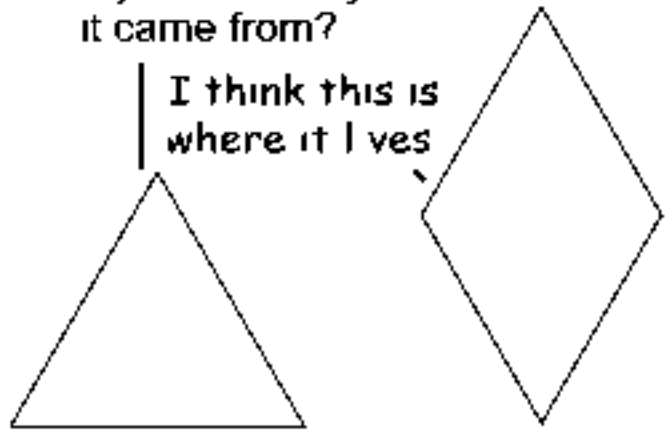


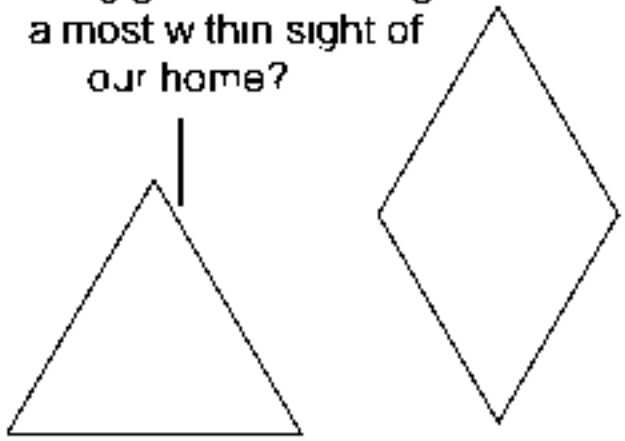
Triangle and Robert

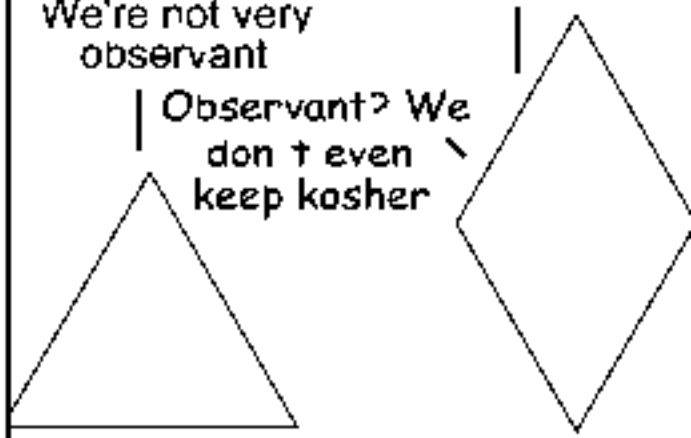




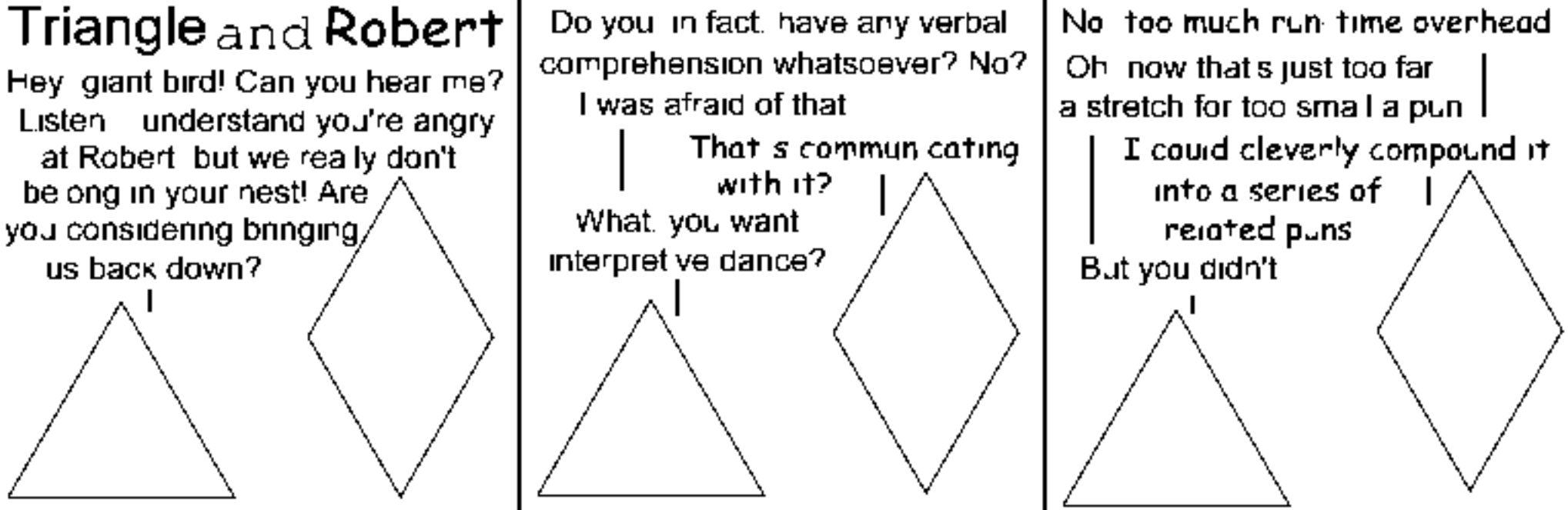
Triangle and Robert



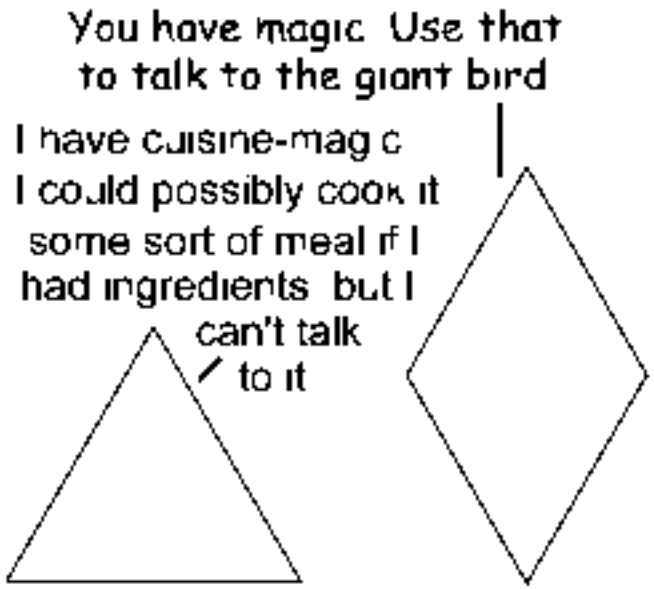


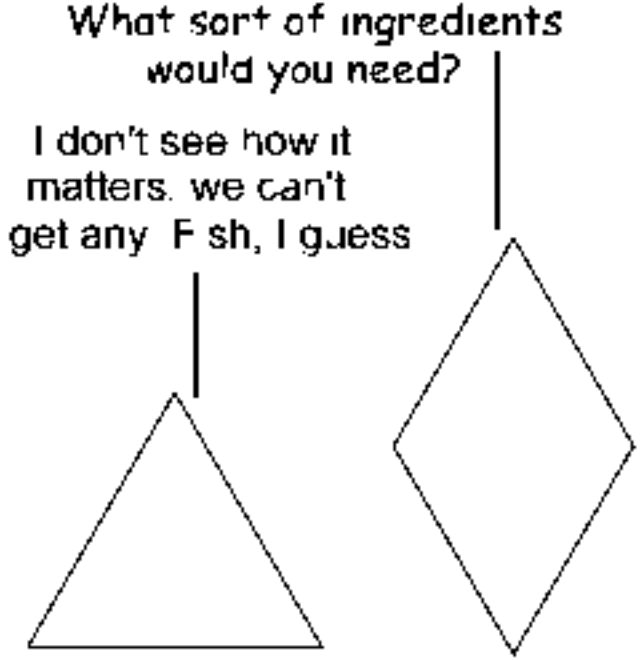


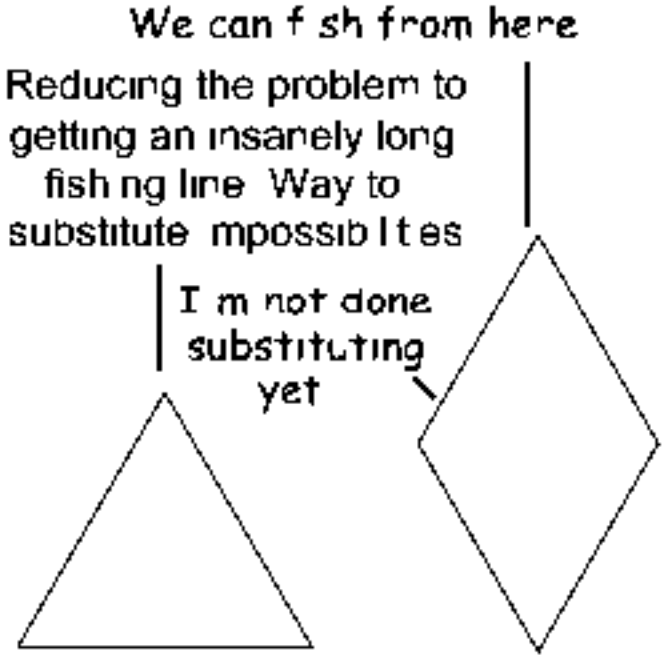
Triangle and Robert



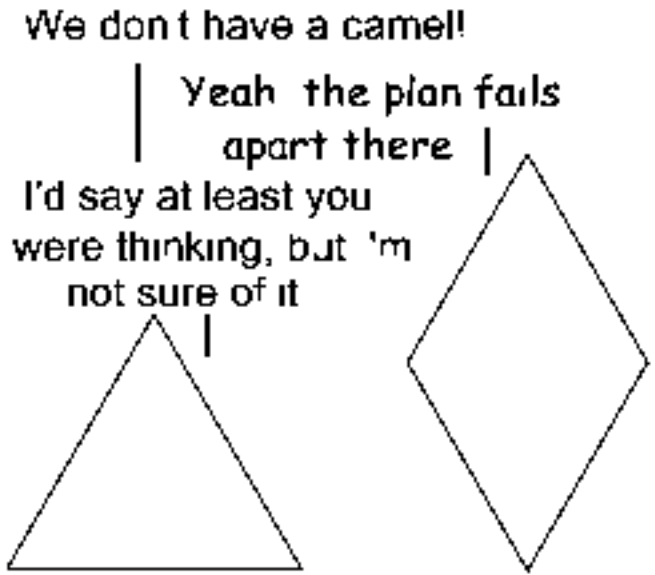
Triangle and Robert



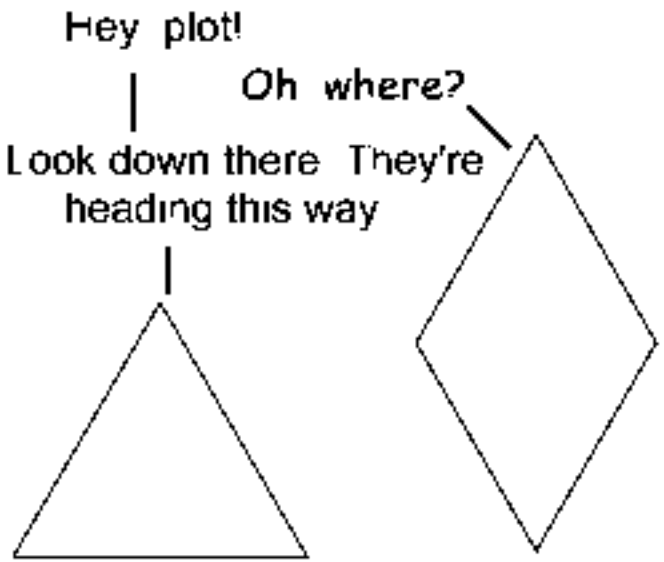


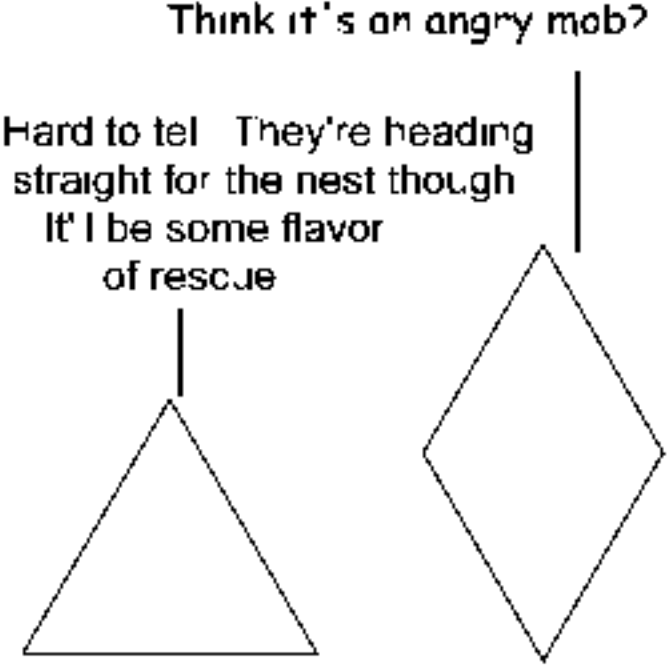


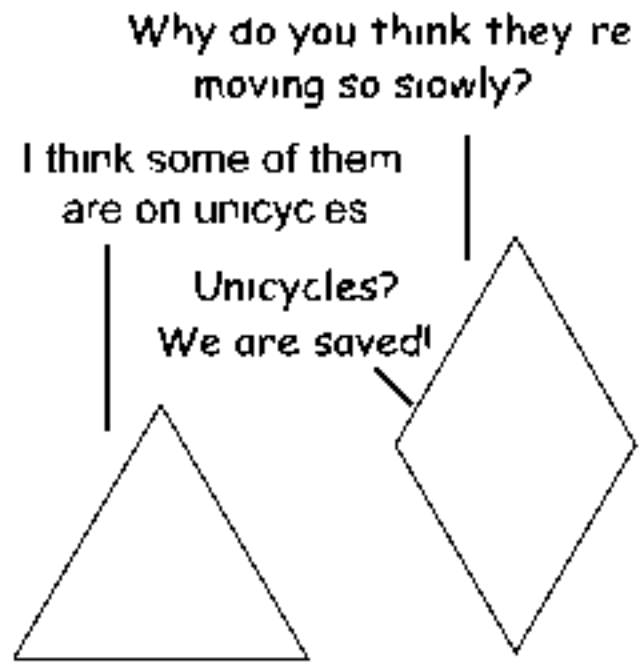
Triangle and Robert



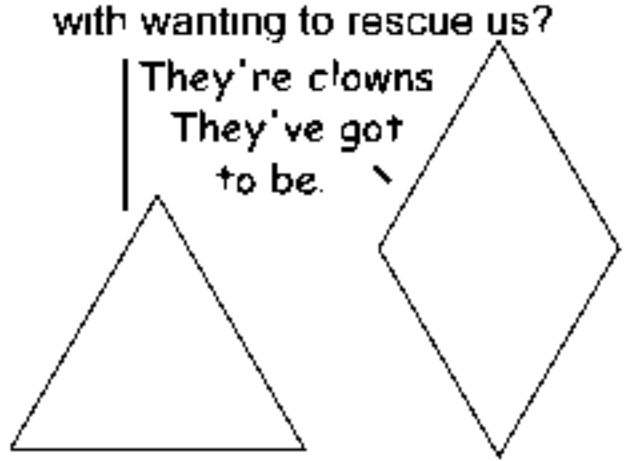
Triangle and Robert

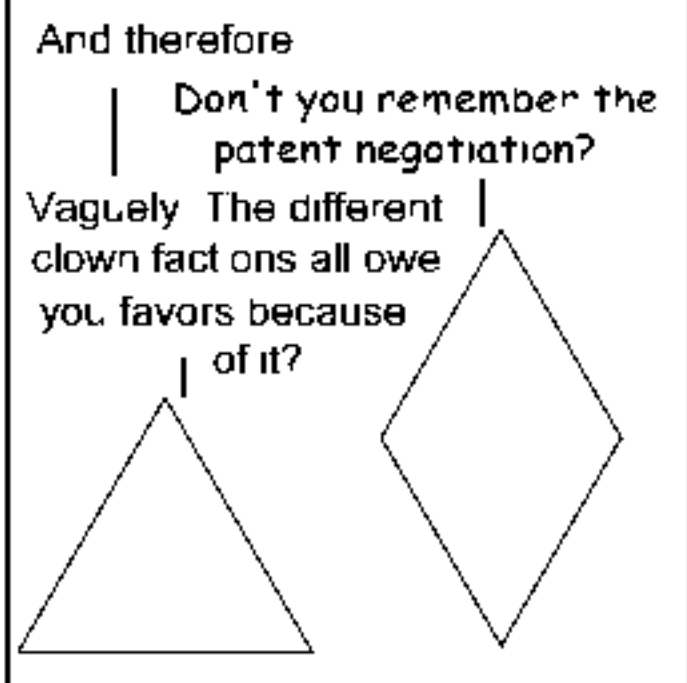


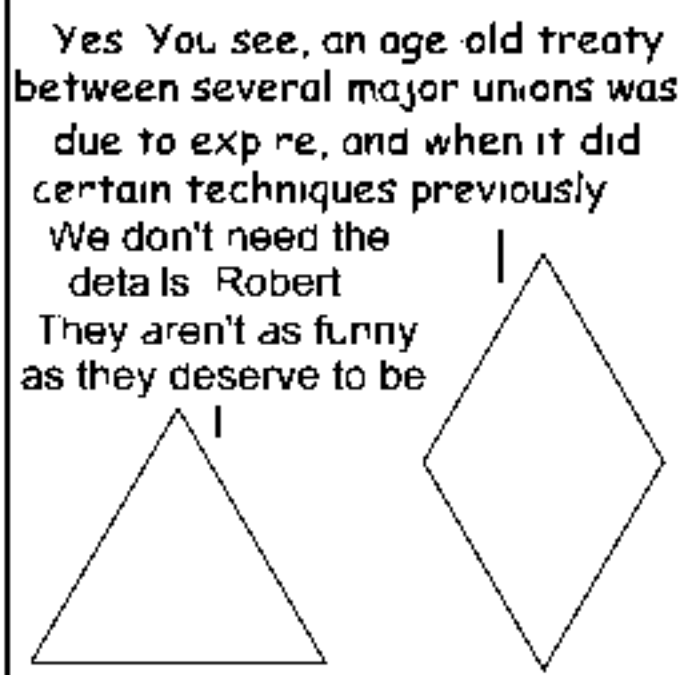




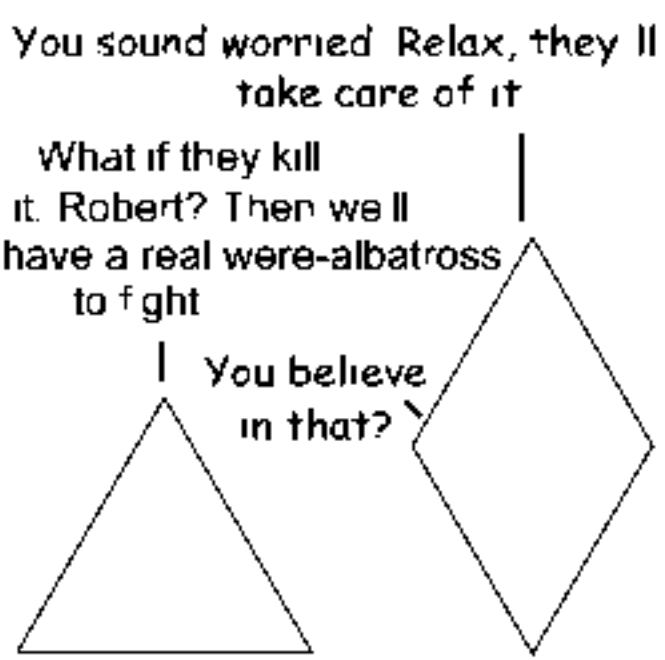
Triangle and Robert

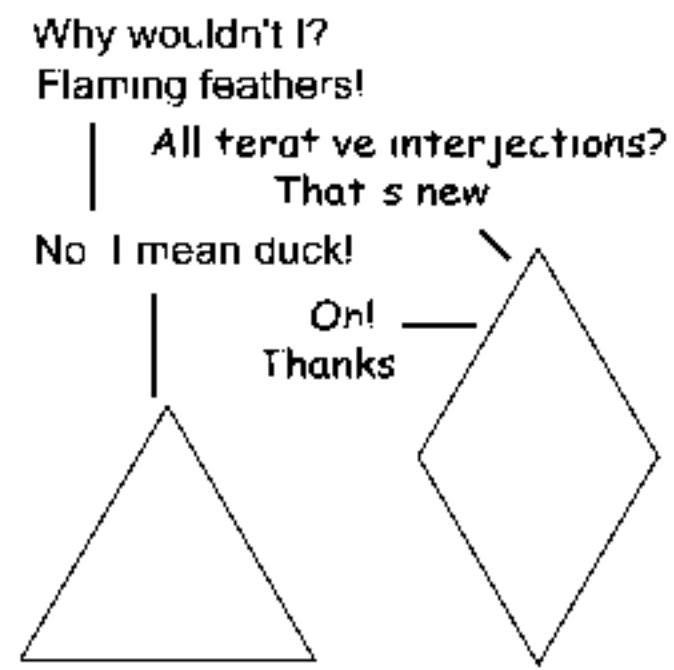






Triangle and Robert





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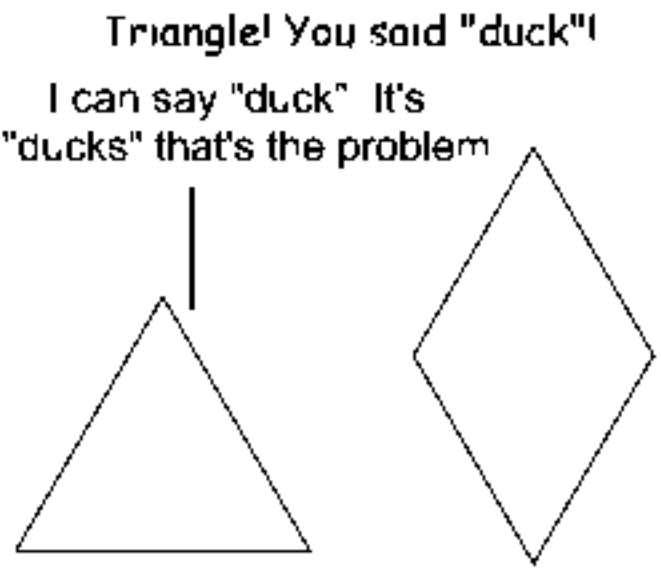

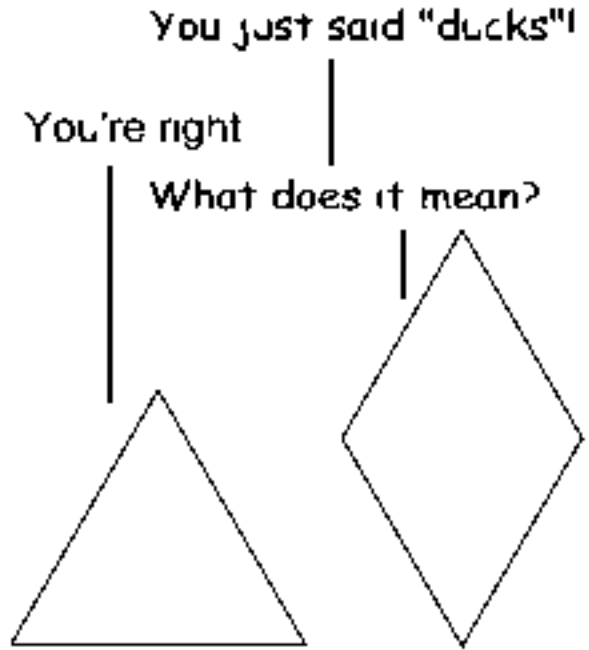

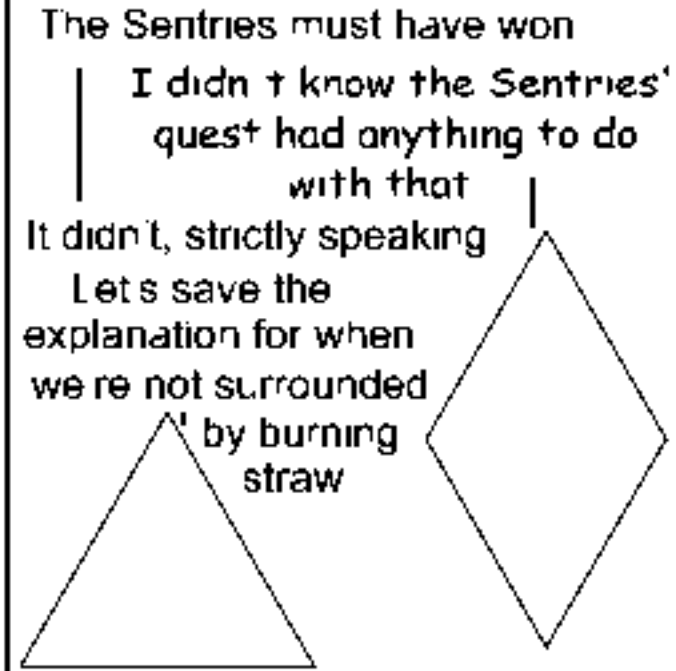

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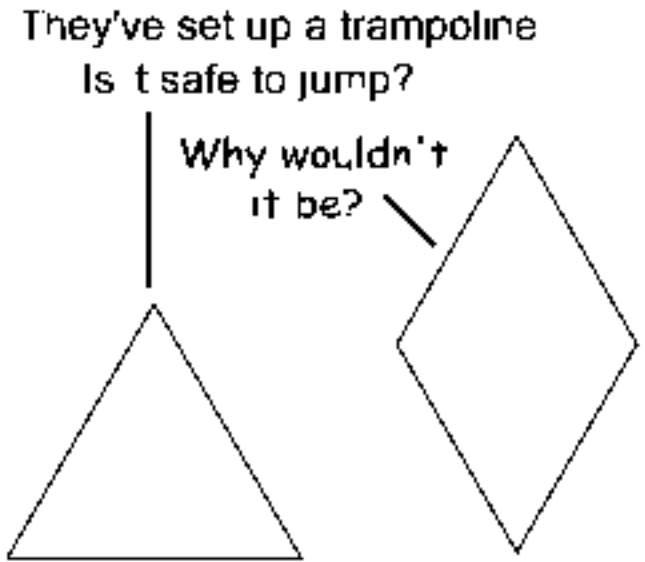

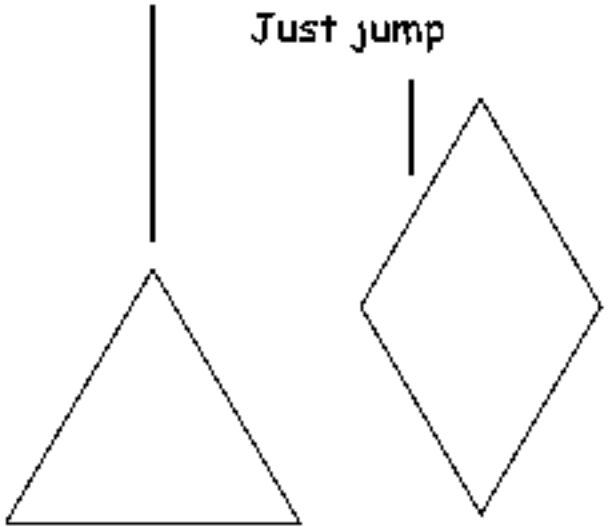

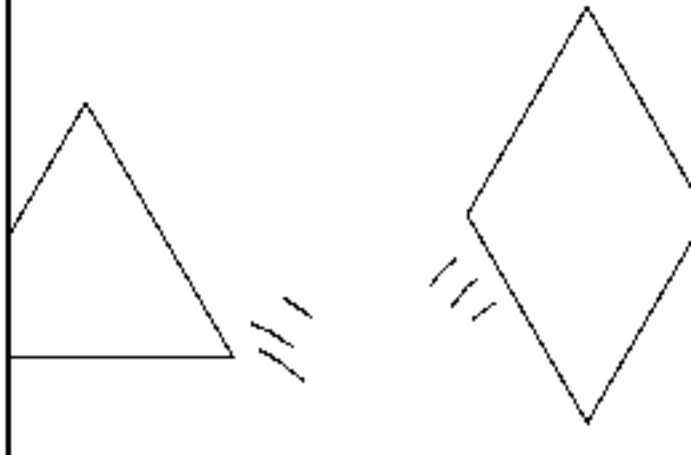

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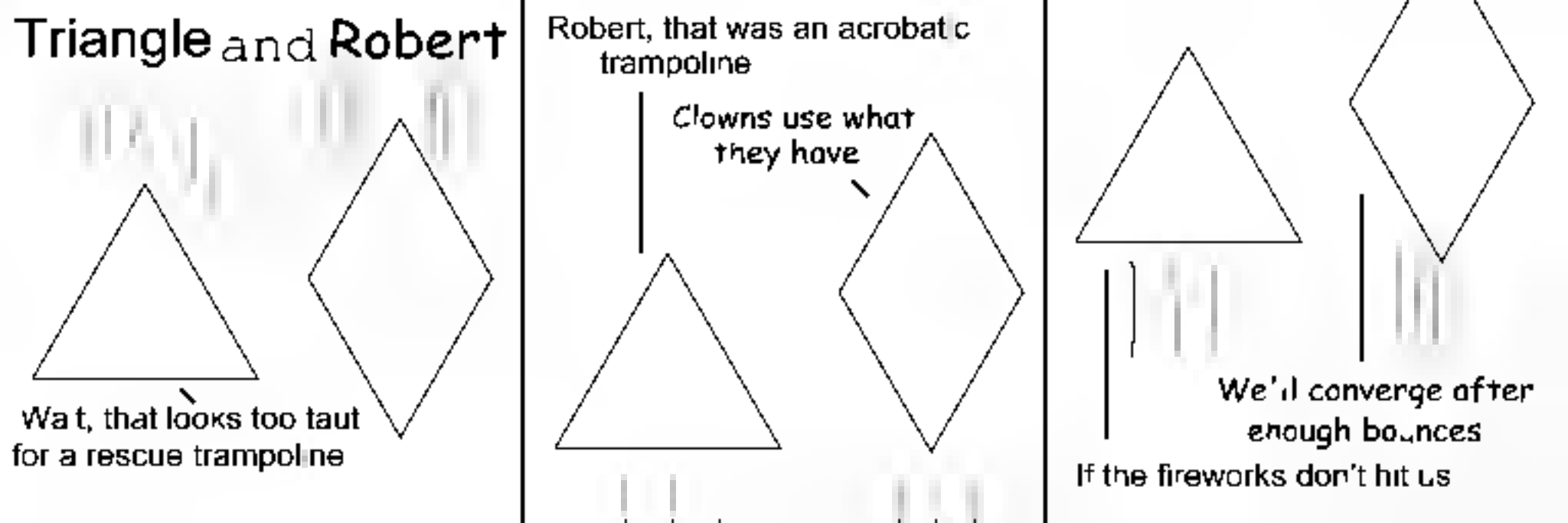

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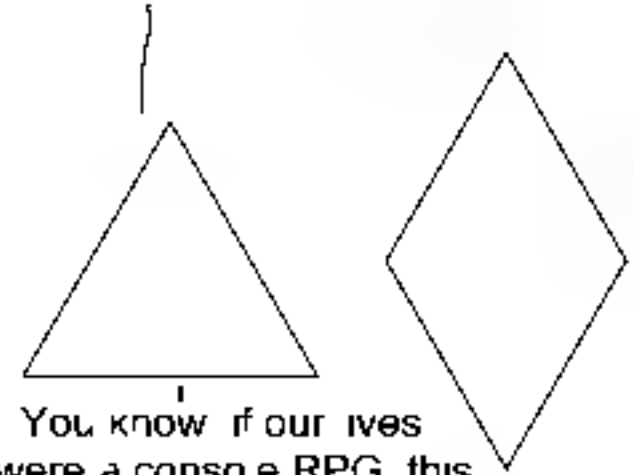
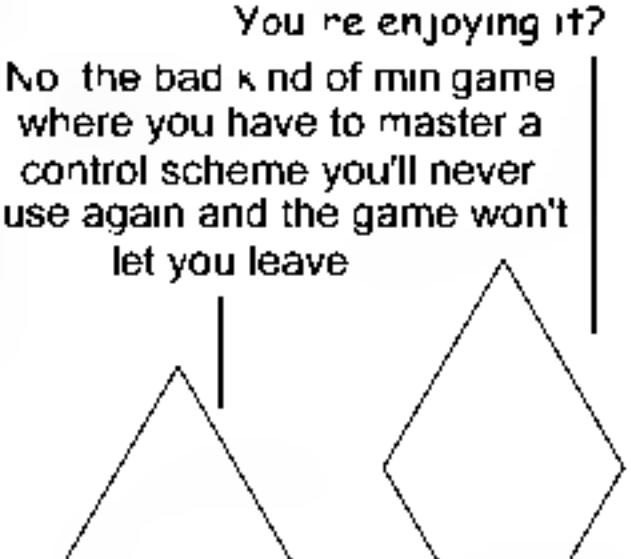
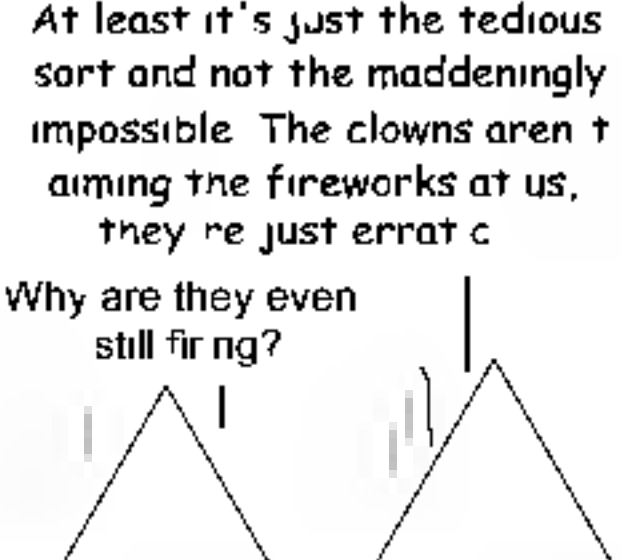
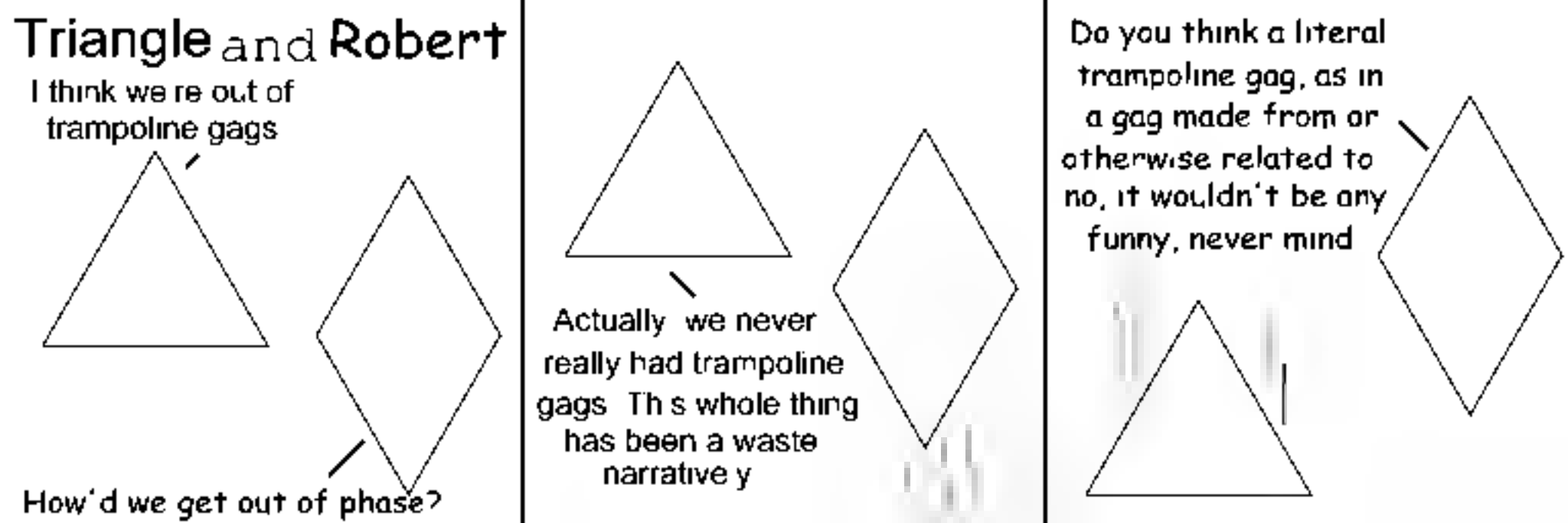






Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



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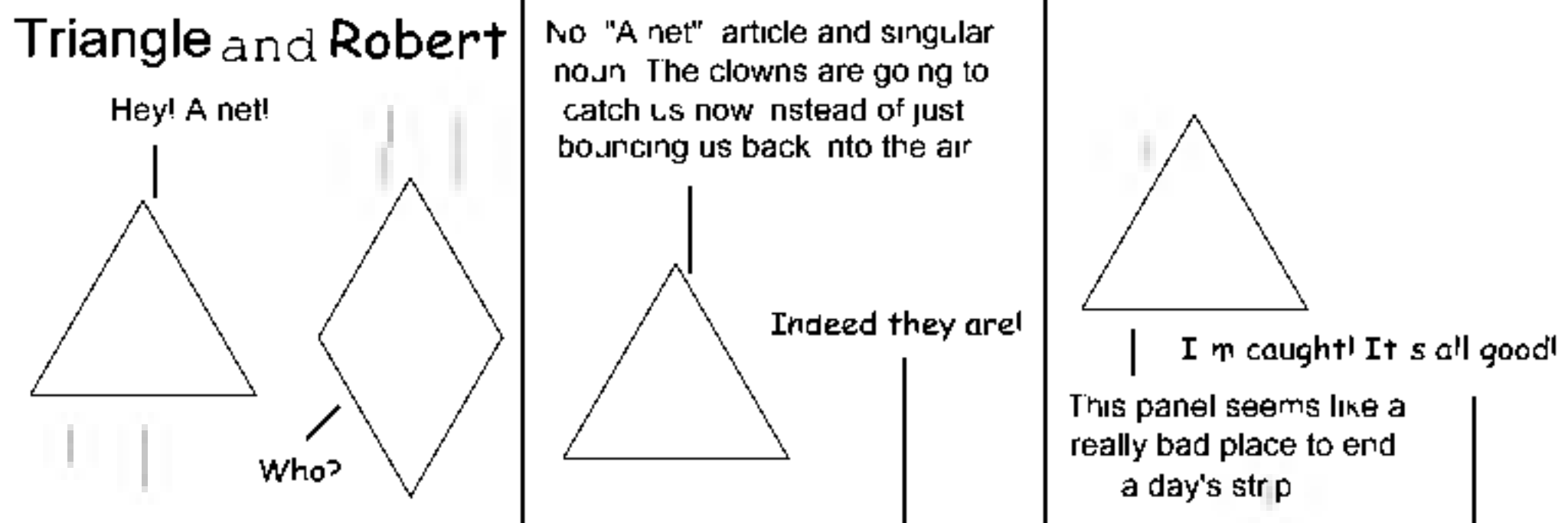

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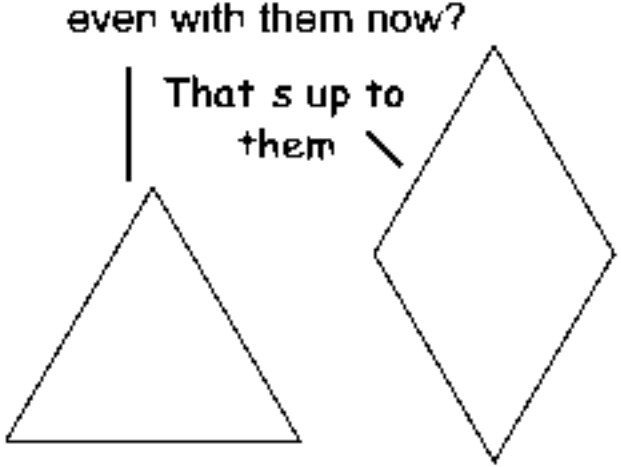

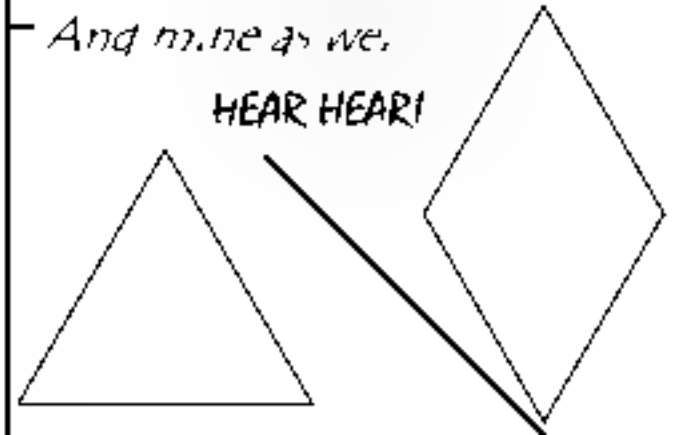

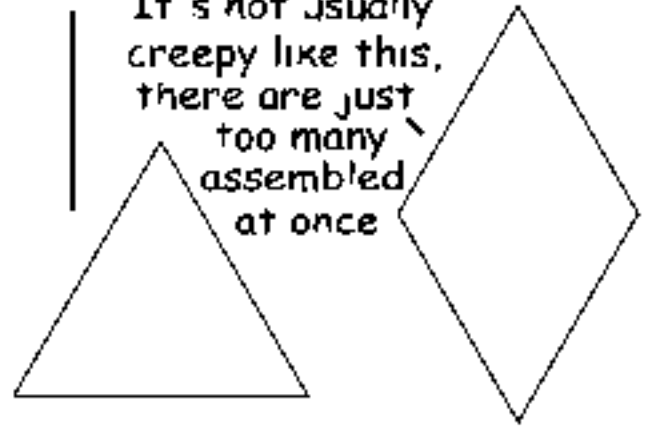

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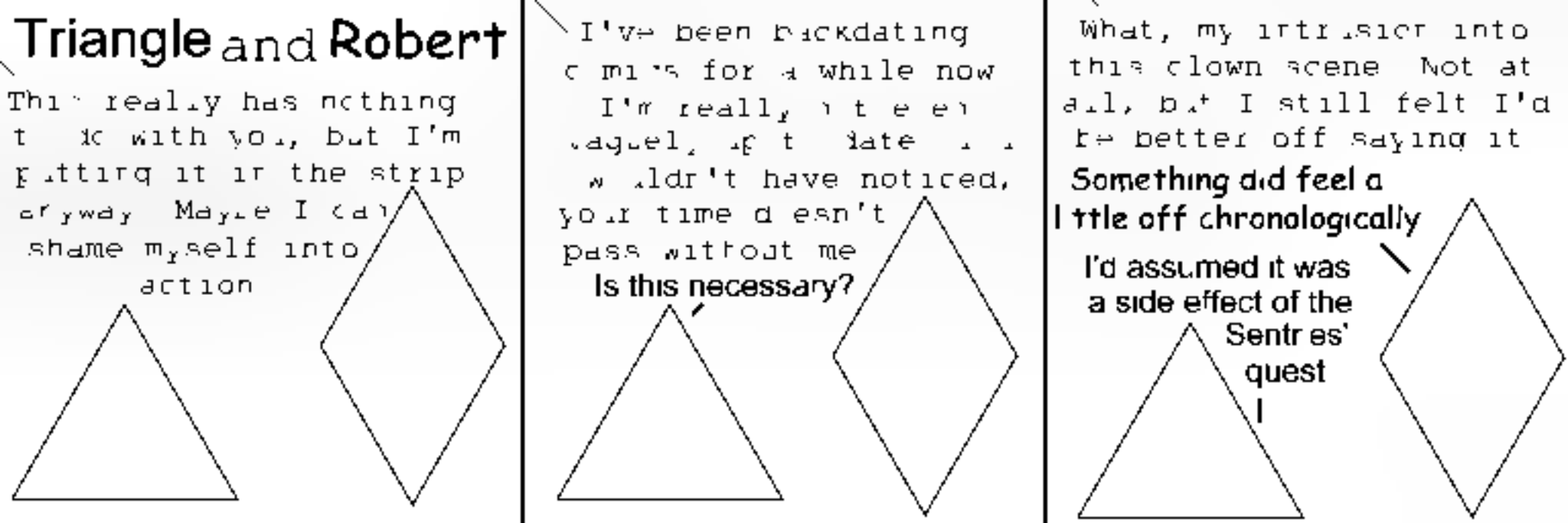

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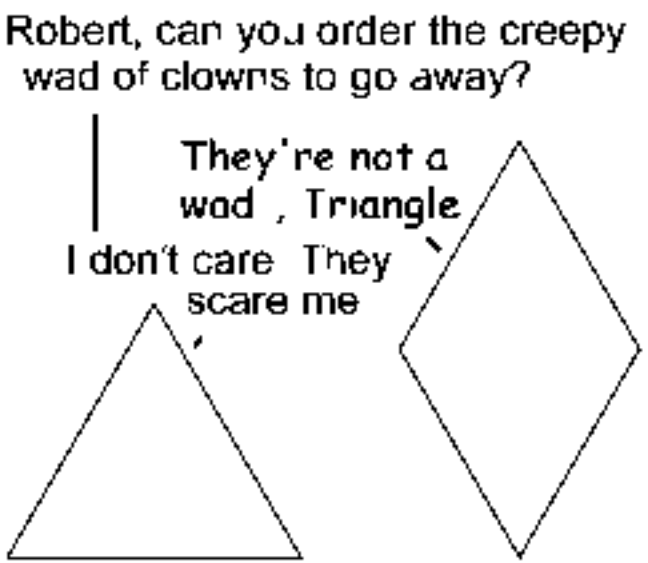
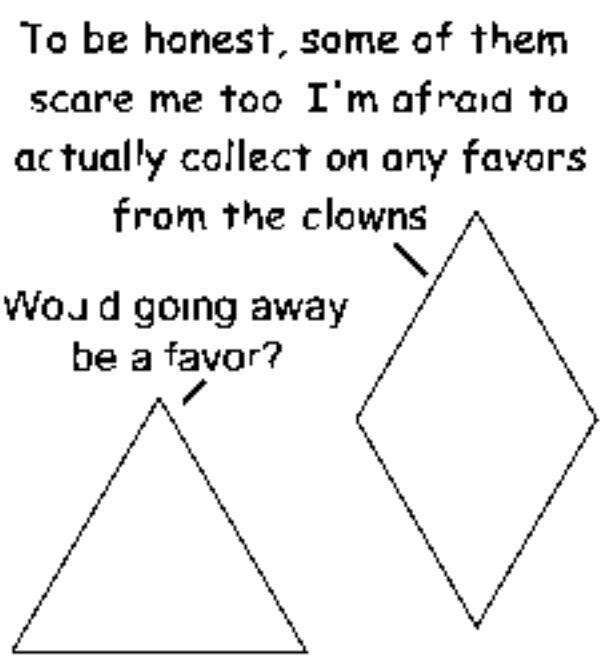
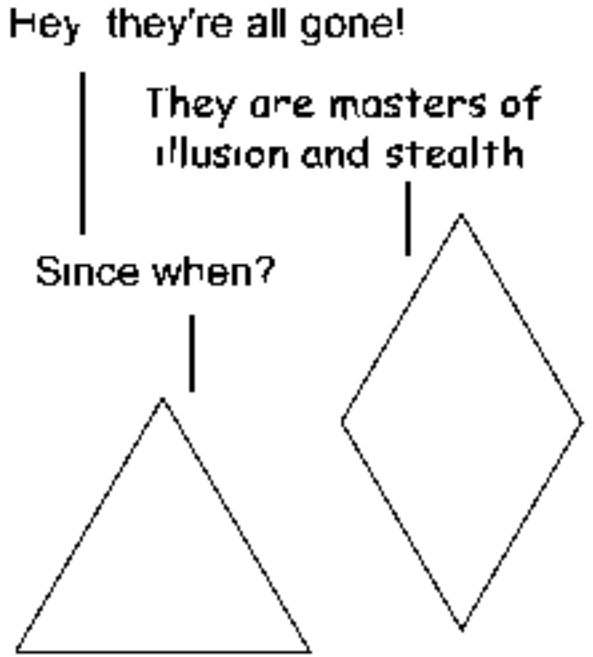


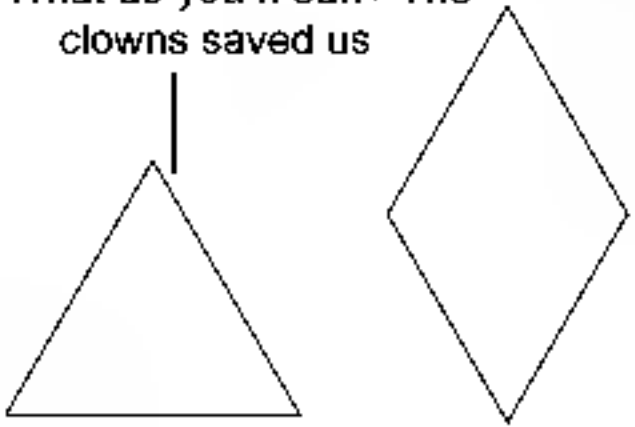




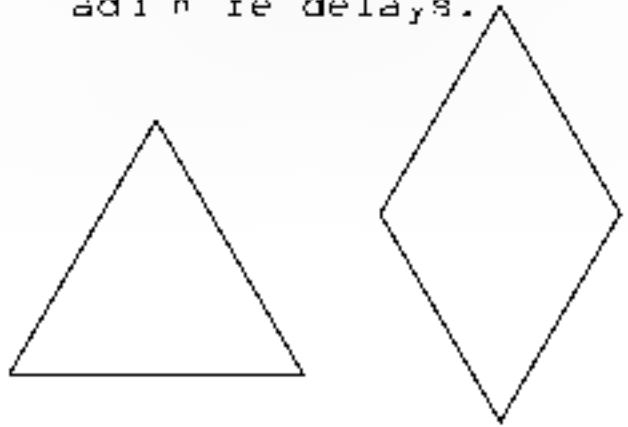
Triangle and Robert

Kay, that didn't work

What do you mean? The clowns saved us

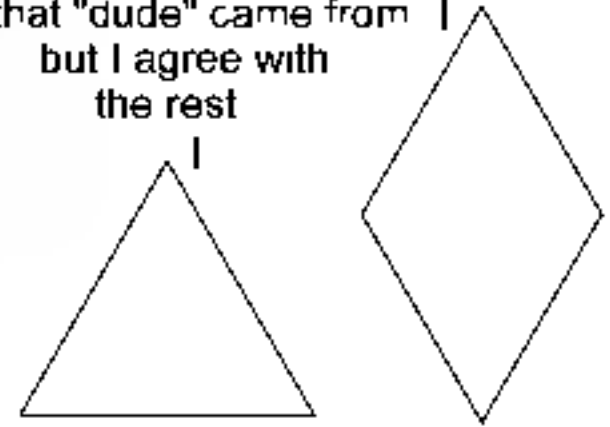


N , me admitting there've been strip delays didn't work Apparently I just used the fact that I mentioned it as license to add more delays.



Dude No One Cares About Your Problems

I don't know where that "dude" came from but I agree with the rest



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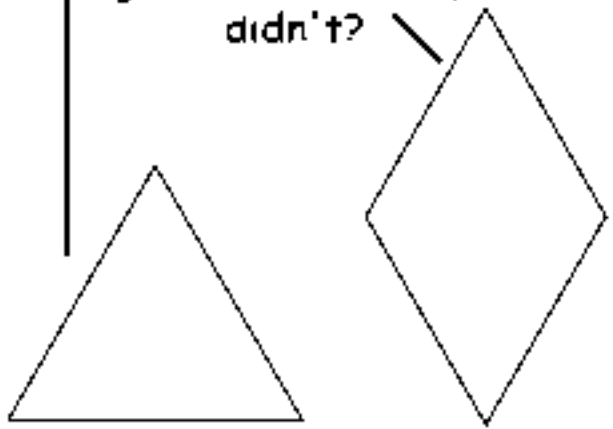

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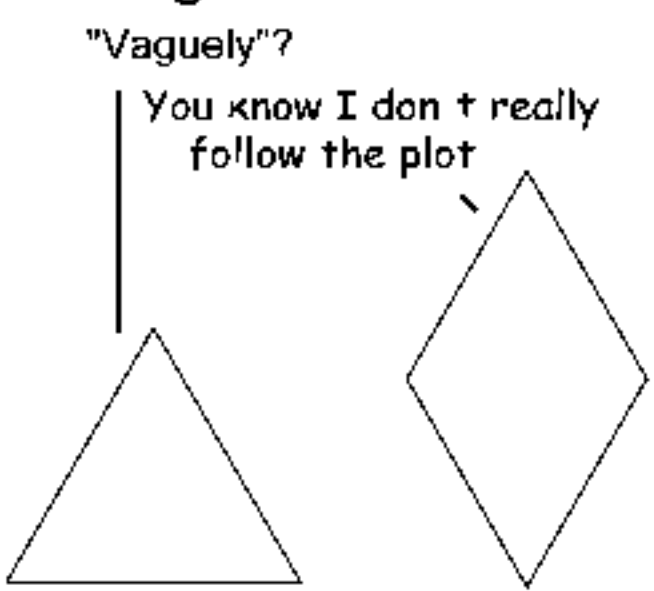

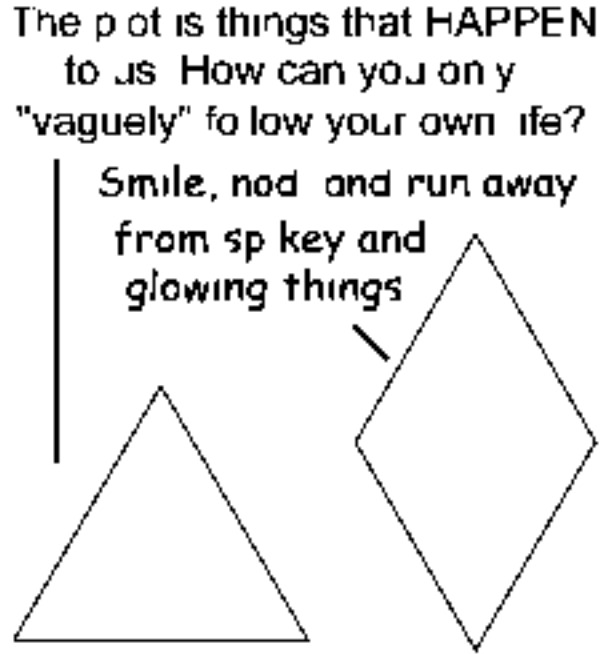

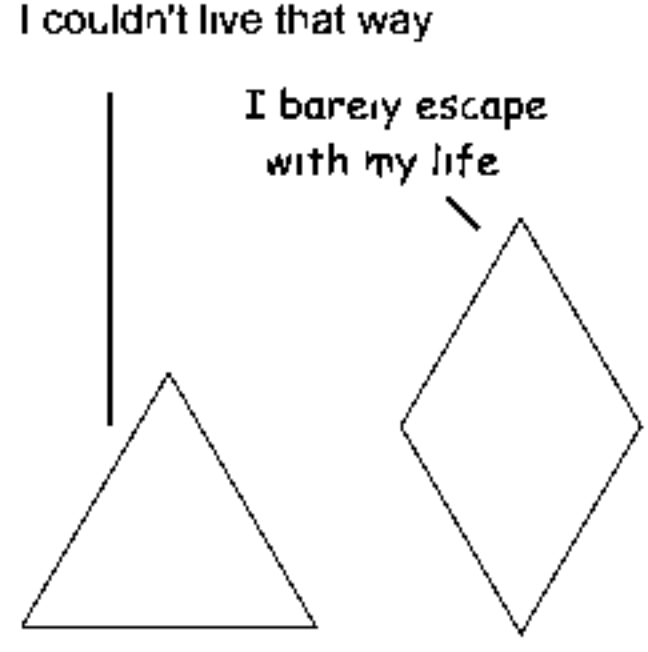

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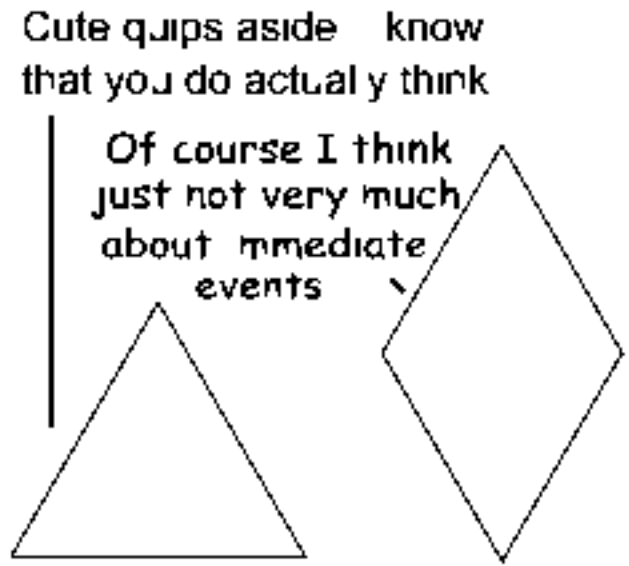

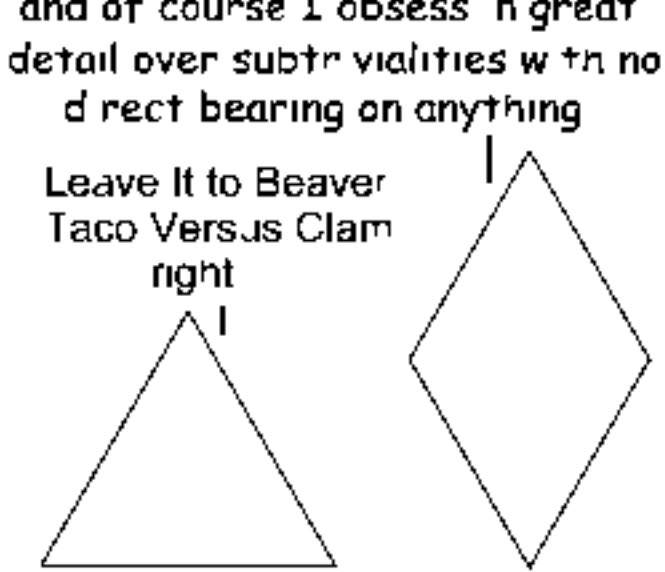

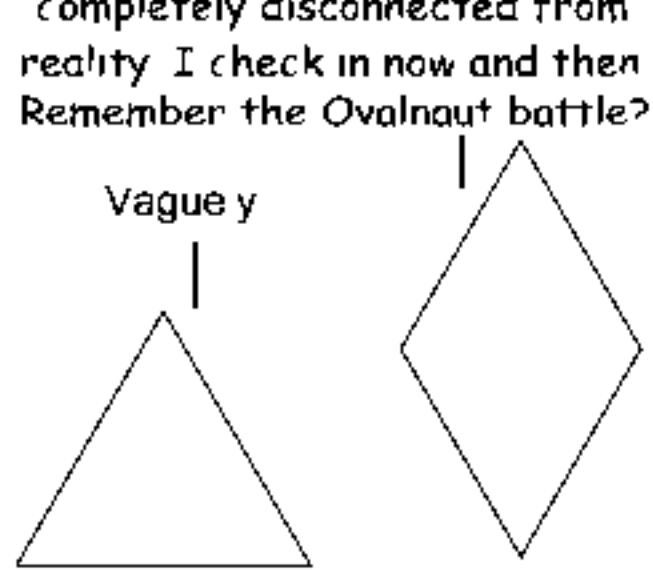

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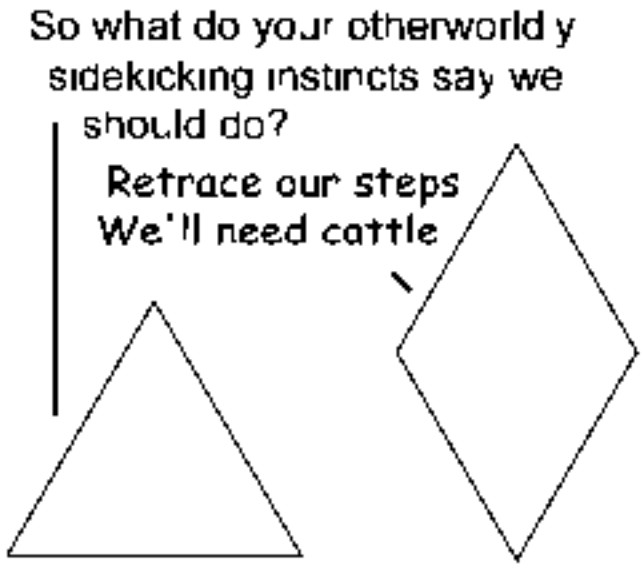

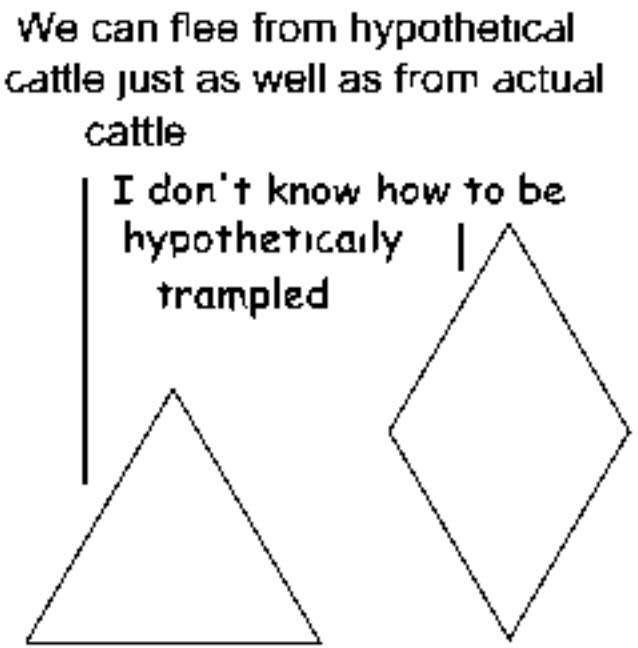

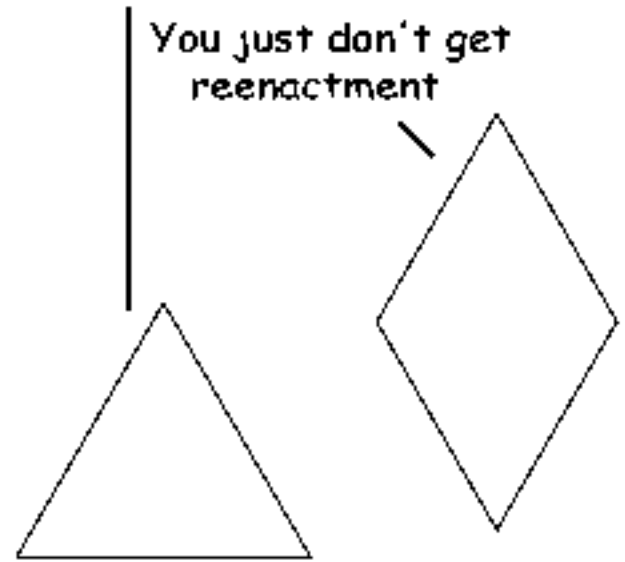

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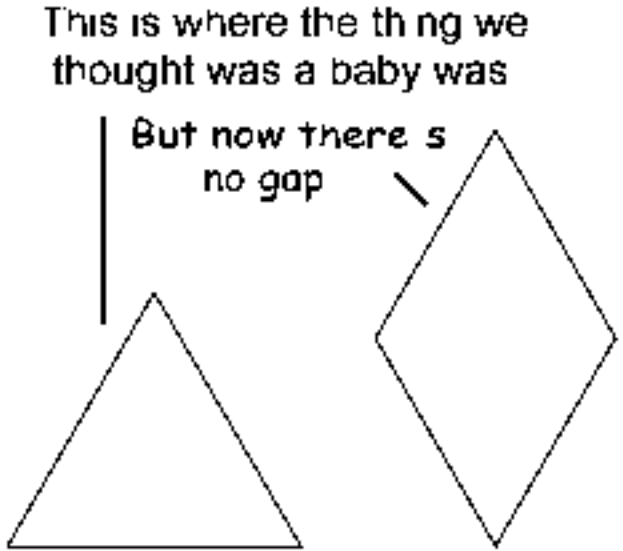

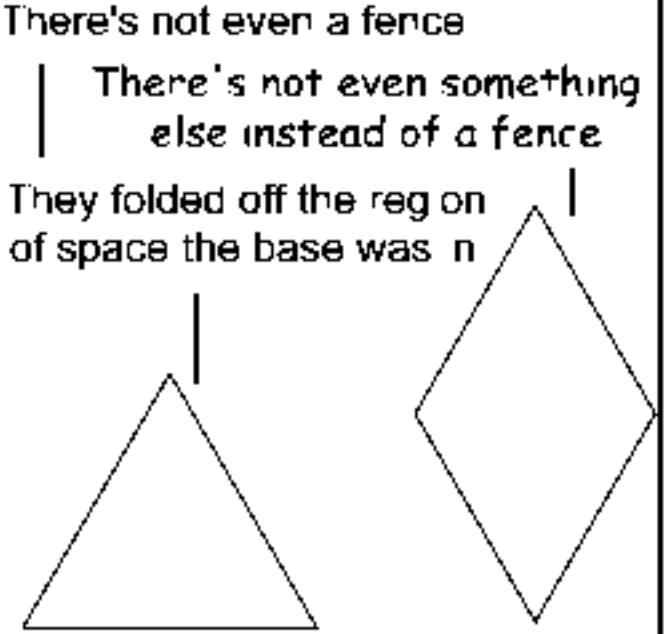

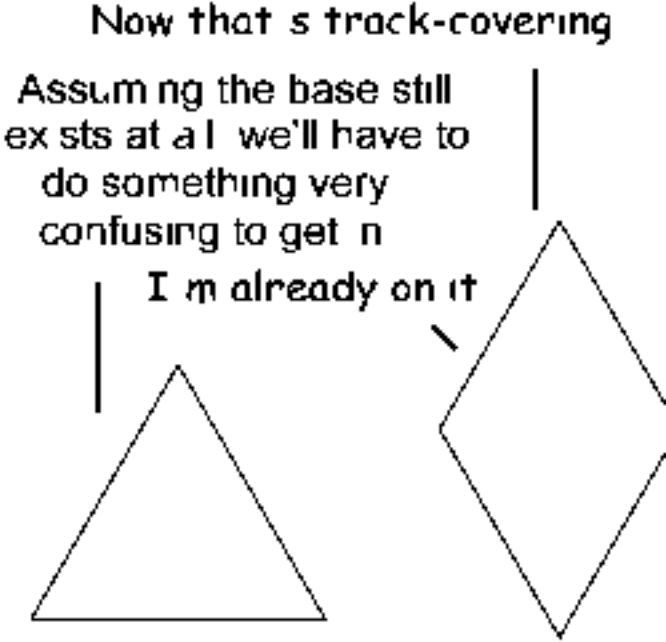

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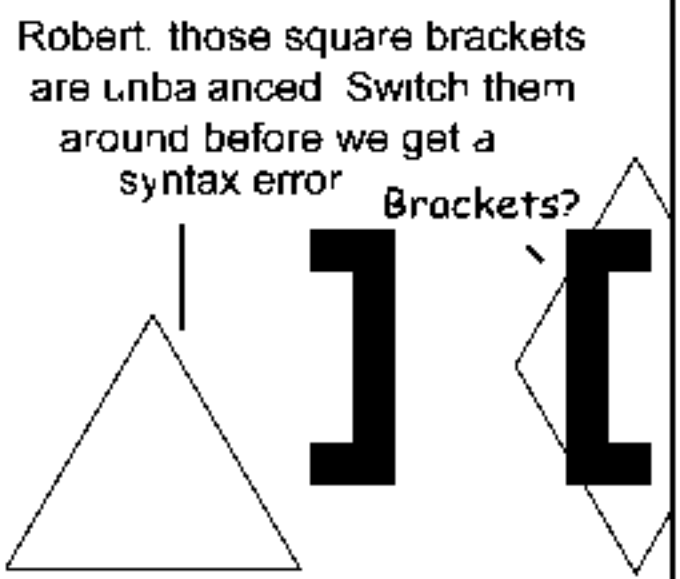

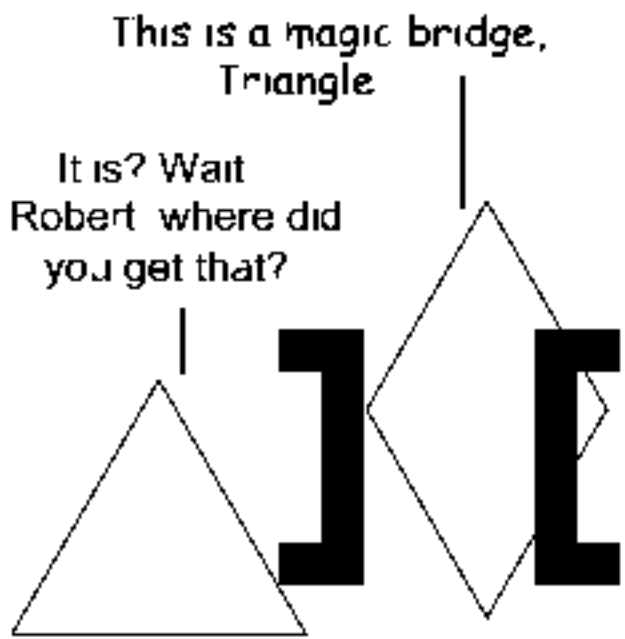

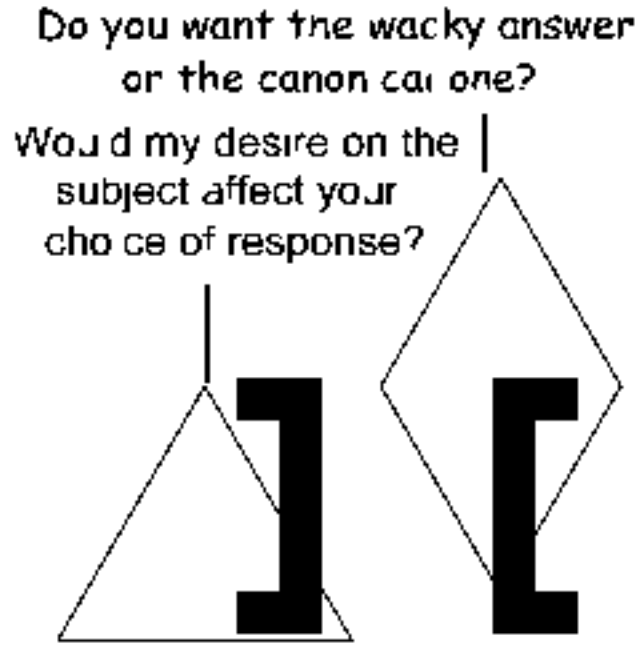

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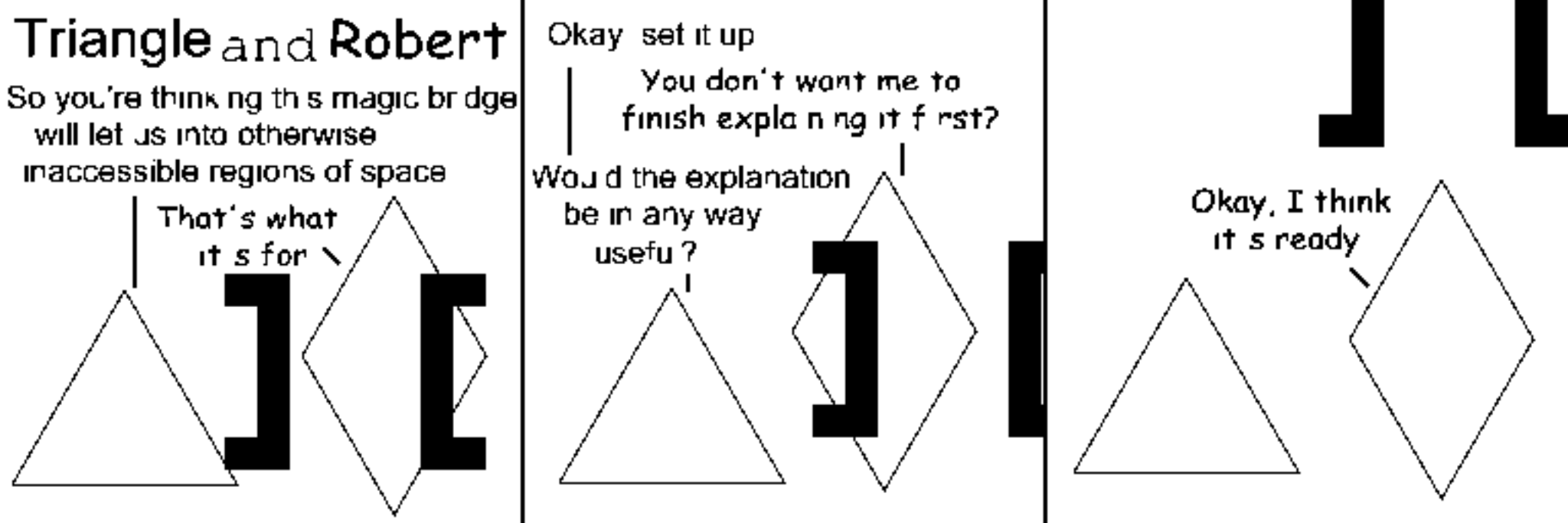
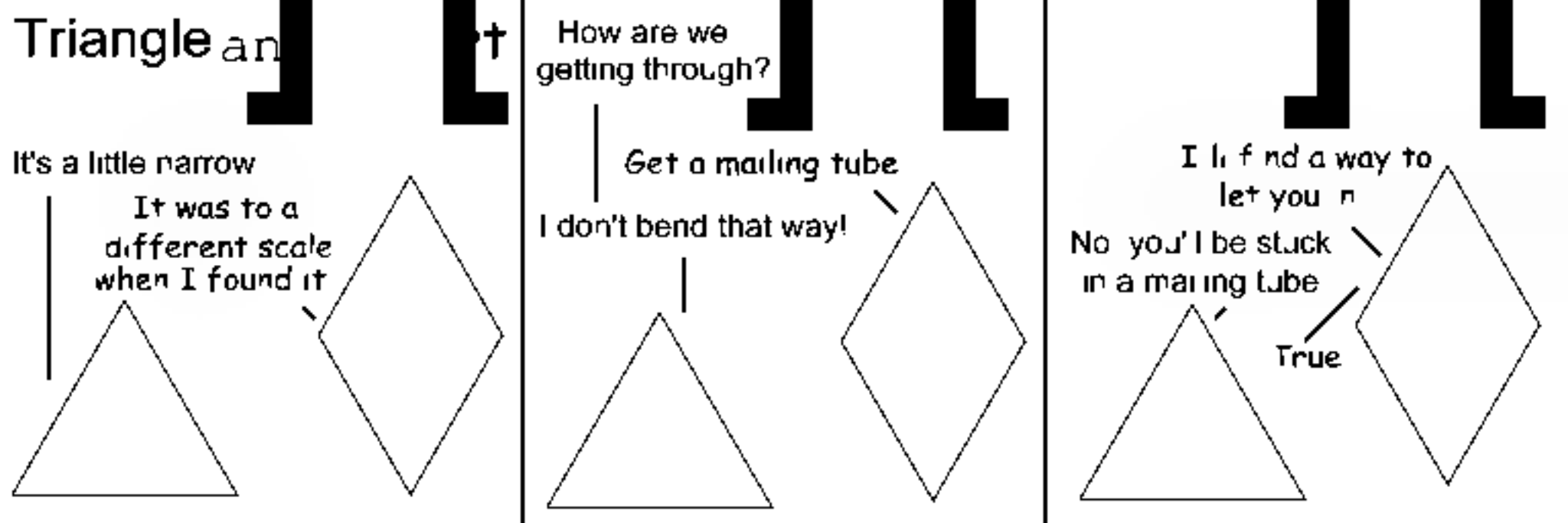
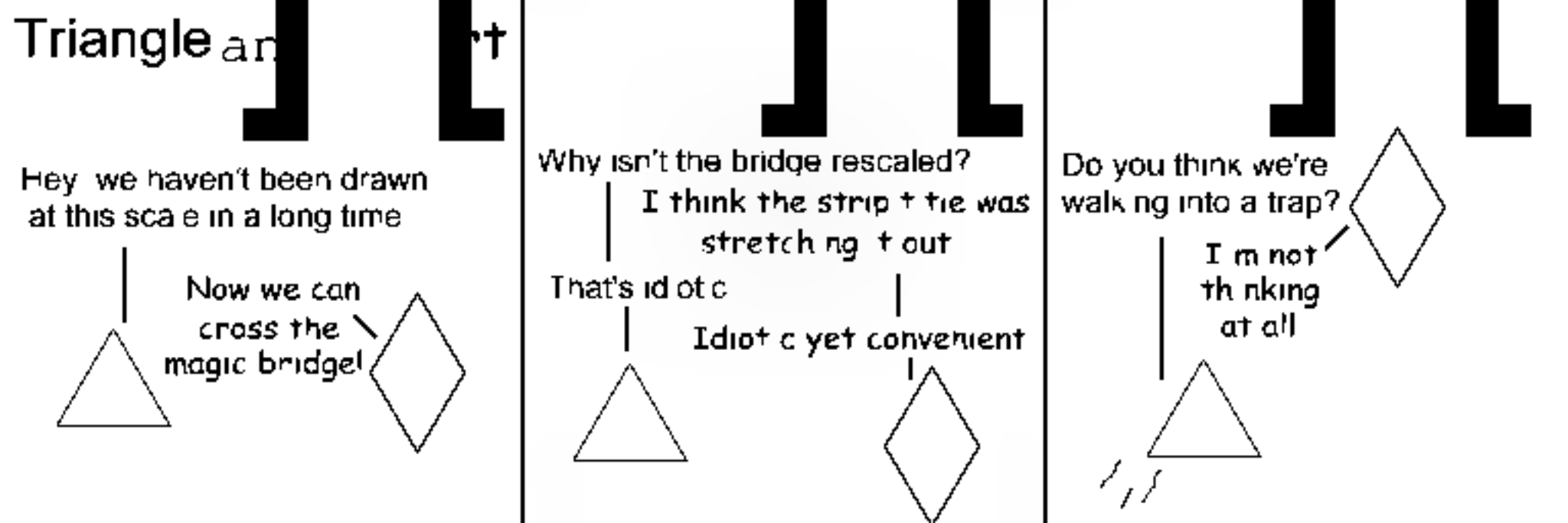



Triangle an t
It's a little narrow
It was to a different scale when I found it
How are we getting through?
Get a mailing tube
I don't bend that way!
I l f nd a way to let you n
No you' l be stuck in a mai ing tube
True

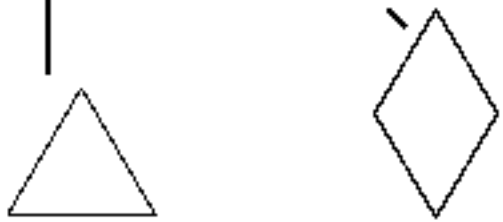

Triangle an t
Hey we haven't been drawn at this sca e in a long time
Now we can cross the magic bridge!
Why isn't the bridge rescaled?
I think the strip t tie was stretch ng t out
That's id ot c
Idiot c yet convenient
Do you think we're walk ng into a trap?
I m not th nking at all

Triangle and Robert

Are we infiltrating yet?

No I think we're only trespassing

Which building do you want to break into first?

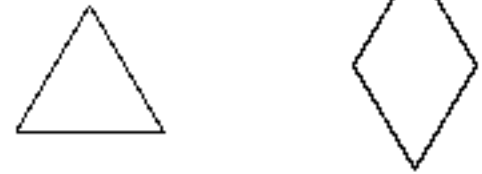


I want to scout out the grounds and see if they left any security in place when they abandoned the base

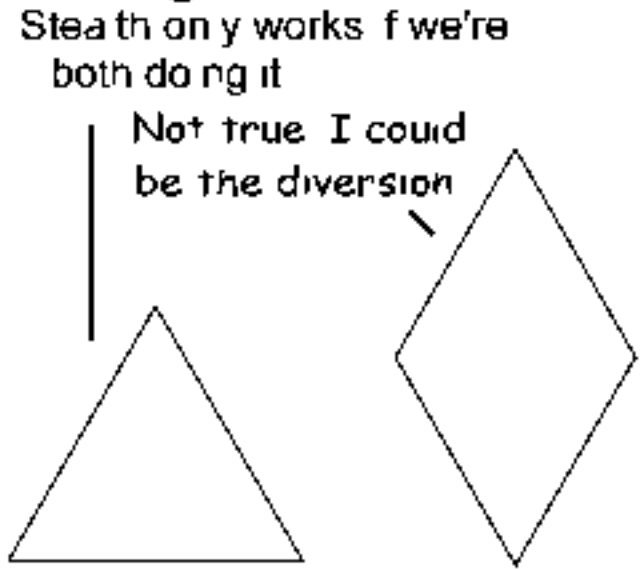
Okay, I'll be smashing my way into the radio tower

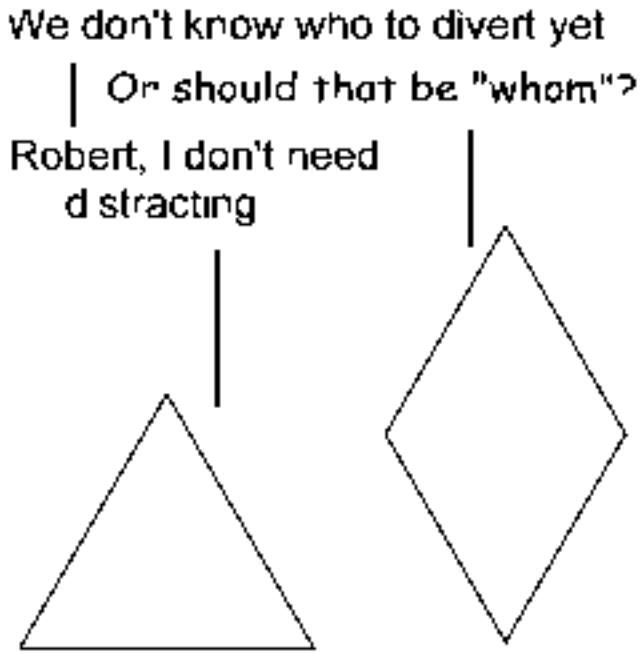
What if we stick together? We'll do less damage that way

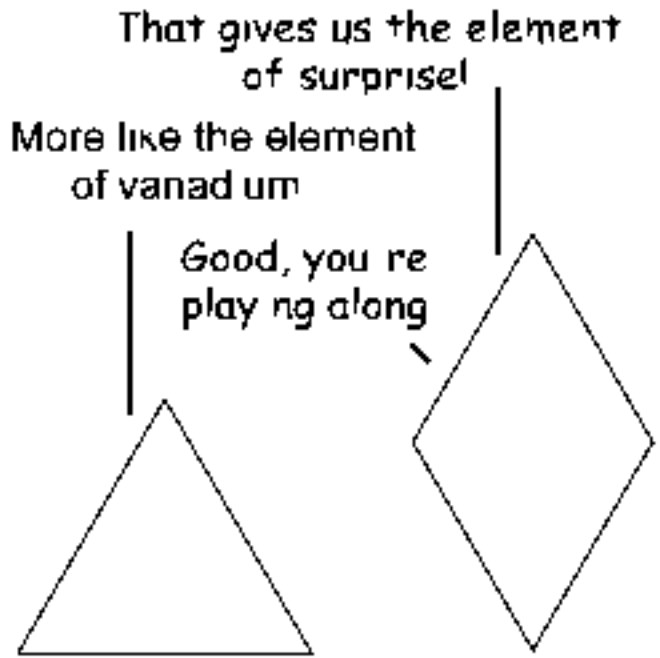
And that would be good because ?



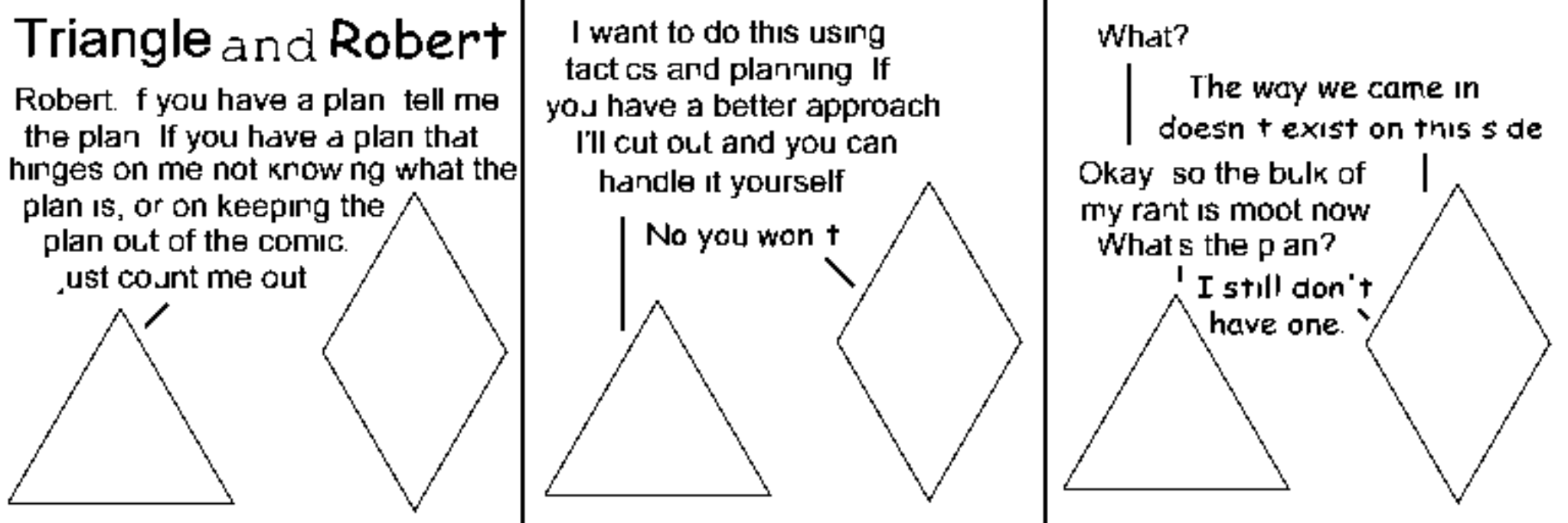
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert



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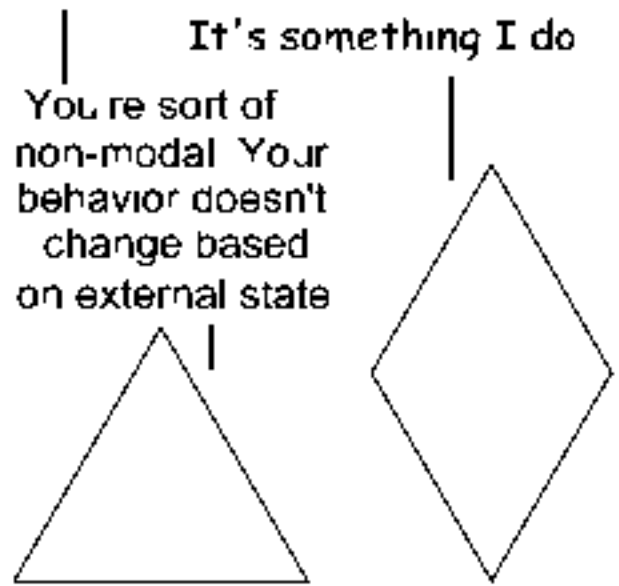

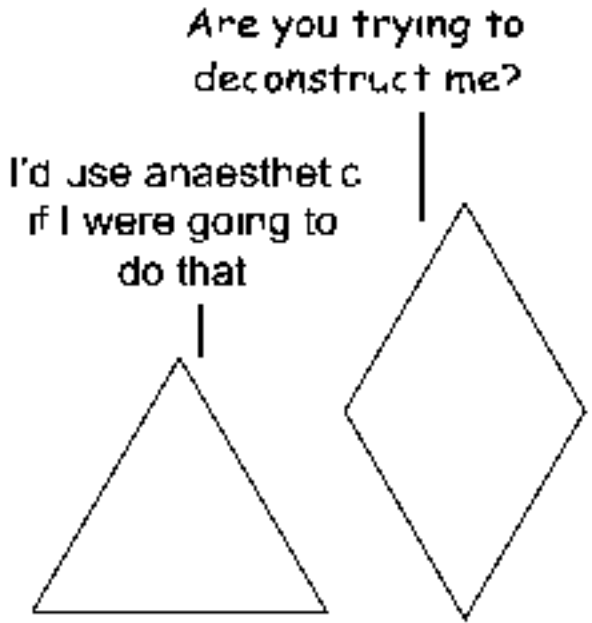

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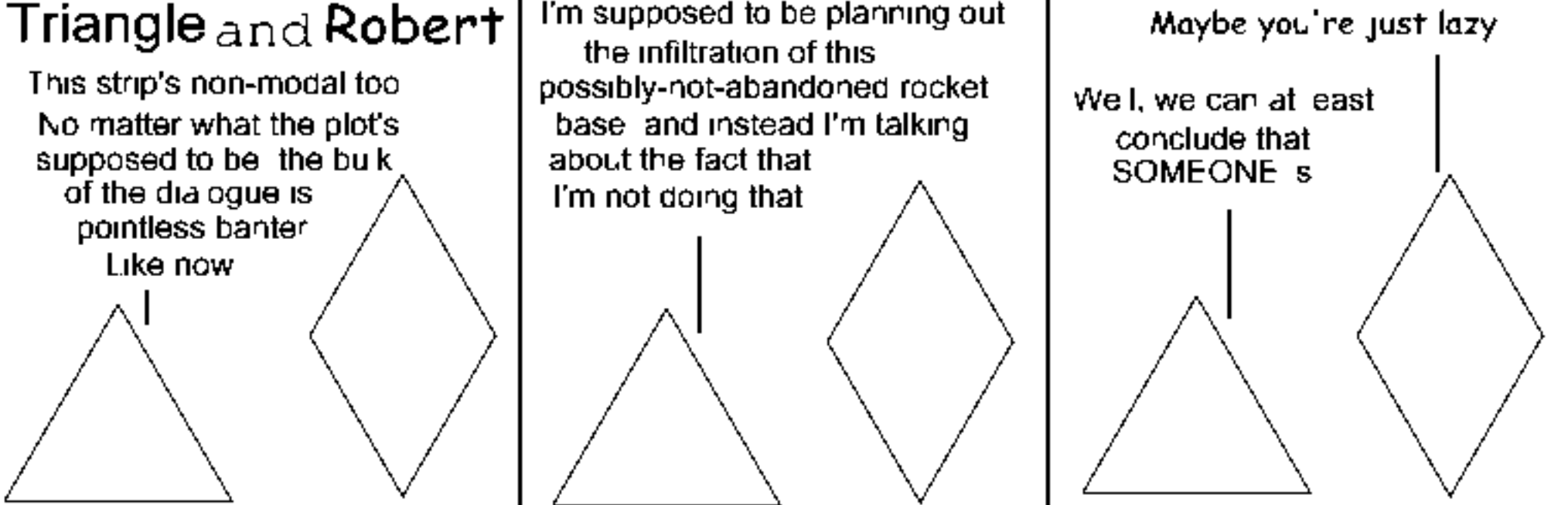
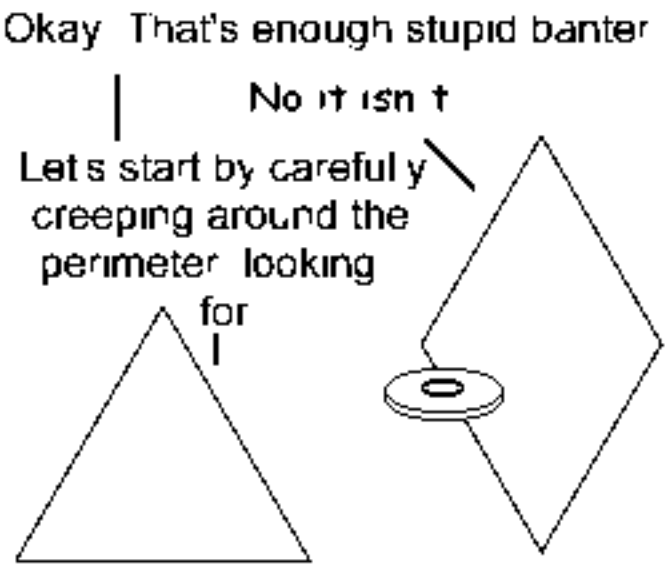
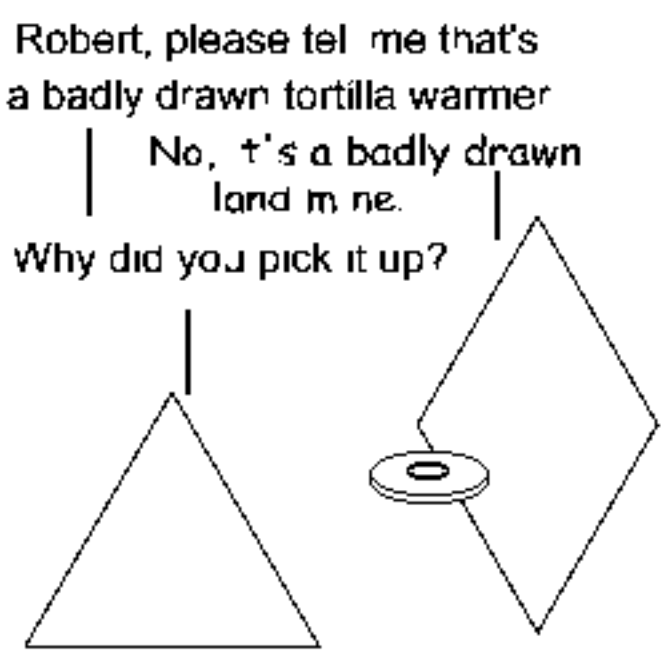
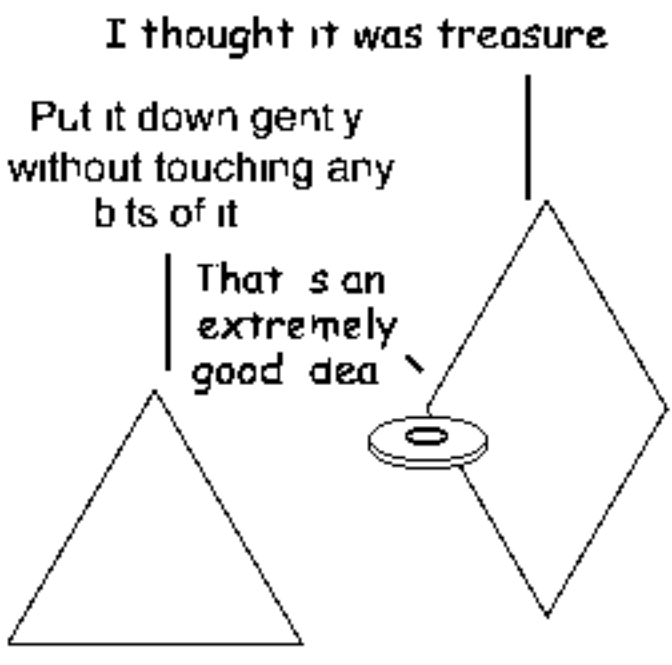


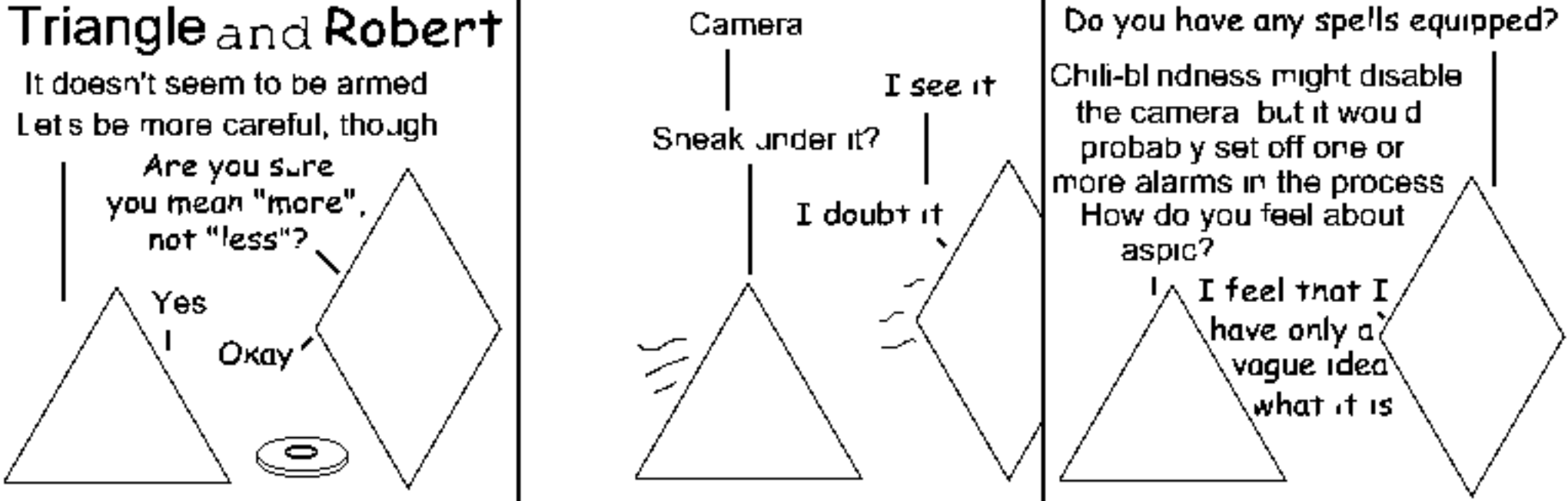
Triangle and Robert



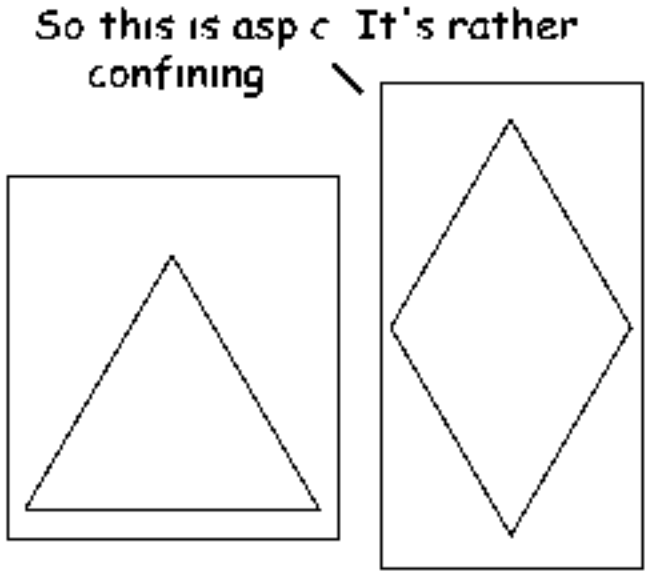


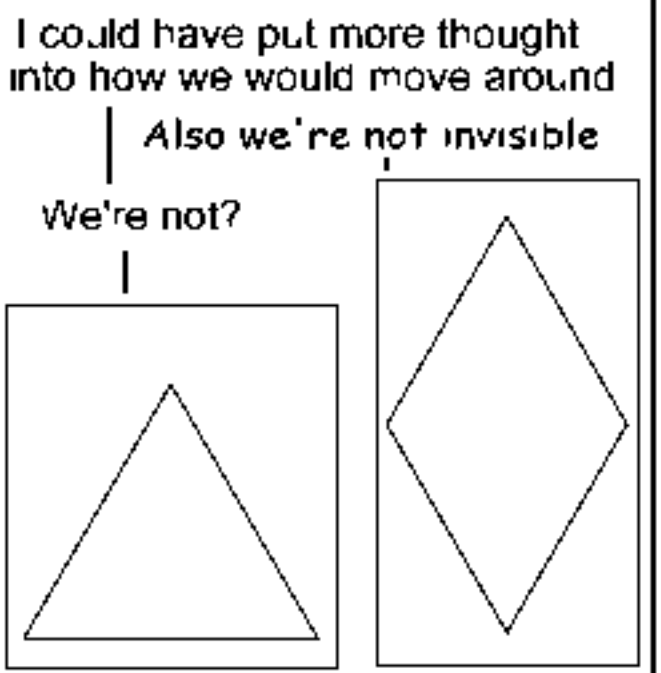


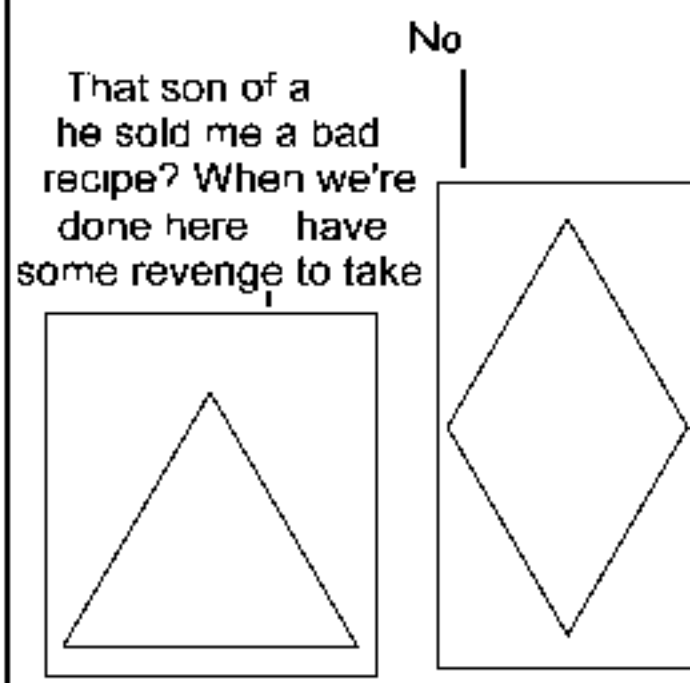
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







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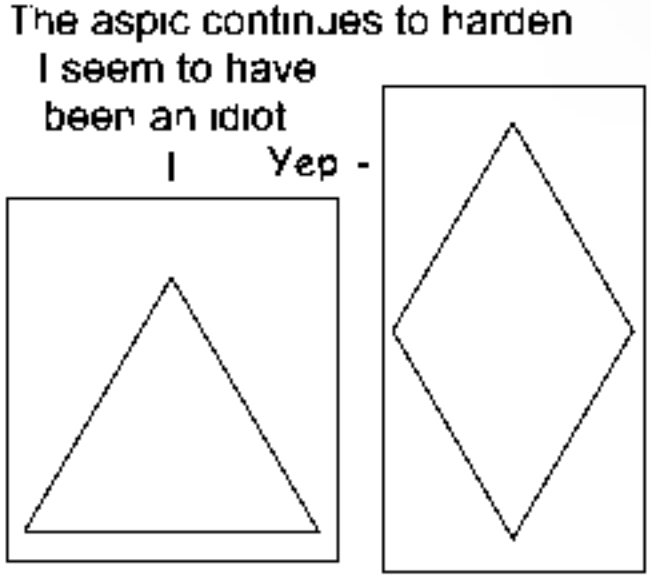
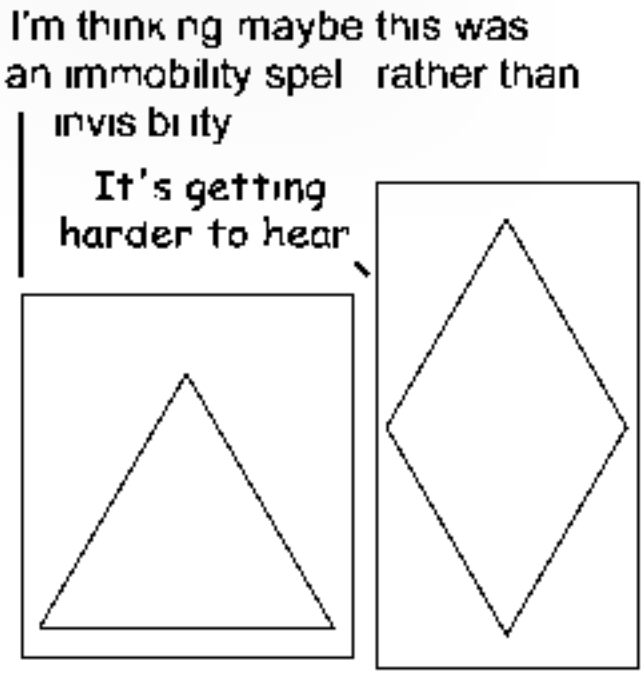
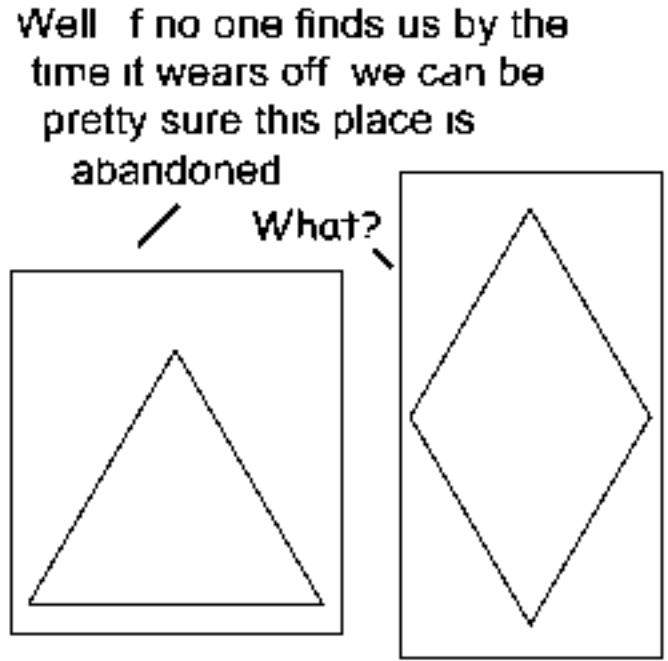
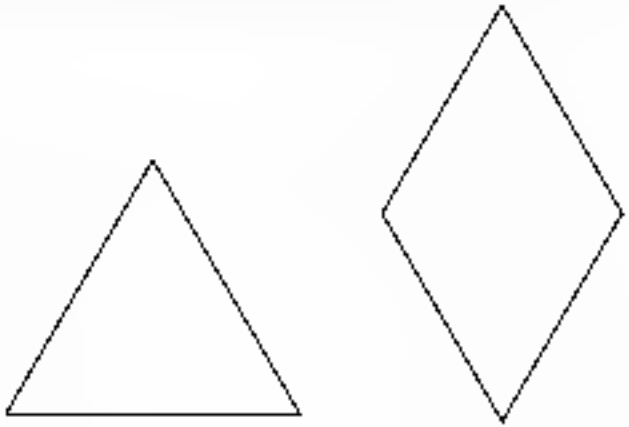






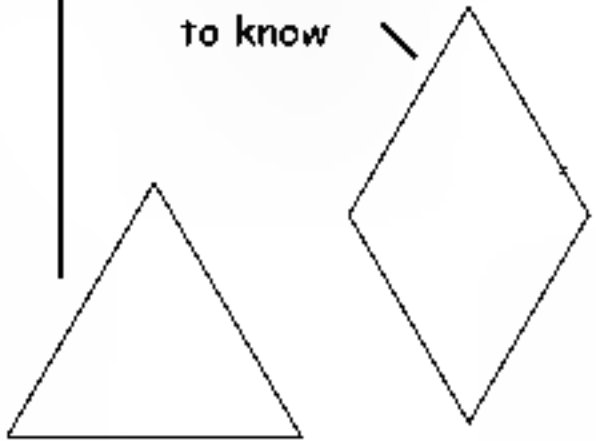
Triangle and Robert

With the rays of dawn, the spell is broken



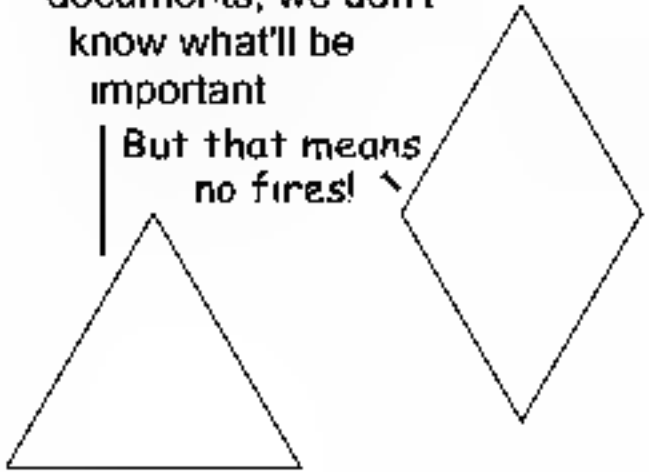
That was uncomfortable and did not need to happen

At least we learned what we needed to know



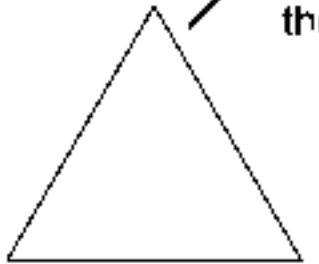
Right. the base is clearly unguarded. Go nuts. Just don't destroy any documents, we don't know what'll be important

But that means no fires!

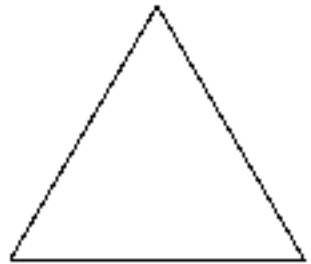


Triangle and Robert

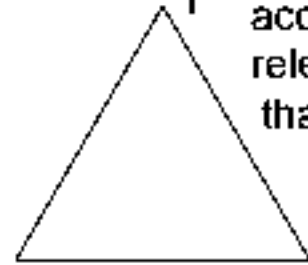
Robert ran off to the nearest building. I think it's a guard barracks, and he's trying to smash down the door. I'm circling the perimeter and trying to get a general idea of how they layed the base out



It's rocket-centric. assembling and launching the rocket in secrecy seems to be the overall theme. Some construction equipment, some abs communications, security, et cetera



Now I'm wondering what sort of operation would have a base like this, kept in utmost secrecy, and then mistake two random strangers for their test pilots. Maybe Prozac the Bear was responsible for that particular boneheadedness but from Cube's account there's plot relevance here, and that's not Prozac's style

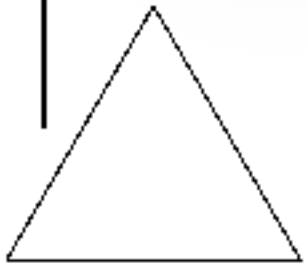


Triangle and Robert

What just happened?

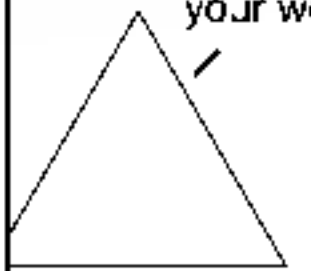
As far as the Universe of Pudding is concerned, nothing

Something happened



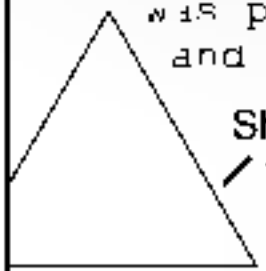
Well, I don't know when the comic started you had some baseline knowledge instead of having to learn everything from scratch

Inaccurate baseline knowledge, based on your world and not ours



Right, that stuff. Well, a big block of philosophy and myth is just... um "leaked" into you from me, I guess. It happens a lot as I learn things and as my world's history progresses, but this chunk was particularly big and you noticed it

Should I have an urge to learn Spanish?



Triangle and Robert

A thematic change was long overdue anyway. Just go back to endlessly the story now

I'd at least like to know what triggered a change in your attitude toward writing so profound that I could feel the shock wave

It wouldn't make sense to you. All of the Seventh Race's art and literature is to some degree about the creative process and deals in absurdities. Here, that sort of thing is a subset of literature rather than its essence

You're right, that doesn't make sense to me

On some previous iteration of history your world must have had a moment when postmodernism began, but by your seventh time around it's pure collective background knowledge.

Much like language The Fourth Race's programming let us bypass a lot of cultural evolution

Triangle and Robert

At one point a polygon was born for whom the mishmash of incompetent gods and contradictory universal laws which passes itself off as "fate" had set aside a place in literature

Can you explain this in shorter sentences?

No. This polygon would have become a writer as destined, but the cycle of Races is not a clean one, and the human author whose destiny was to be repeated in this polygon hadn't truly been forgotten, or rather while he himself had been forgotten, the effect of his work remained

So what happened to the polygon?

He went into voice acting and has nothing to do with the plot of this comic strip

But he has everything to do with the theme

That's possible

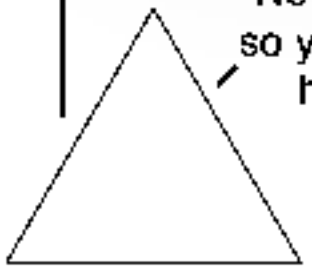
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

It's dark in here

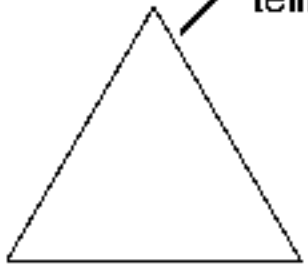
Are you insisting that I portray the darkness visually

No I stated it so you wouldn't have to



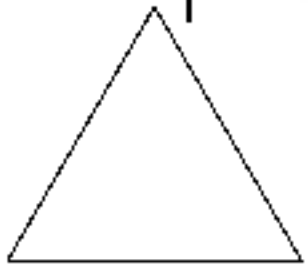
That's weirdly perverse

Opposing you on the most trivial matters is a waste of time and only worth doing when wasting time is called for My efforts are better spent changing events themselves rather than their telling

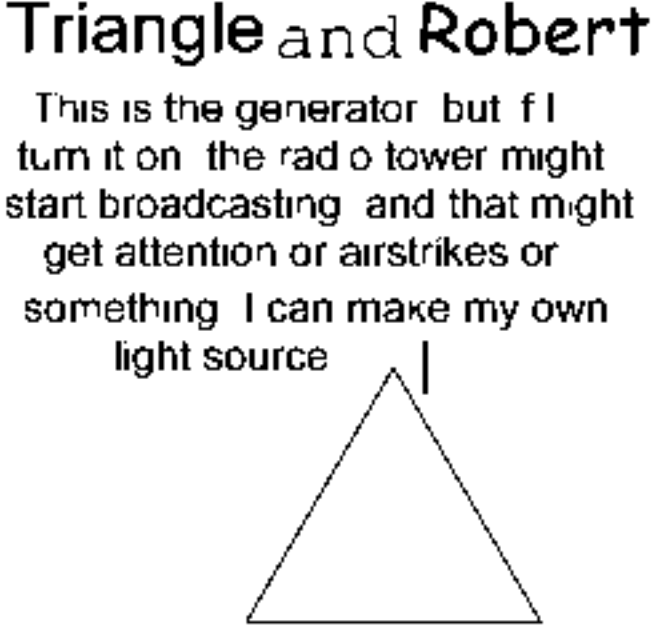


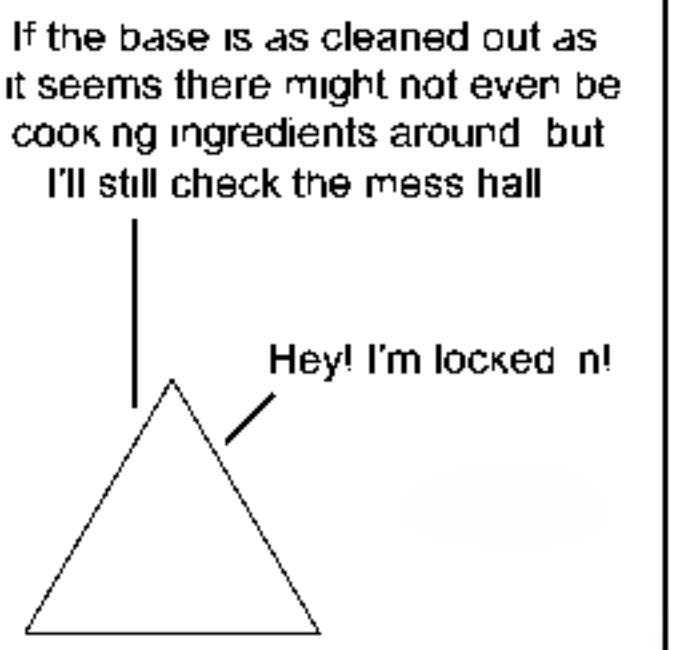
When a distinction exists, that is

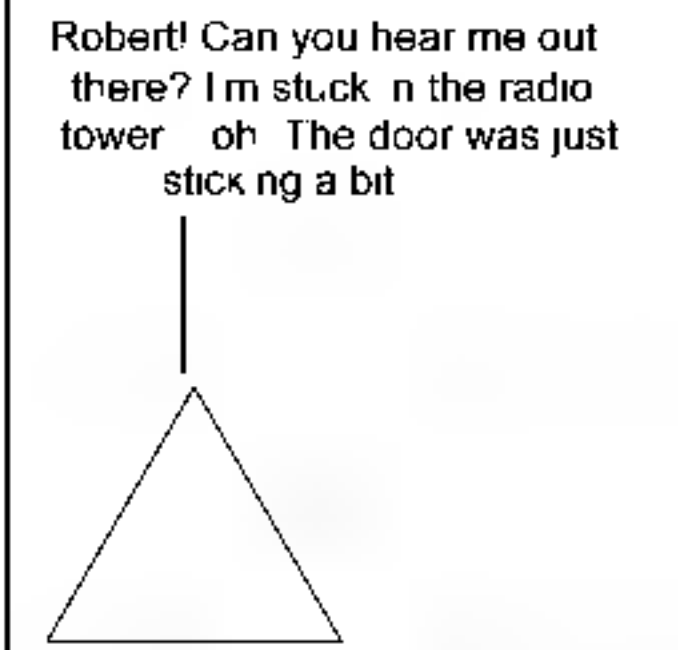
Maybe should find the generator and get some light in here



Triangle and Robert







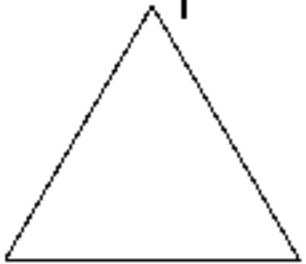
Triangle and Robert

Never m nd!

Never mind what?

I was screaming for help but it was a false alarm

I didn t hear a thing

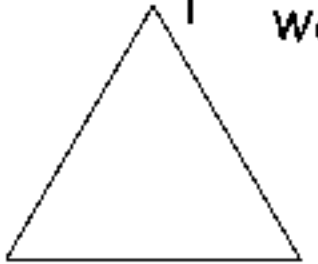


You reduced that bu ld ng to rubble very quickly

It wasn t built to last

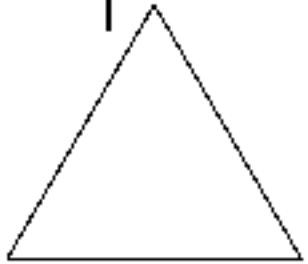
Hm so they weren t expecting to stick around and had no interest in defense against attack

We say "hm" too much



I suppose we do I'm going to be thinking about that all day now Anyth ng interesting in the rubb e?

Only the lack of things You d barely know the building was even used



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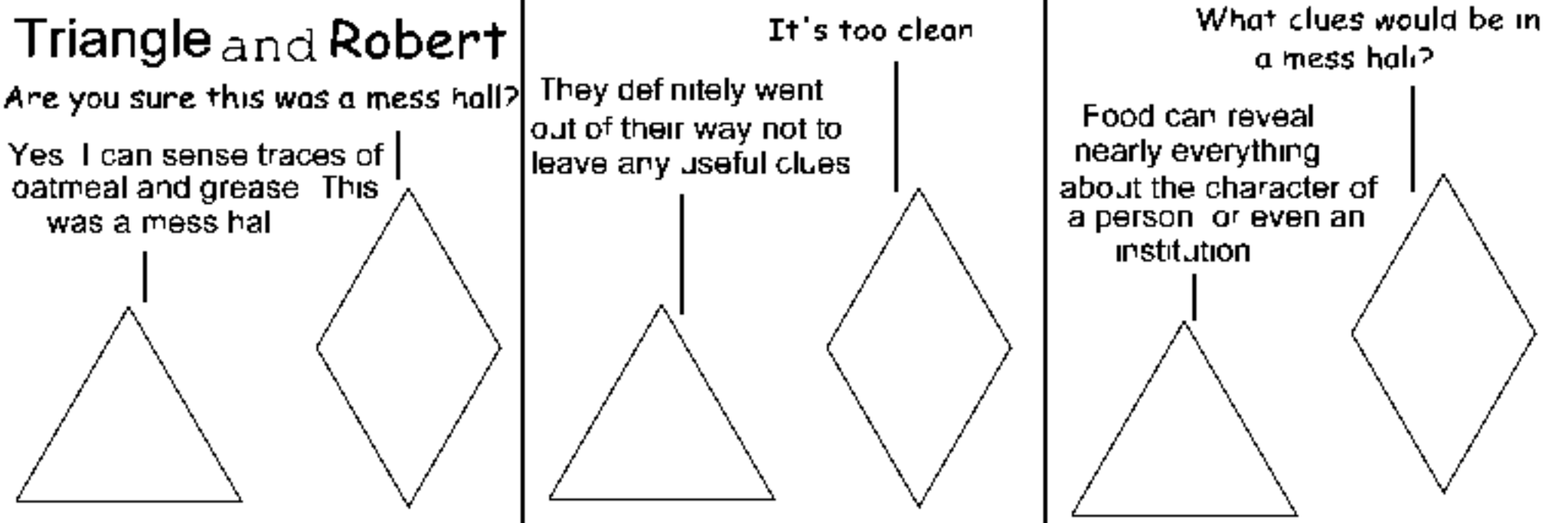

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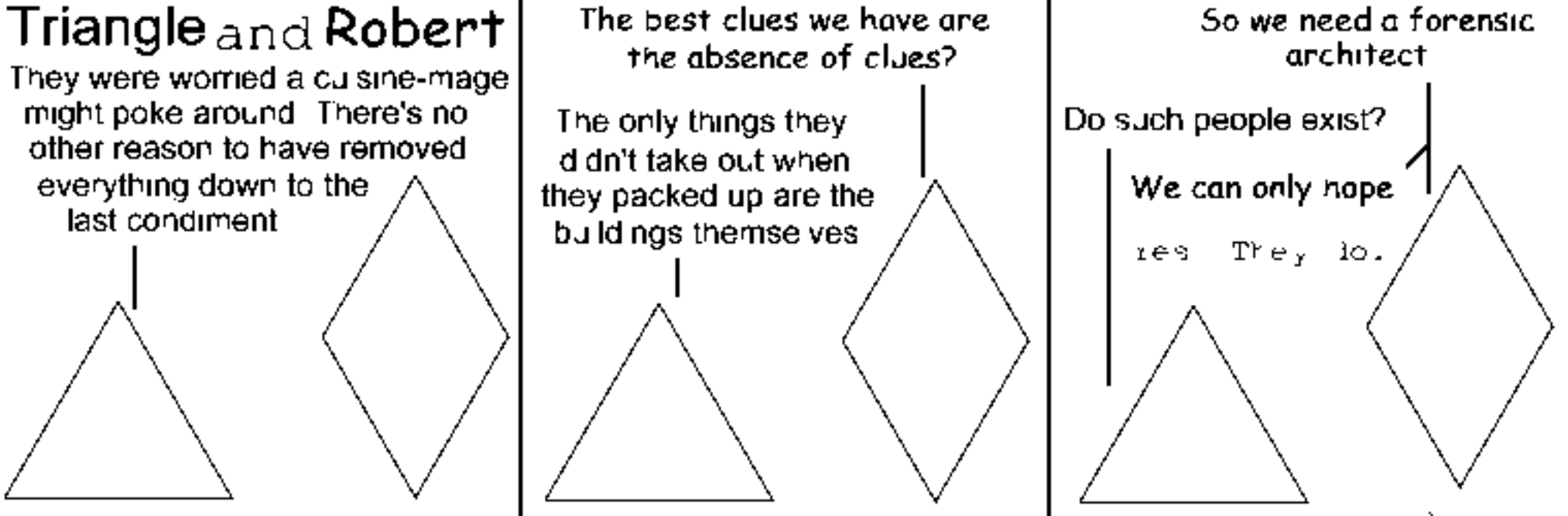

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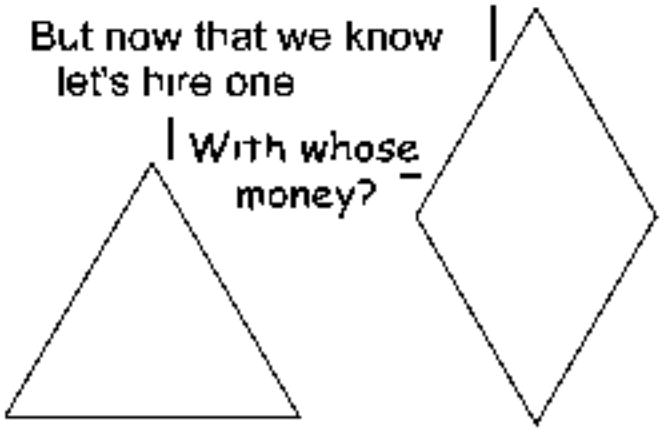

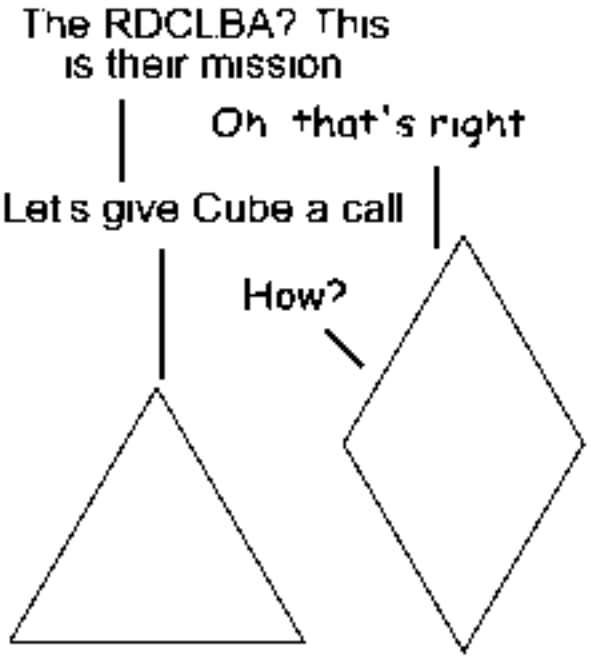

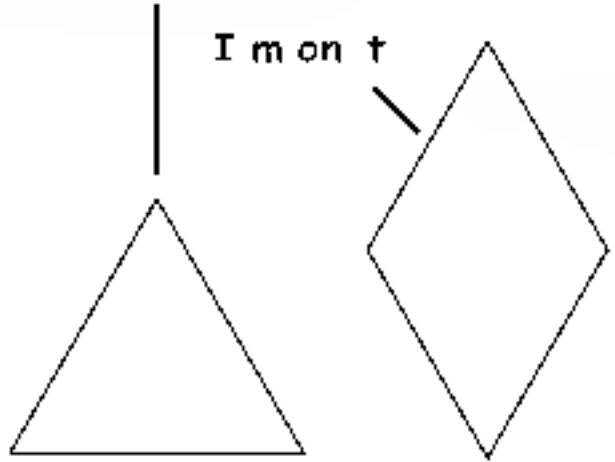

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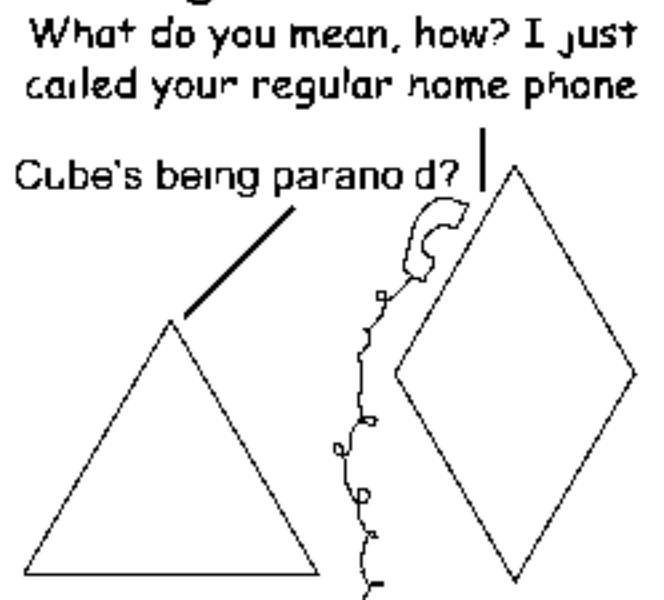

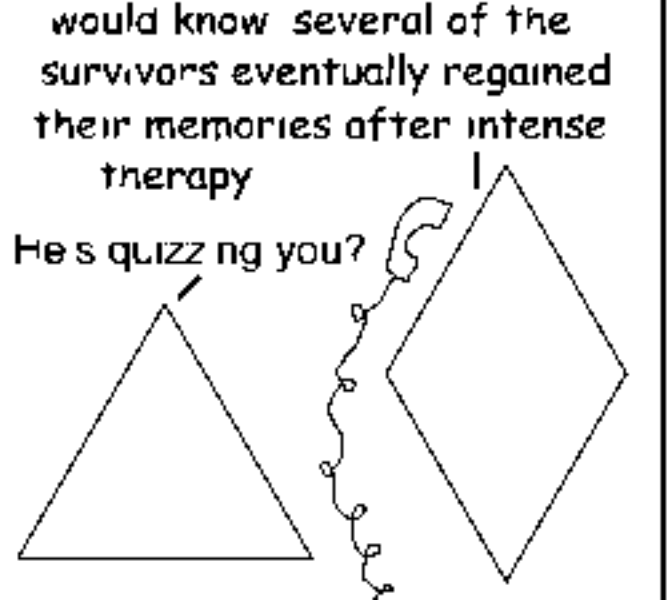

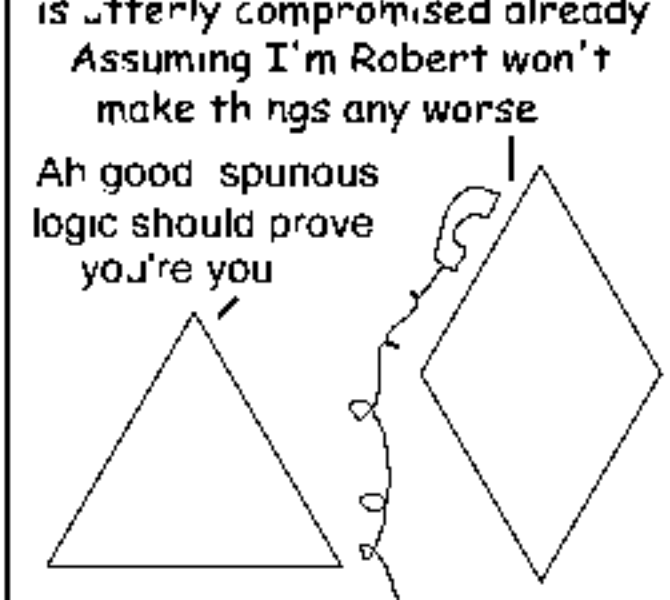

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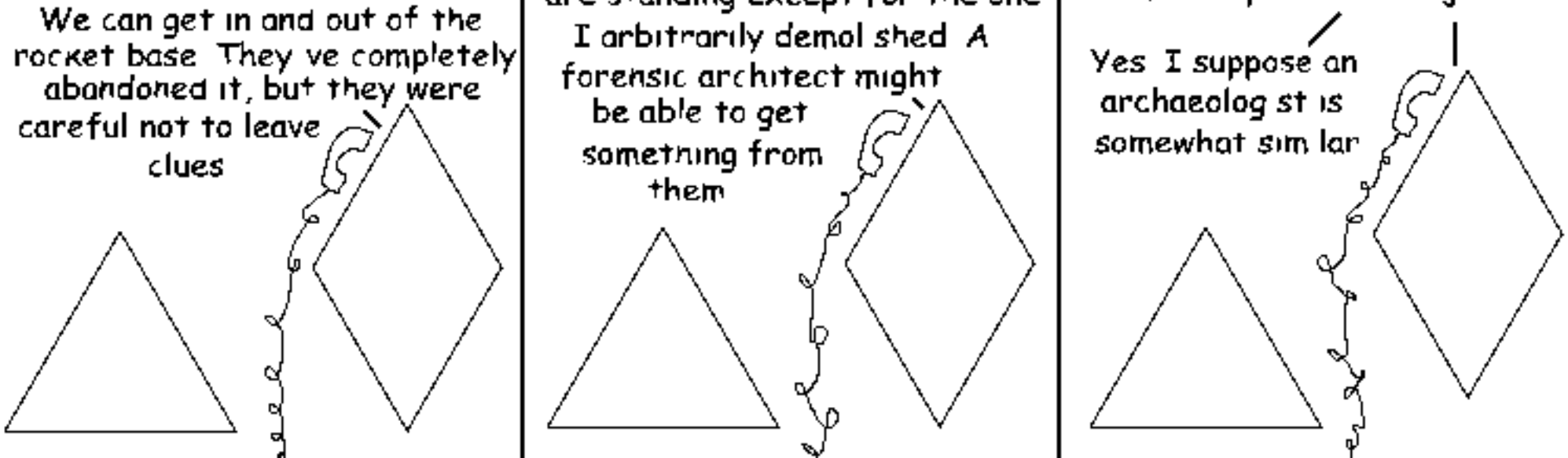

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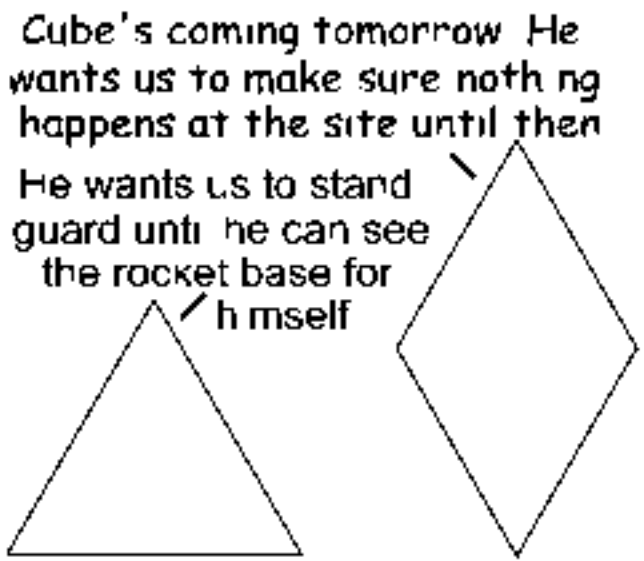

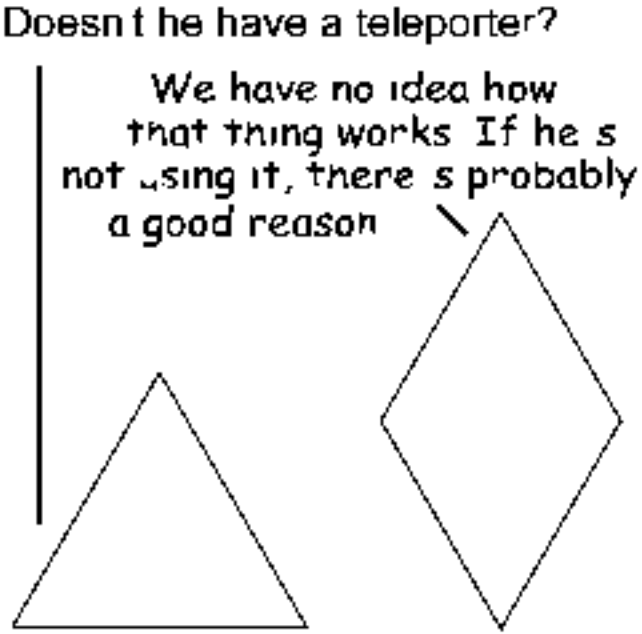

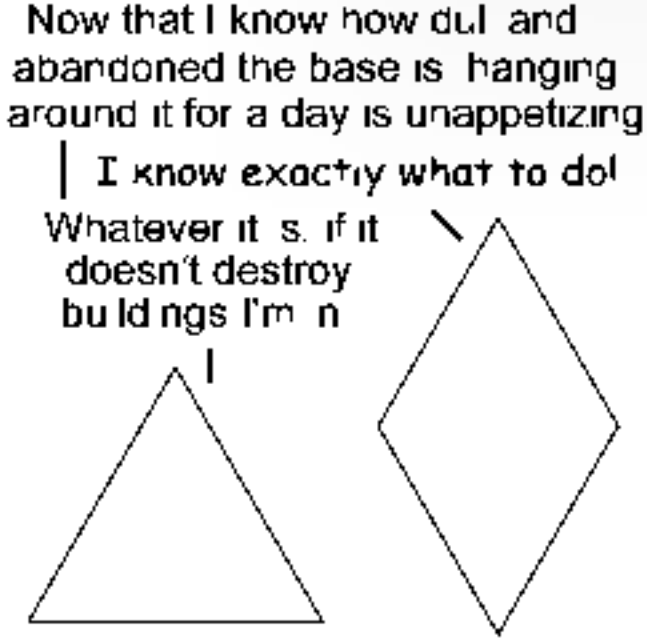

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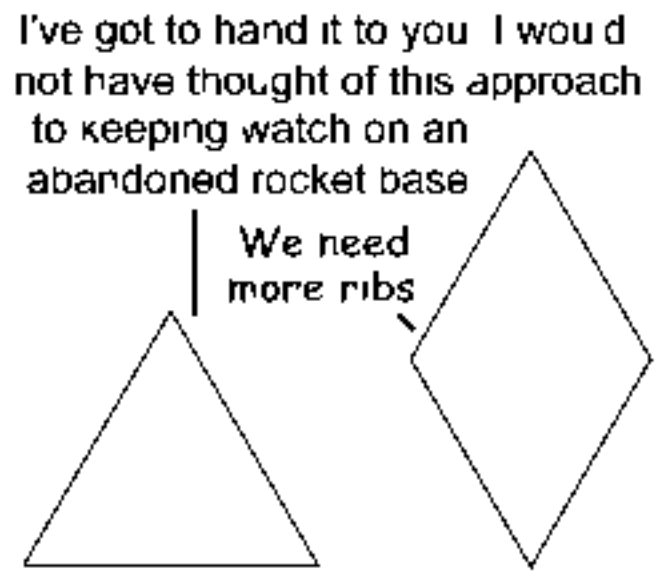

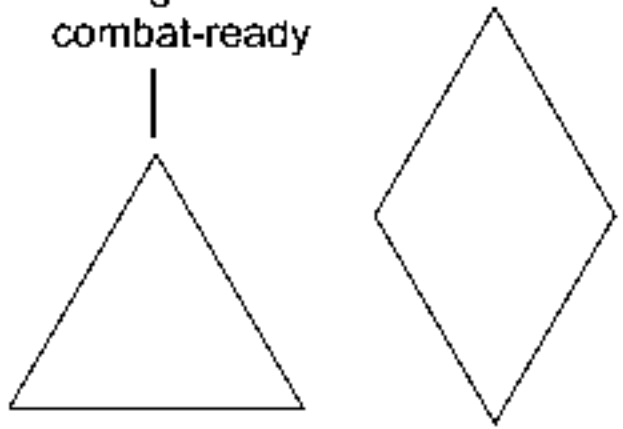

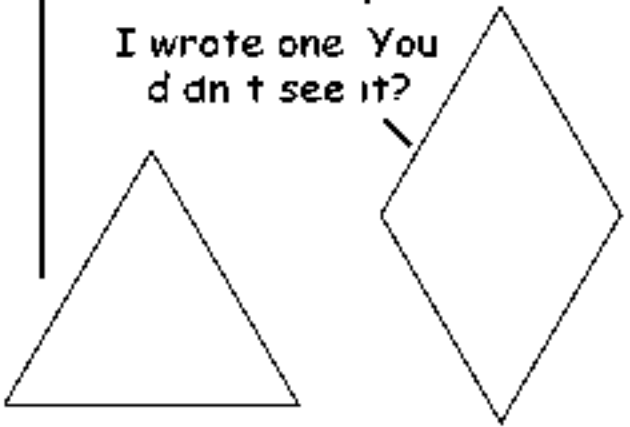

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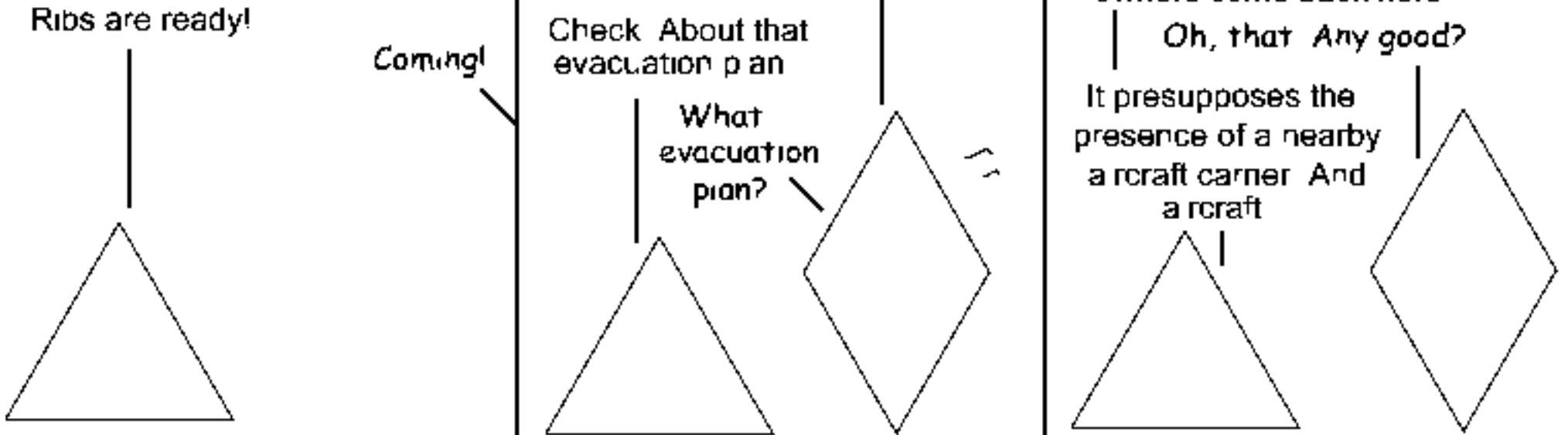

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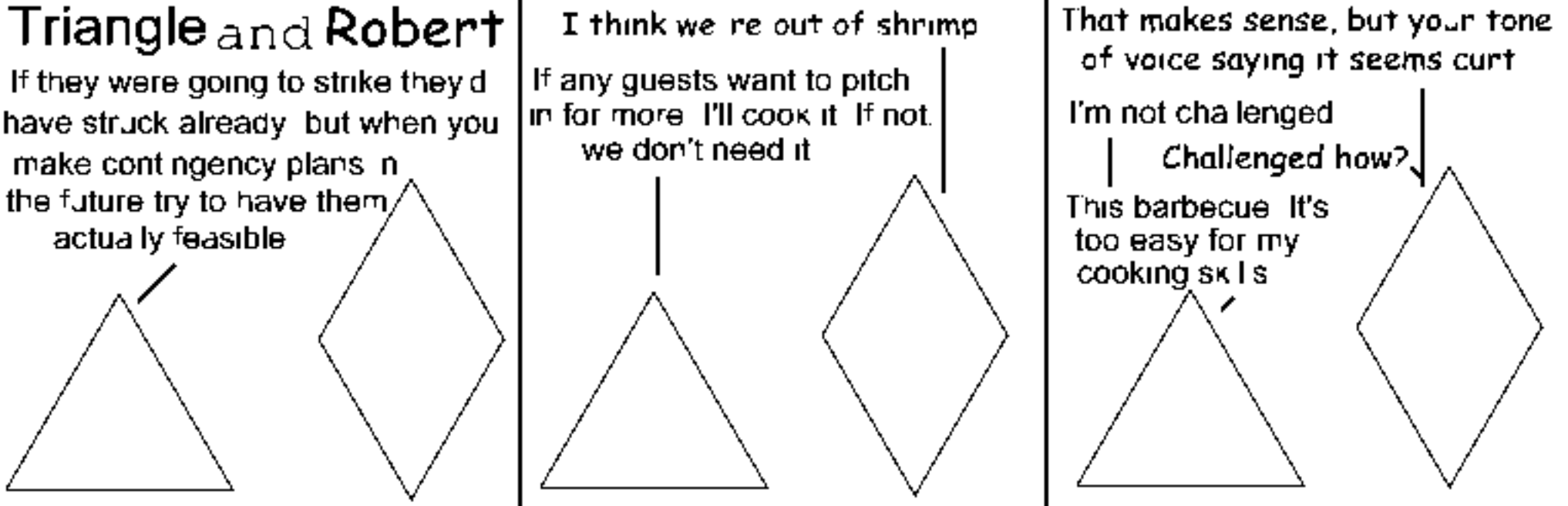

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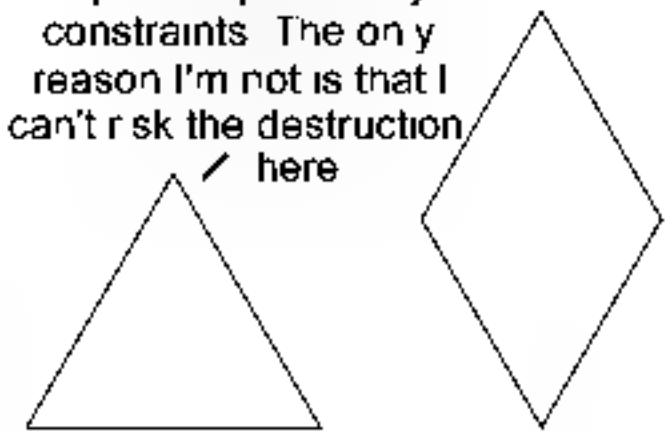
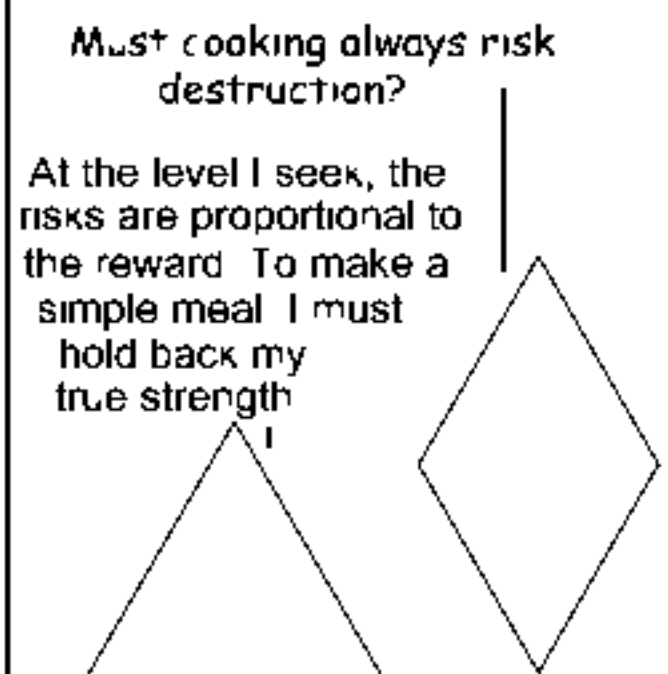
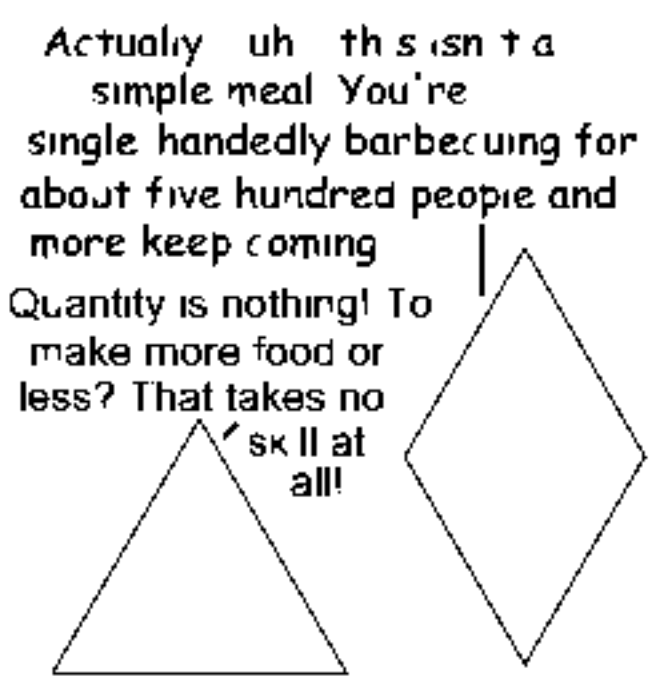
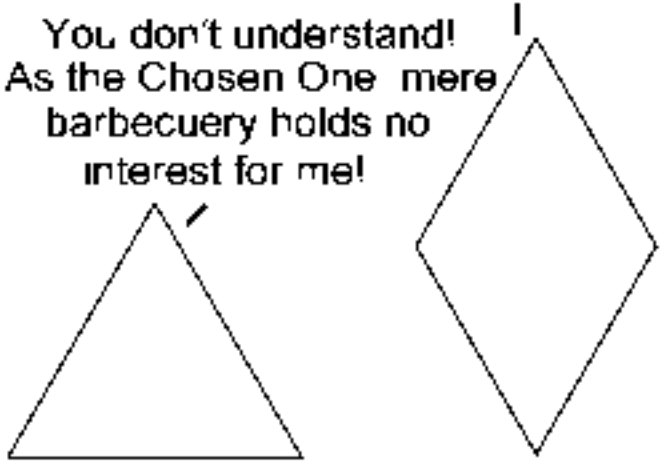
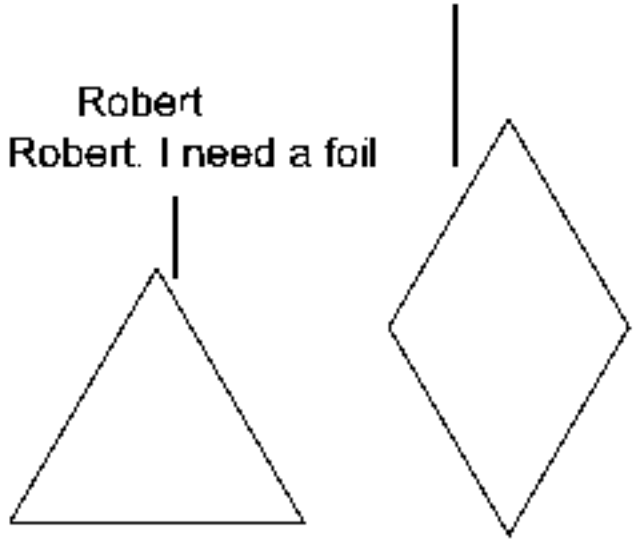


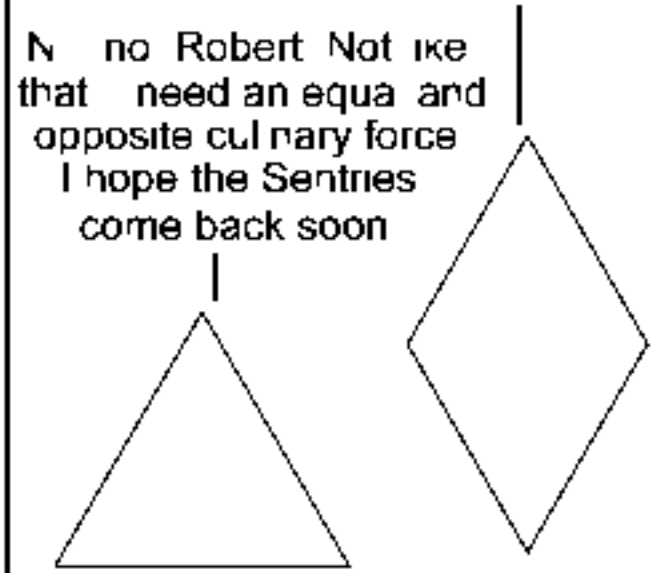




Triangle and Robert





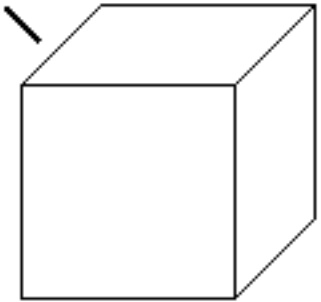


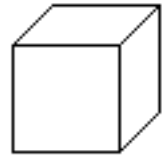
Triangle and Robert

The following morning, Cube approaches the site of the rocket base

I guess those brackets must be the magic bridge.

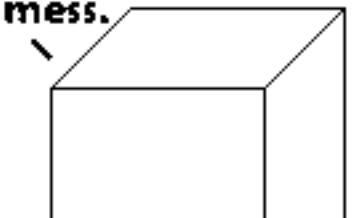
Here I go.





I know rocket bases aren't normally filled with cherry tomatoes, but I'll give it the benefit of the doubt.

Yeah, this isn't right. This was a cuisine-magic accident. Shish kebab fixings everywhere. Polygons sprawled out amidst the vegetables and steak cubes, hopefully just unconscious. At least there doesn't seem to have been mass skewering, but come on. There's no excuse for this mess.



Triangle and Robert

Robert? Is that you?

Merv?

This is Cube. What happened? Why shish [redacted]?

I don t even know a Merv

Not to offend, but I think you're even more delirious than usual.

Triangle push ng himself I managed stop him before skewers, but

Triangle did this? He was supposed to watch and make sure nothing happened here.

Turn me over I m on damp cucumber

Triangle and Robert

Triangle! Get up!

I don't think he can after what he d d

What happened here, Robert?

He kept cook ng faster and faster He was assembl ng some sort of s.per kebab array I tried to talk him down but he was just going too fast All I managed to do was keep him away from the skewers

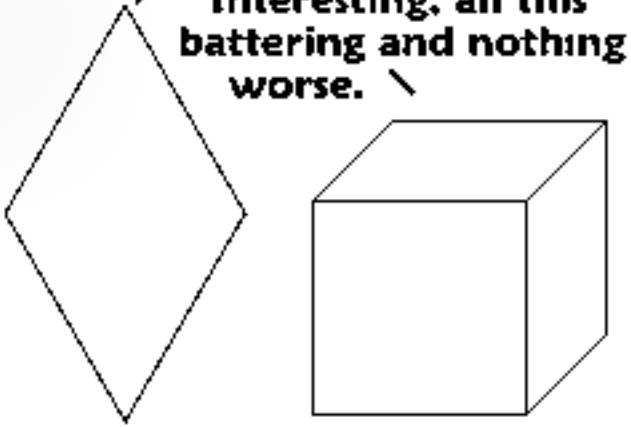
So everyone here should just have blunt vegetable and meat trauma and not anything really horrible. What were these people doing here in the first place?

Okay, that part s my fault

Triangle and Robert

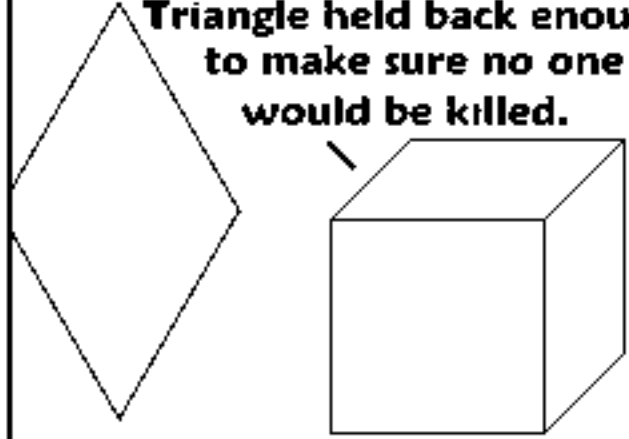
No major wounds on this side
Some of them are wak ng up

Interesting, all this battering and nothing worse.



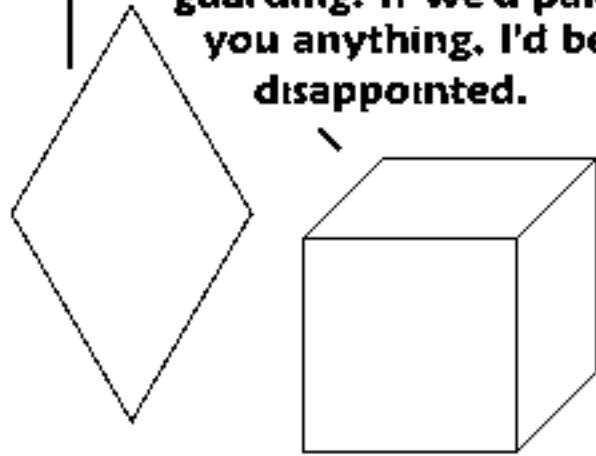
There wasn't any batter involved

I mean all the superficial blunt wounds. I'd guess Triangle held back enough to make sure no one would be killed.

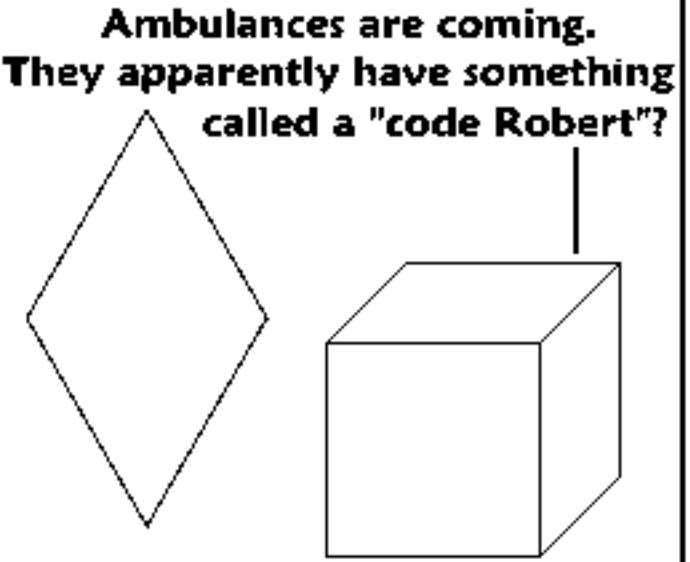


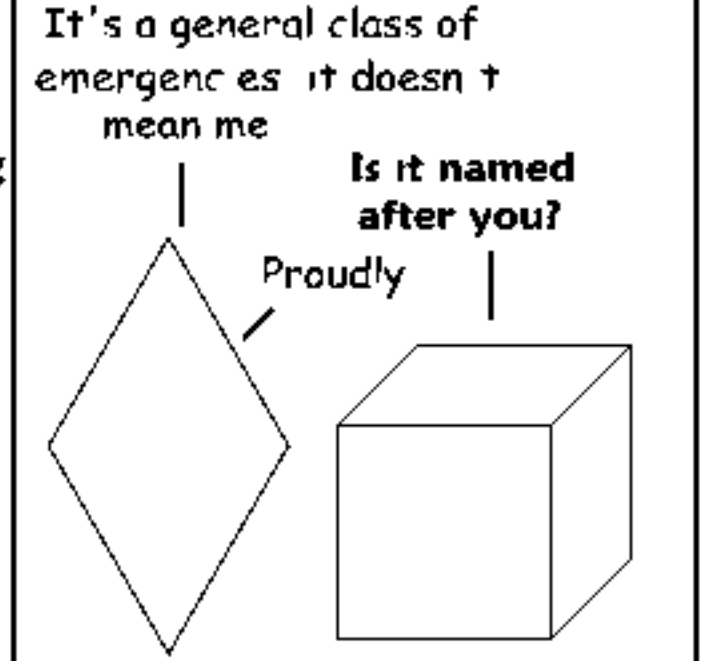
We might have gotten lucky

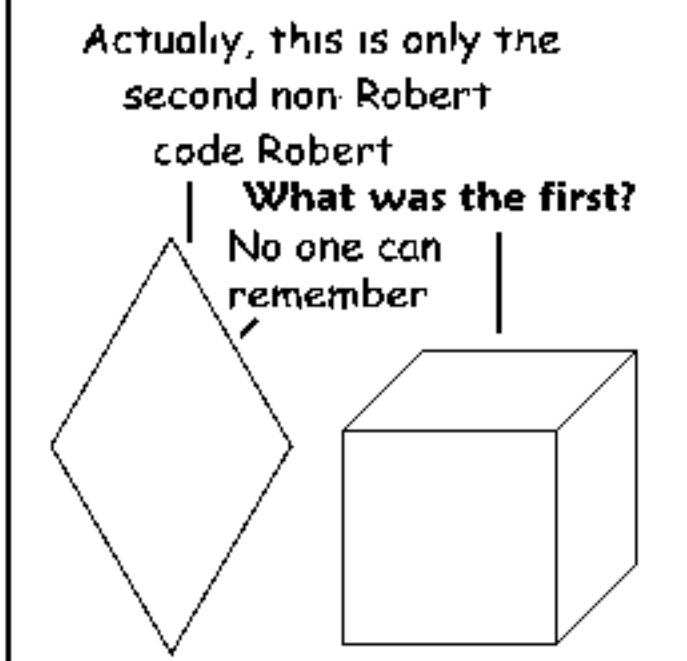
You shouldn't have thrown a barbecue instead of guarding. If we'd paid you anything, I'd be disappointed.



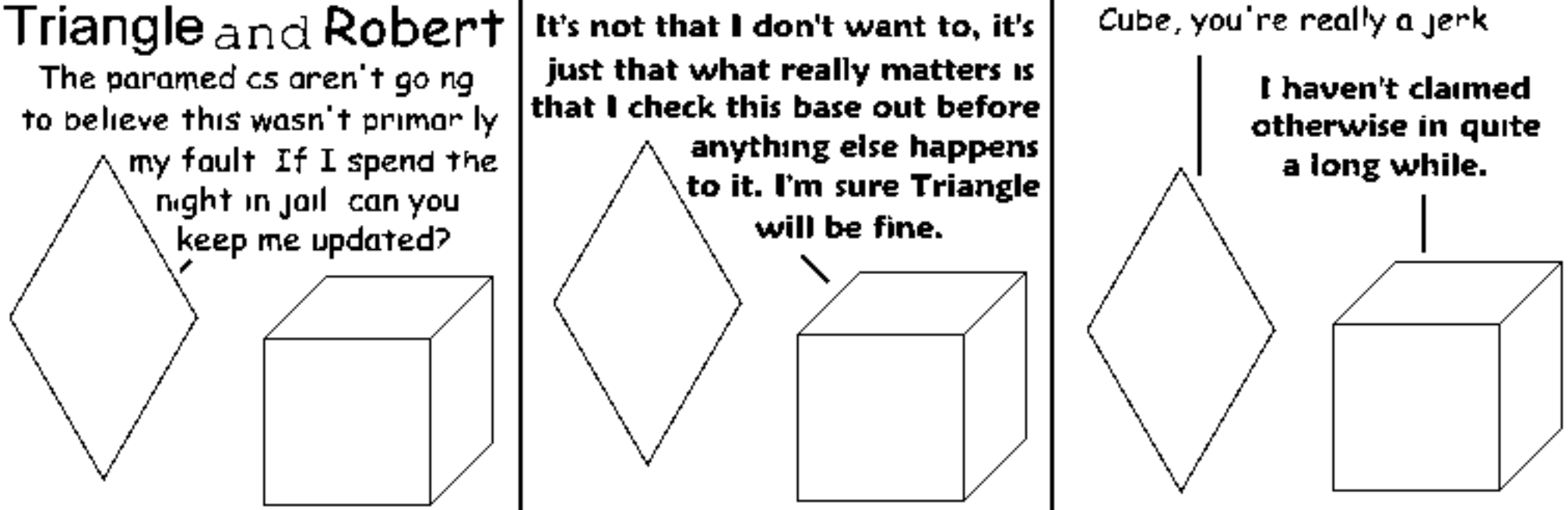
Triangle and Robert



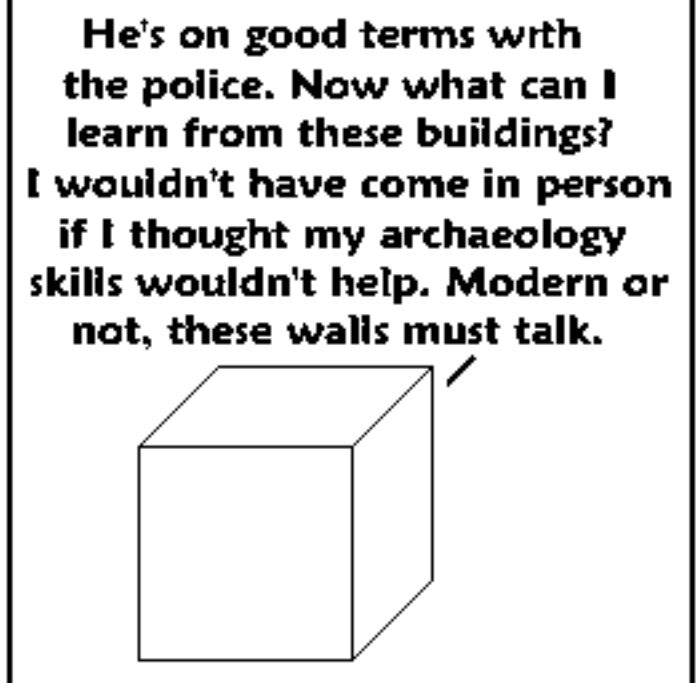


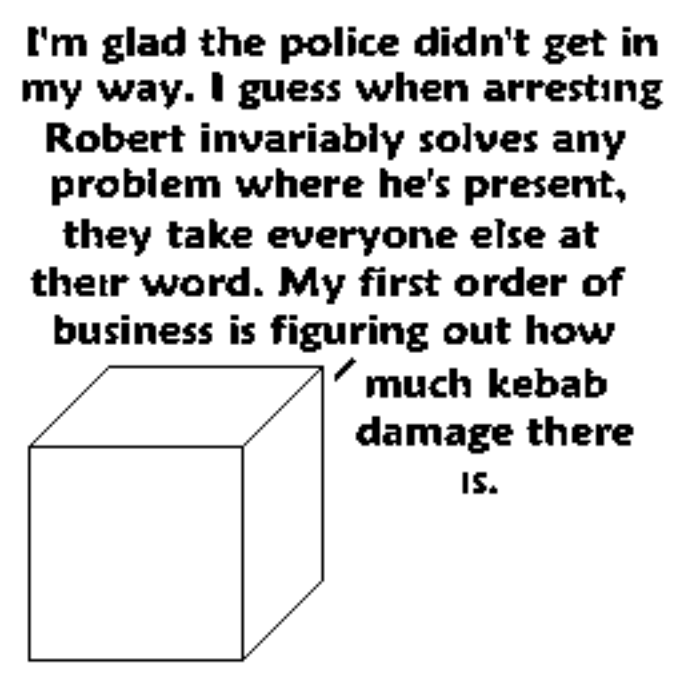


Triangle and Robert



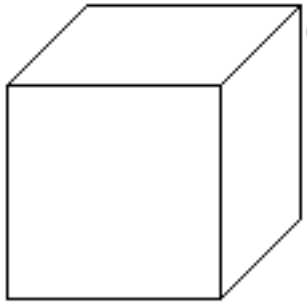
Triangle and Robert





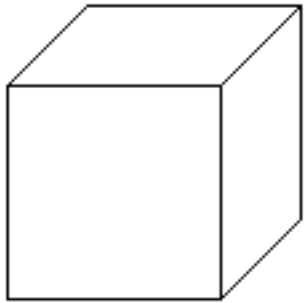
Triangle and Robert

I can't sift anything useful from the rubble of that barracks. Robert's enthusiasm leveled it well before Triangle's buried it in delicious grilled meats and vegetables.

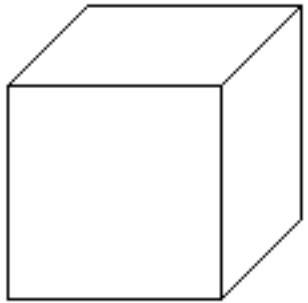


This must have been one expensive barbecue, unless Triangle did some sort of magic shish ex nihilo thing. I'll have to ask him when he's recovered.

Now for contemporary archaeology, or forensic architecture, or what have you.

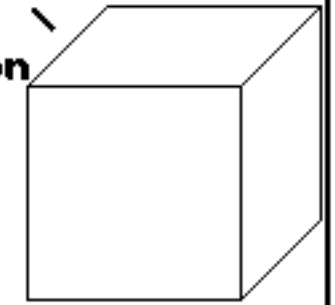


Question one: dating. When were these buildings erected? Not buried, so no geological help. Technology of materials won't narrow it down. Course of action: look for markings. Construction supplies often bear logos.

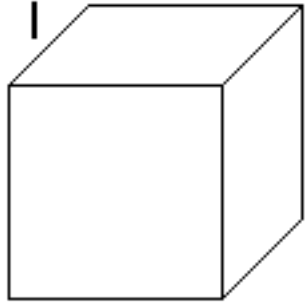


Triangle and Robert

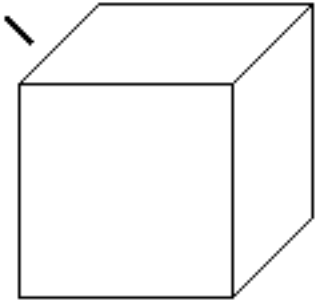
Beautiful. All this wiring in the radio tower? Manufacturer's lot numbers on it. That should be enough to trace the supply chain and dig up all sorts of info. Marks on the wall insulation and hinges too.



No information about the actual operation of the base yet, though. And none about how they pulled off that warping thing to hide it. Now I'm thinking plumbing. A base like this needs to put its waste somewhere.



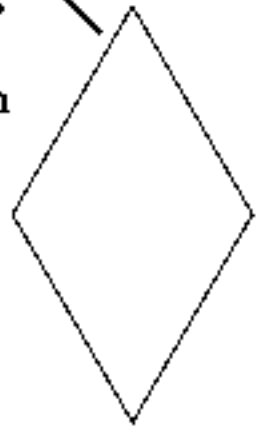
Okay. So we need to get some agents in here with excavation equipment. I haven't directed a good dig in too long. Septic tanks aren't exactly tombs, but what's down there is down there.



Triangle and Robert

You re letting me go that quickly?

Some federal agents pa.d a visit Their word's good enough for us

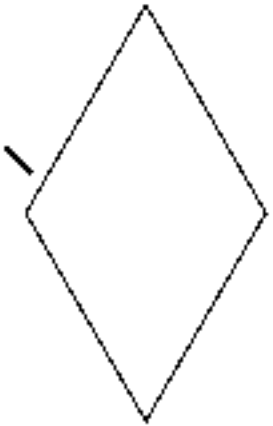


Er which agency?

That one that s .n the com.c so much, with the archaeology

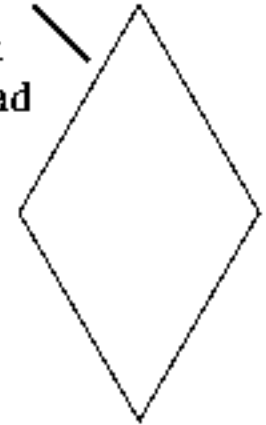
RDCLBA?

That s it



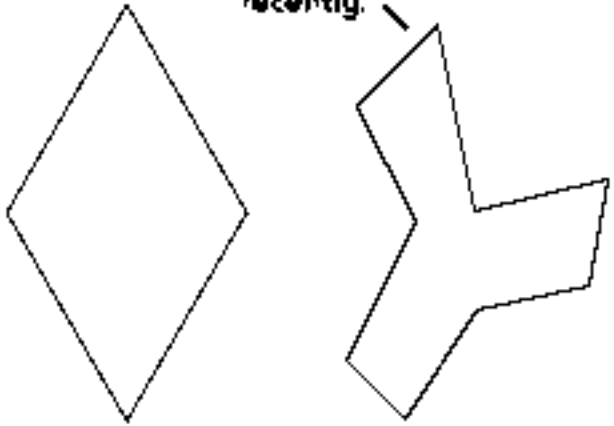
Good The other possibil ty would have been frightening Can I get a ride to the hospital where Tr angle s?

Call a cab We can't rea.ly spare any squad cars todav



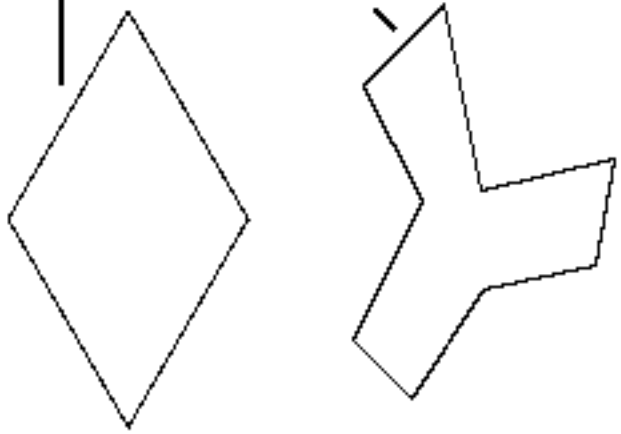
Triangle and Robert

A few months ago we d have had no idea what s wrong with Triangle, but we've seen a lot of would-be cu sine mages recently.



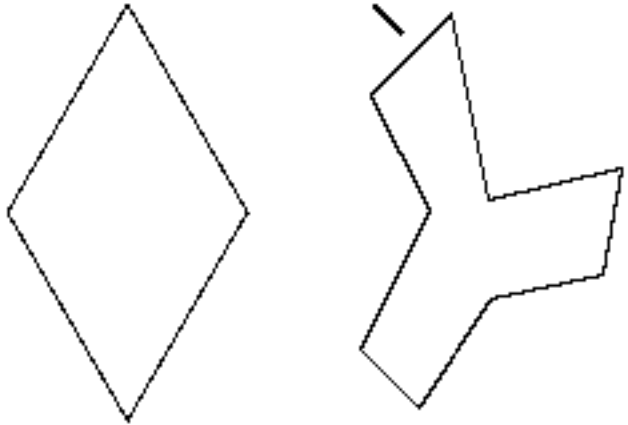
Cuisine magic is getting popular?

Attempt ng it is. A lot of people are trying dangerous spells without even knowing how to cook. We see a lot of magical overexertion cases.



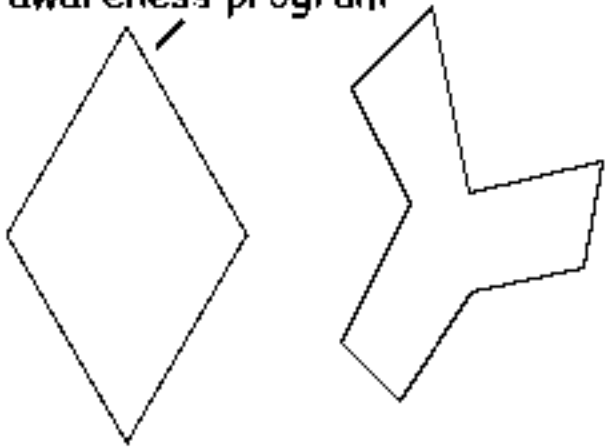
So it's treatable?

No, it s outside the realm of medica science We can diagnose it and keep the patient a ive, that s about it.

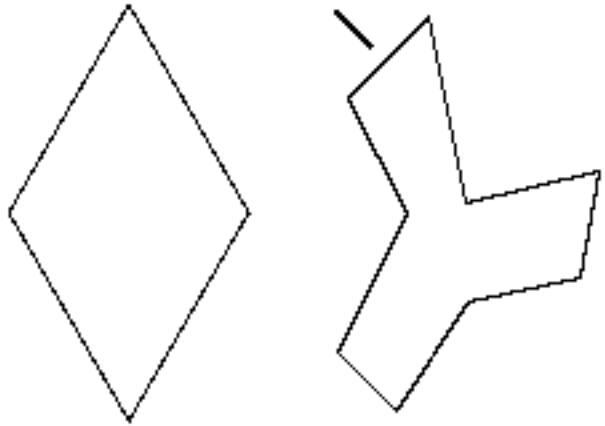


Triangle and Robert

Cuisine magic is dangerous There needs to be some sort of awareness program



You're right. We should nip this in the bud This hospital s public-awareness budget is a bit tapped but I bet we could get a grant if we show how mportant it is.

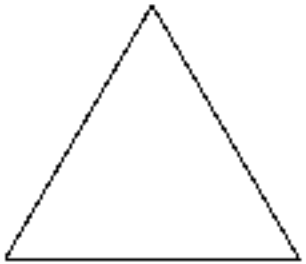


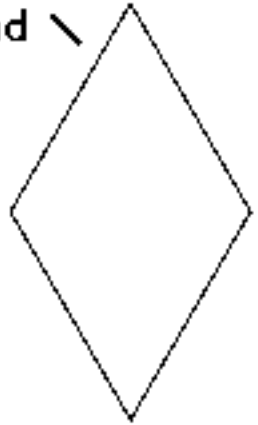
Do you think I d make a decent spokesperson for it?

With your reputation. anyth ng you say s too dangerous s certainly too dangerous.

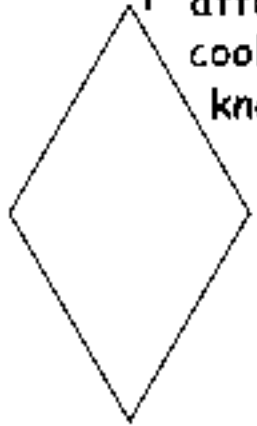
Triangle and Robert

This is Triangle one of the most powerful cuisine mages He hasn't moved or spoken in a week He thought he could handle a spell He was wrong

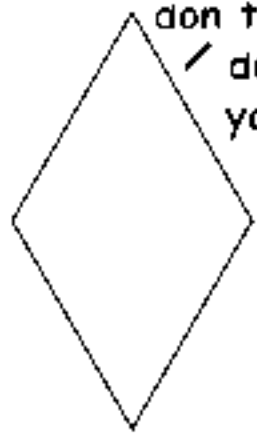




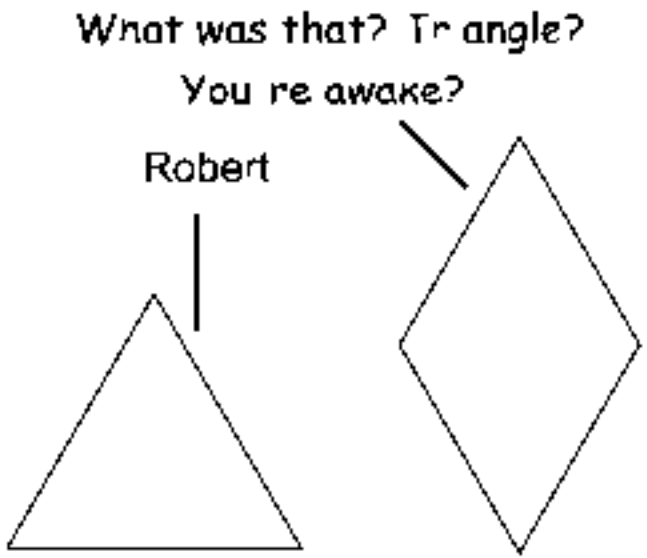
With luck, Triangle may recover Not everyone who tries cuisine magic is that lucky If you don t know how to cook don t even attempt magical cooking If you do know how to cook start slow and stay safe

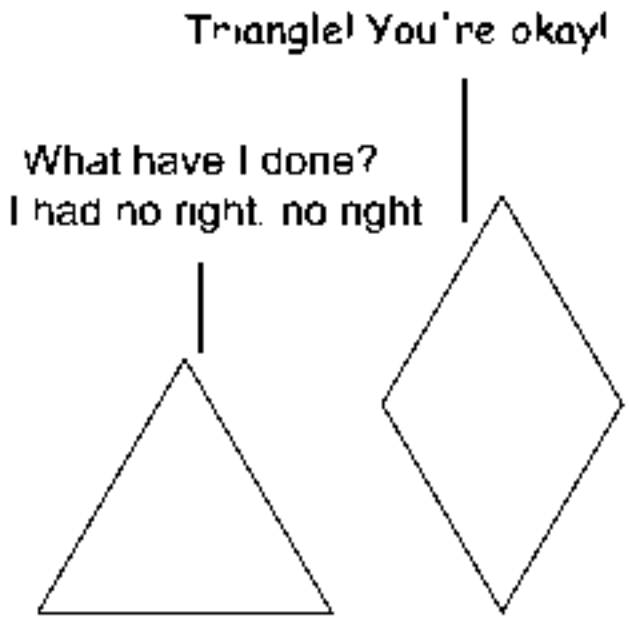


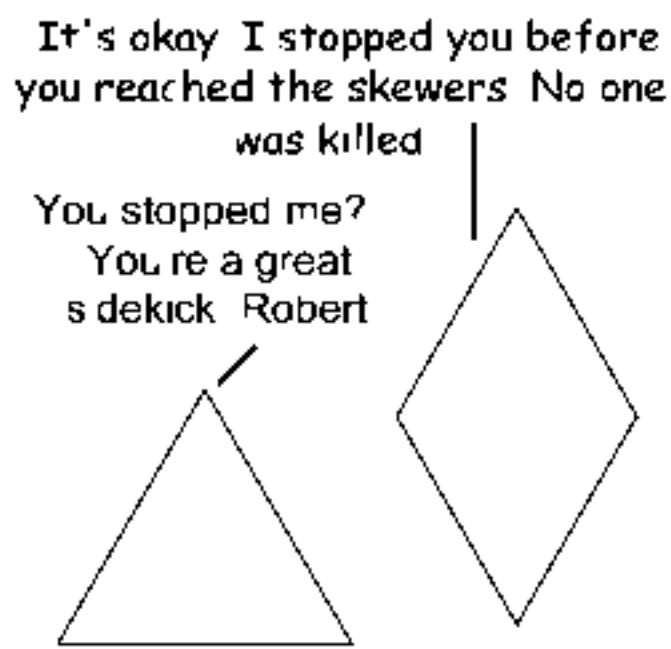
Most polygons, even accomplished chefs, have no magical aptitude It's nothing to be ashamed of If magic doesn t work for you, don t force it Even if it does, you owe it to yourself to be very careful with it I m Robert and I know danger when I see it



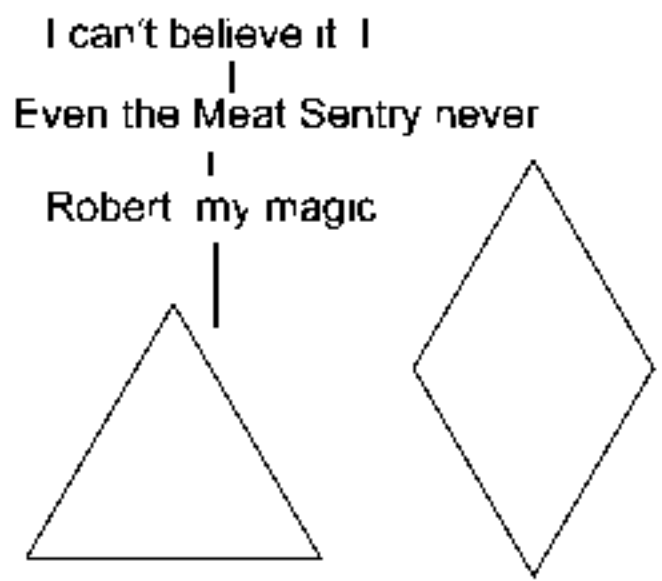
Triangle and Robert

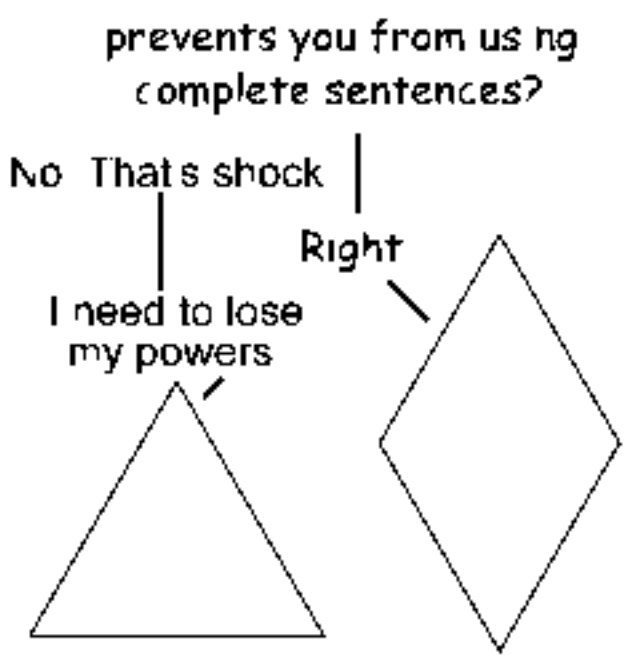


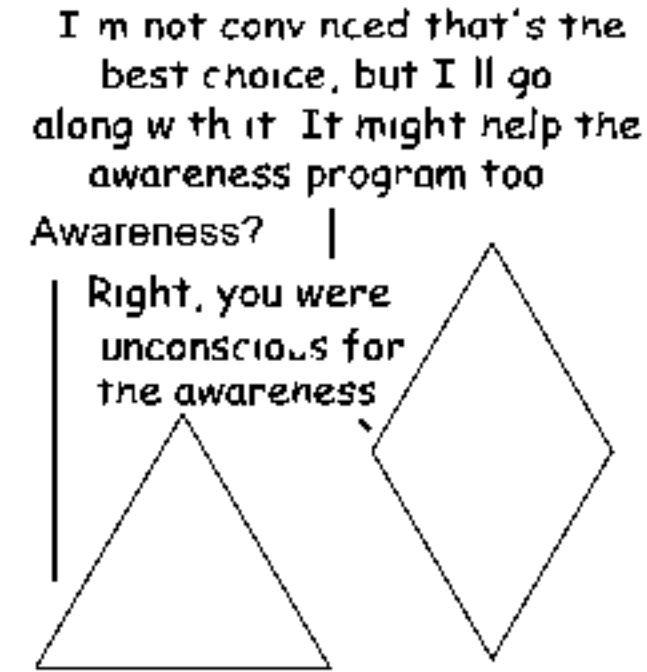




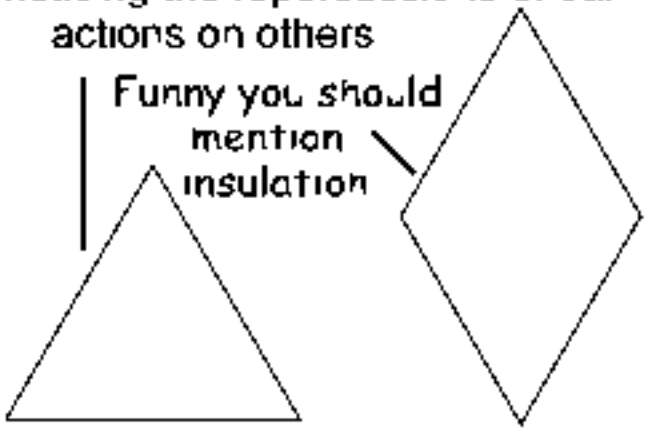
Triangle and Robert

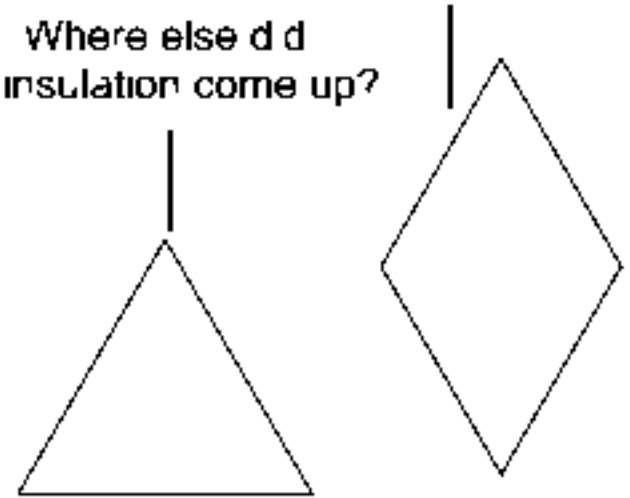


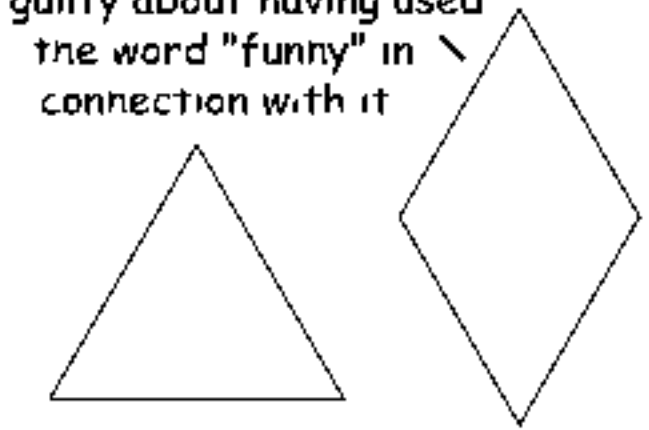




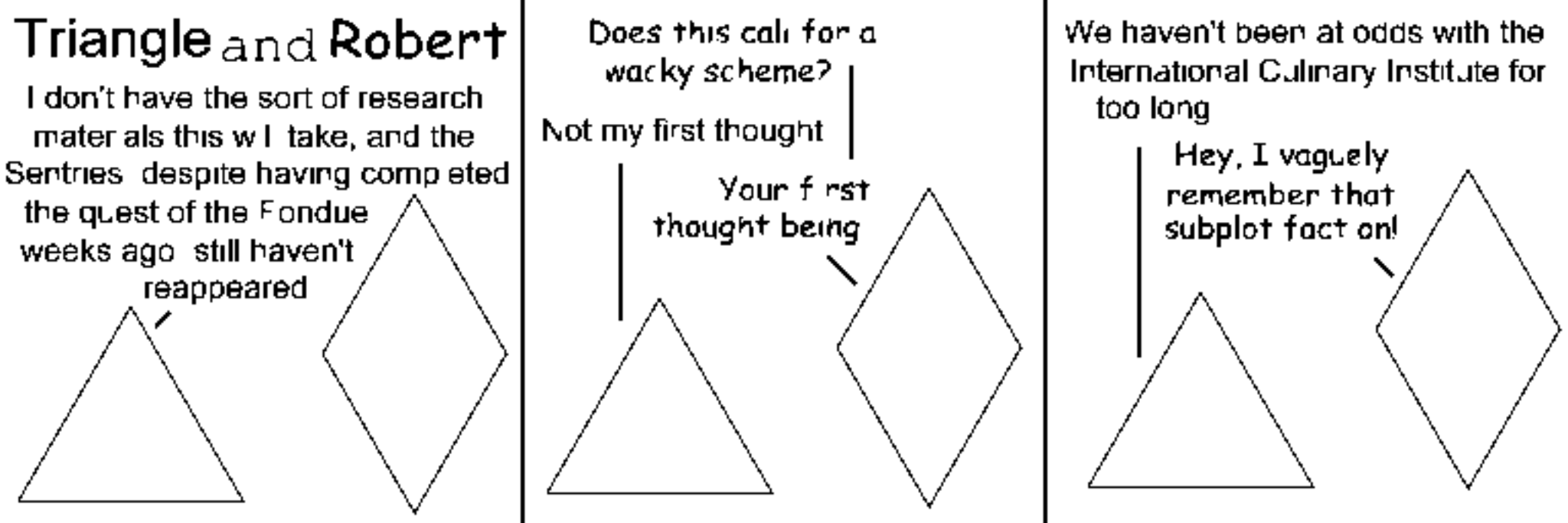
Triangle and Robert



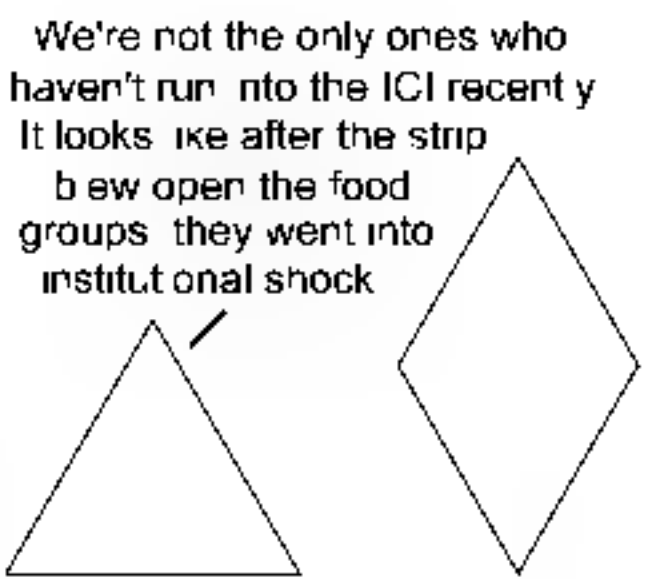


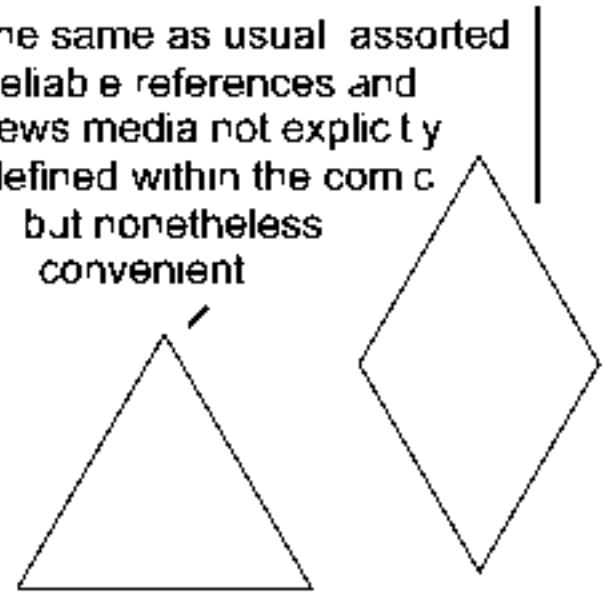


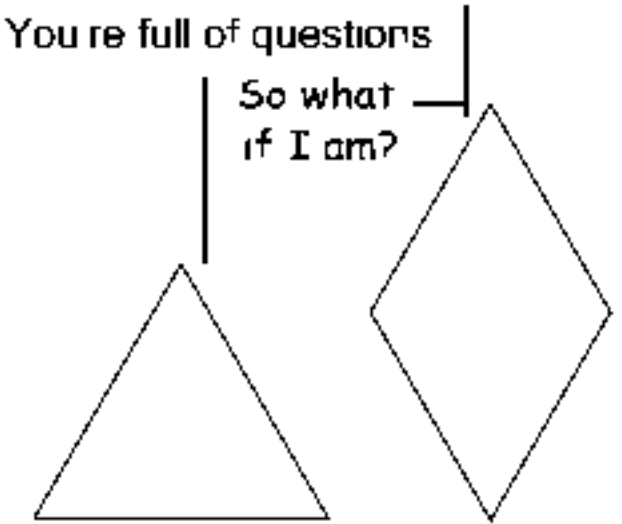
Triangle and Robert



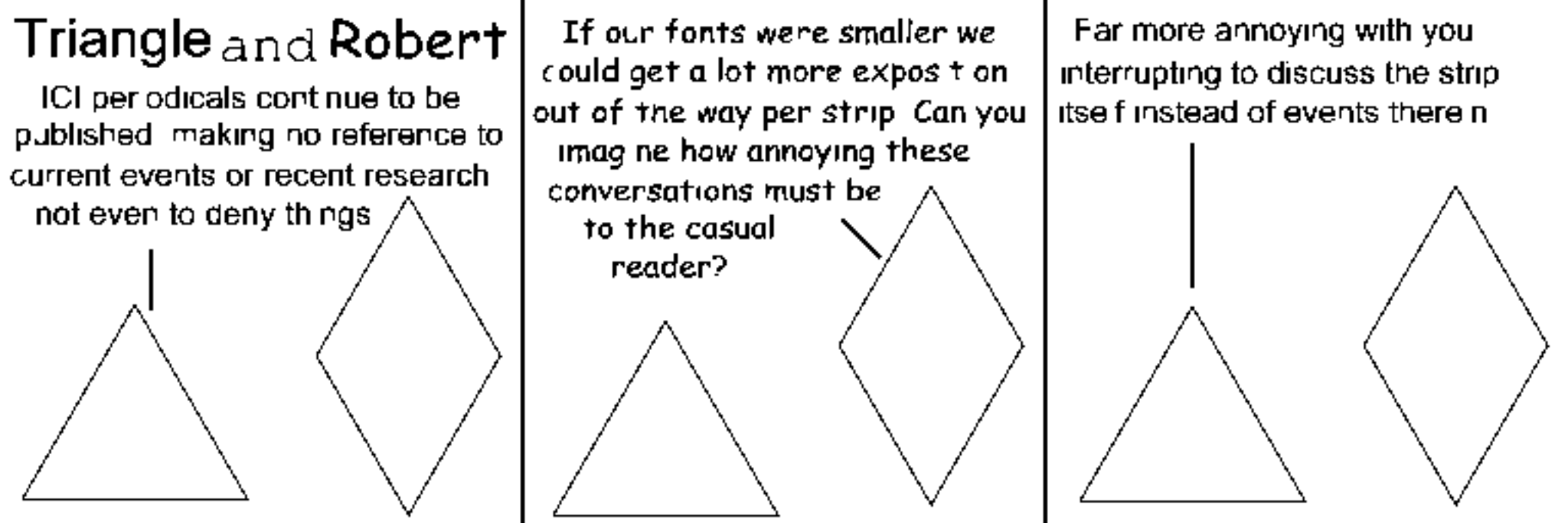
Triangle and Robert



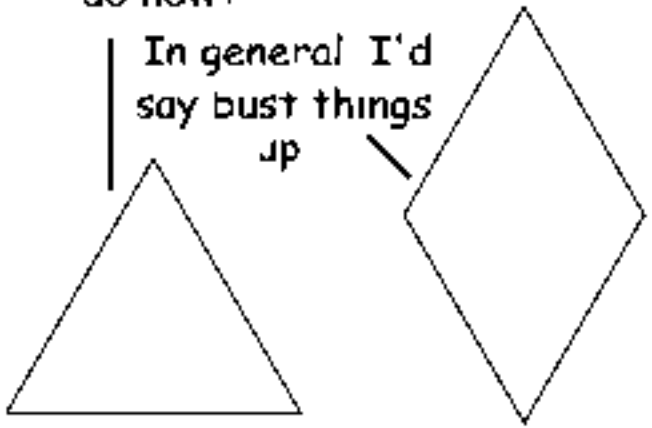


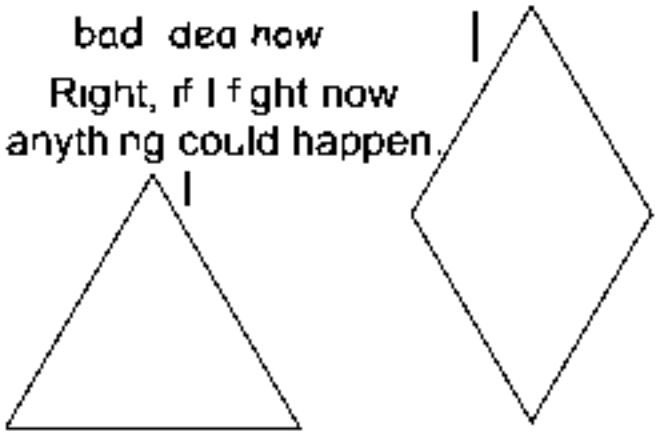


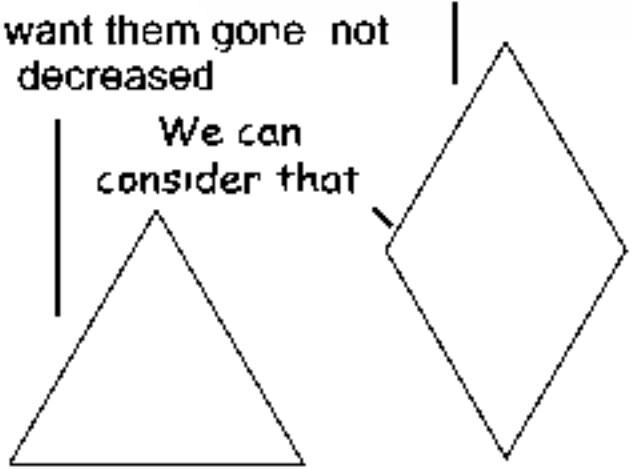
Triangle and Robert



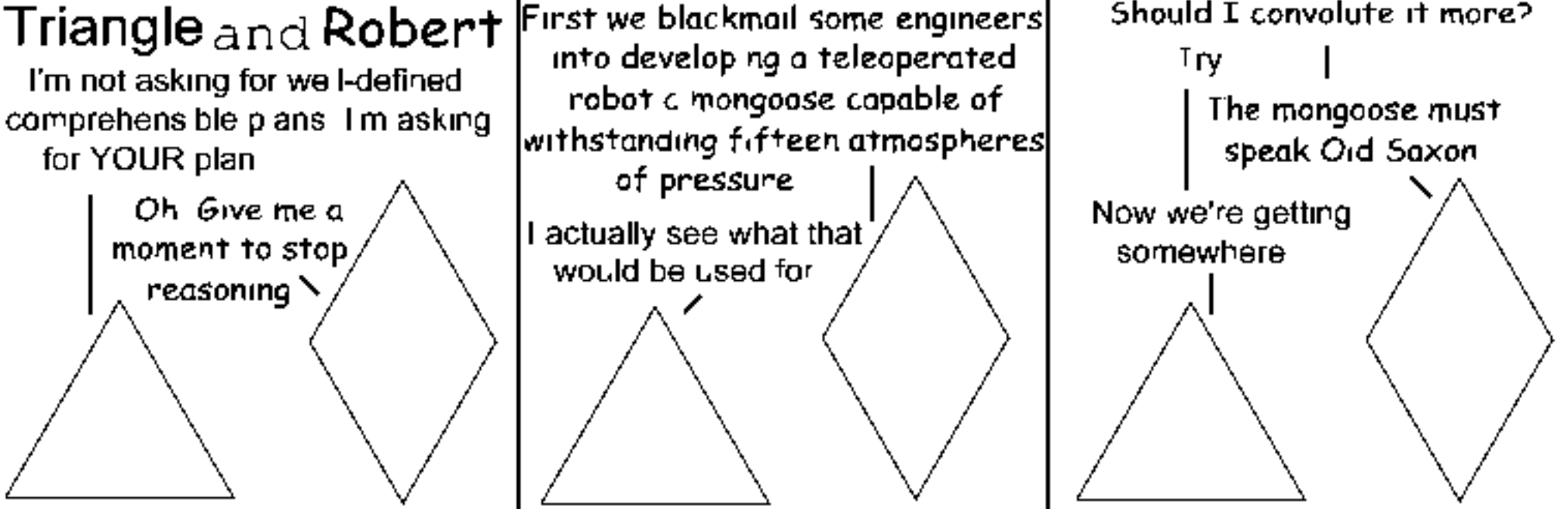
Triangle and Robert



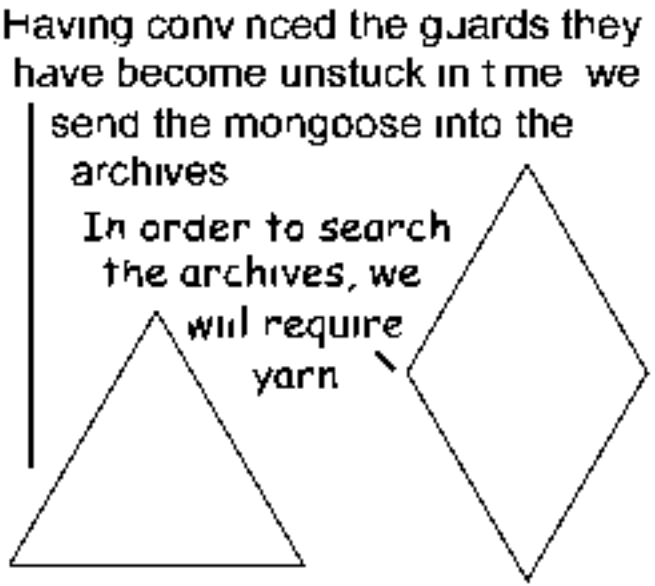


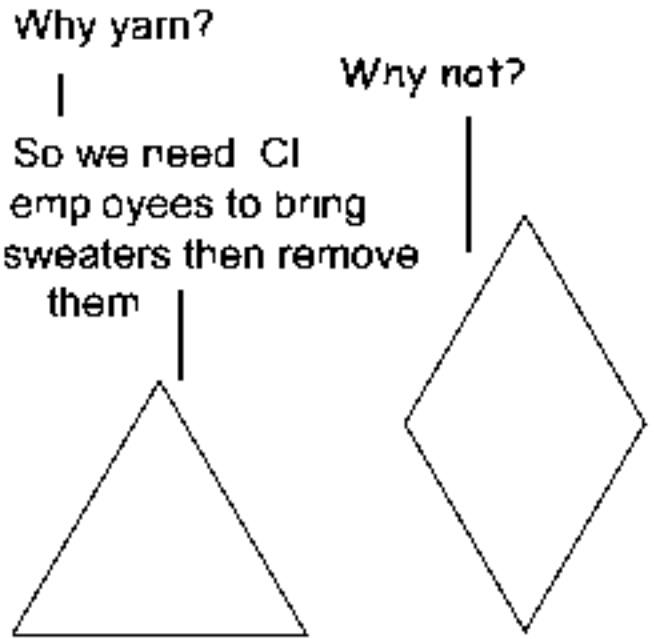


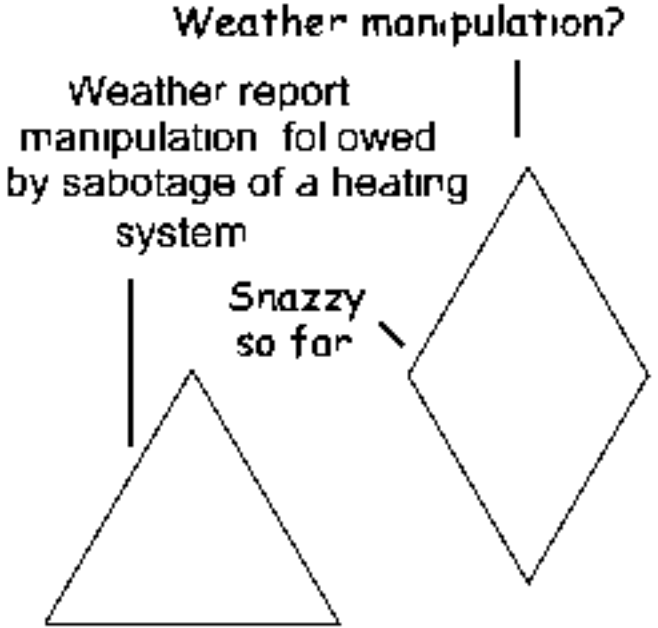
Triangle and Robert



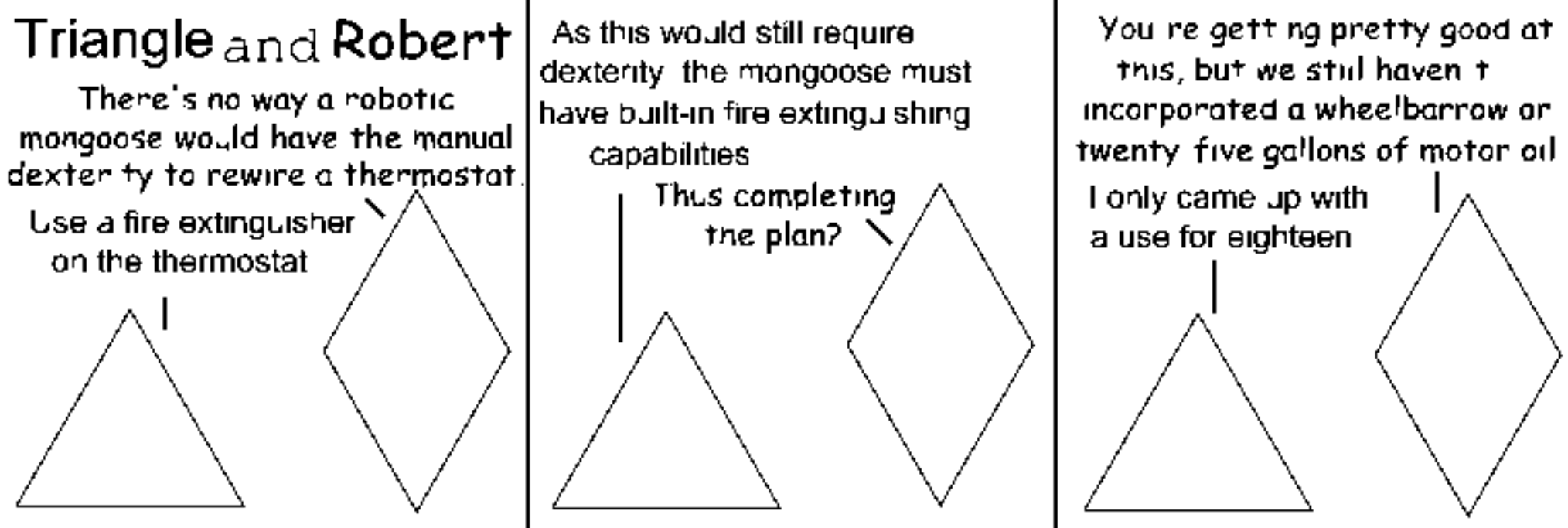
Triangle and Robert



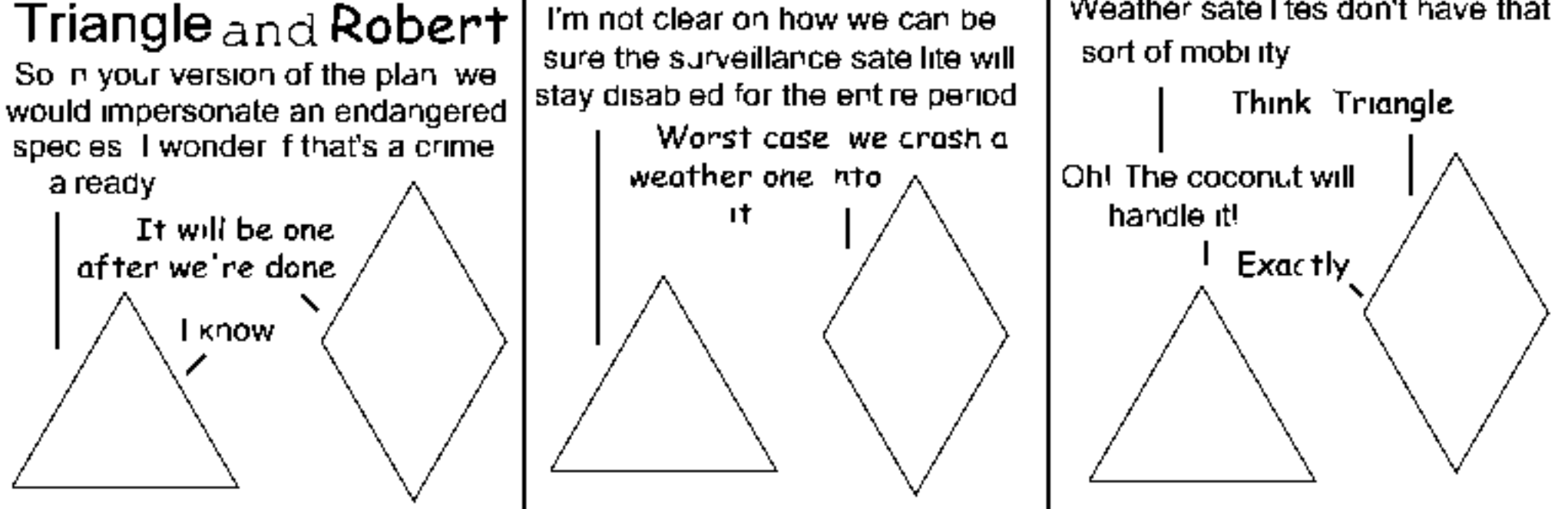




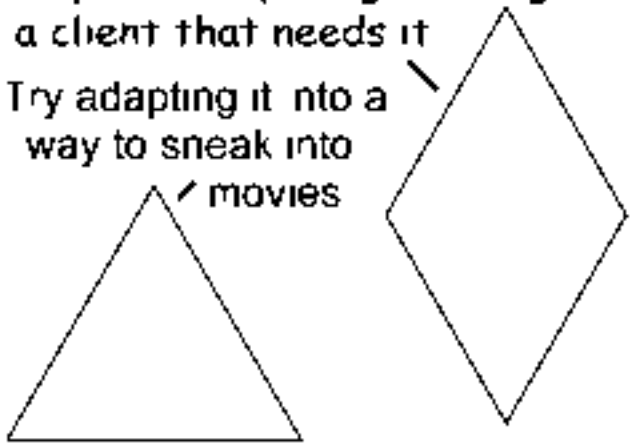
Triangle and Robert

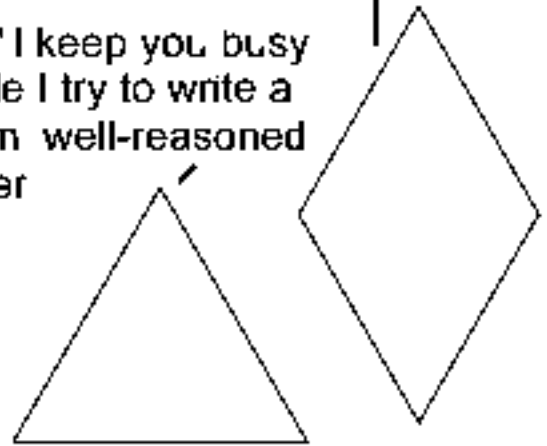


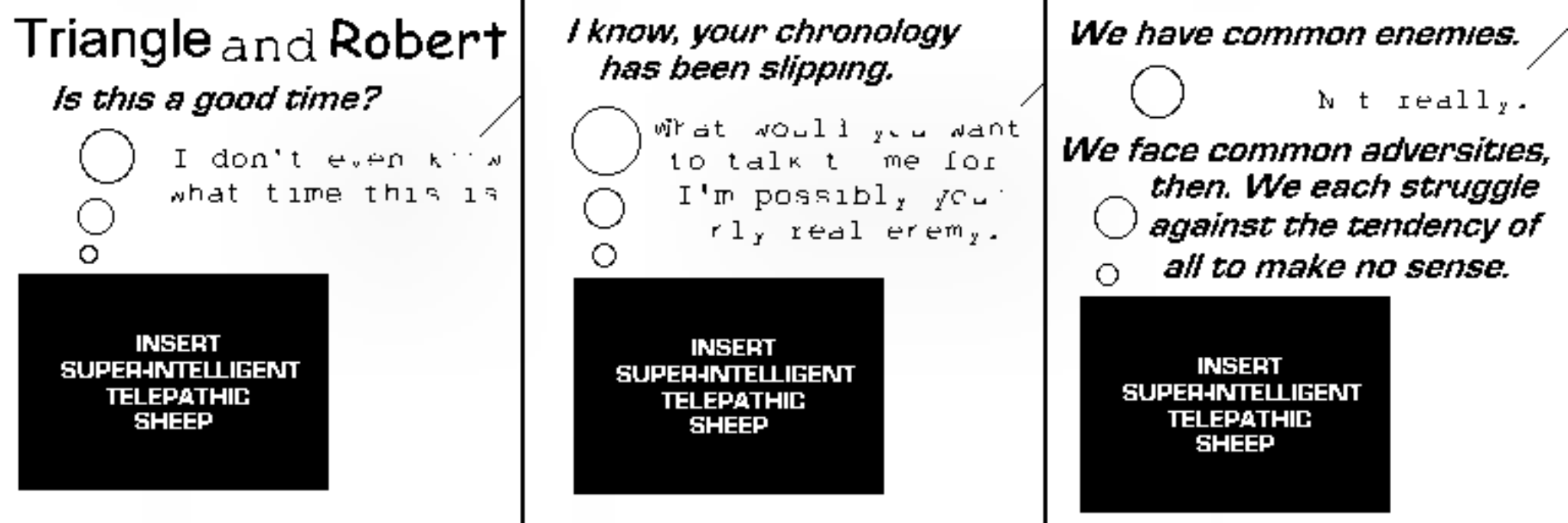
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert






Triangle and Robert
Is this a good time?
I don't even know what time this is
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
I know, your chronology has been slipping.
What would you want to talk to me for I'm possibly your only real enemy.
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
We have common enemies.
Not really.
We face common adversities, then. We each struggle against the tendency of all to make no sense.
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

I still blame you for some of this mess, Cartoonist. Your incompetence is unforgivable, but it is not the only problem with our reality.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Be less abstract. What's the actual issue at hand?

Legacies. Far too many legacies. The present is drowning in pasts.

Still too abstract.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Can you put it undramatically without supervillain trappings?

You try my patience.

You're sounding like Krpadex.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

To choose our own destiny is a thing of exceeding difficulty. As we speak, ancient secrets are being delved into by polygonal fools who fail to understand what they repeat.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Y u're still being verly abstra t.

It was you who drew me that way.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

This has to do with Cube, right He consulted with y u about his findings c ncerning the shadow ager y's activities

Yes. Can I tell it at my own pace, please?

Apparently not

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Why did I think this would be anything but awkward?

Failure to account for your ego and mine

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

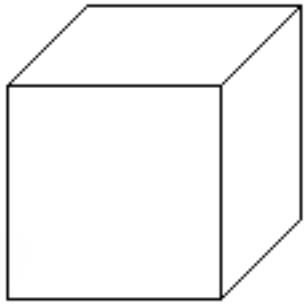
Maybe I should cut to Curie and let him explain what he found, then come back to you for possible solutions

Scene changes are your answer for everything.

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Curie, are scene changes my answer for everything

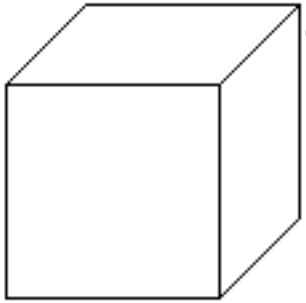
What? I'm in the middle of a presentation!



Triangle and Robert

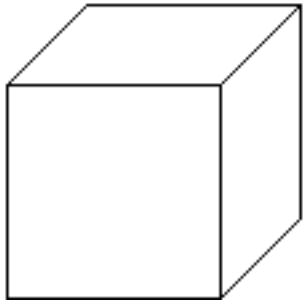
Now, where was I before that interruption?

Something about Tetris?

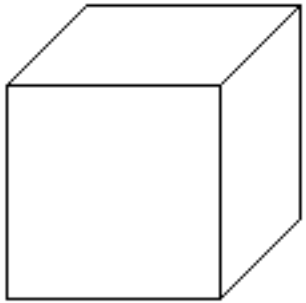


Thank you. Yes.

If you'll look at page eight of my report, you'll see that the same money trail leads both to the construction of the rocket base and, a few months prior to the initial planning for that construction, several expeditions in the vicinity of Tetris.



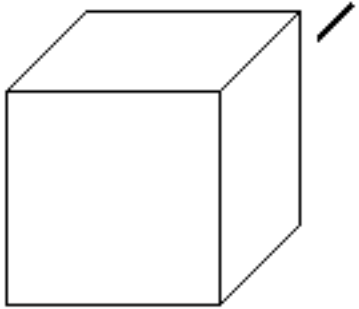
The conclusion is not inescapable, but it is likely: the function of the base was to develop and test Tetrean technology. My proposed course of action is on page twelve. I've taken the liberty of preparing a sub.



Triangle and Robert

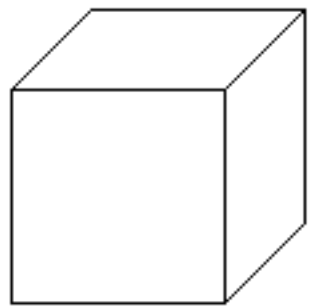
This is quite a sub.

Thanks, I've been studying sandwichcraft in my spare time. Not to toot my own horn, but I think I have some real talent with condiments.



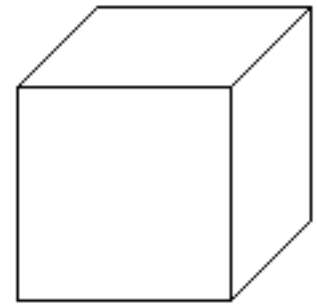
Once we're all fed, I'd like to discuss requisitioning and outfitting an undersea vehicle. Oh, and I'll need a K-95.

What's that a weapon?



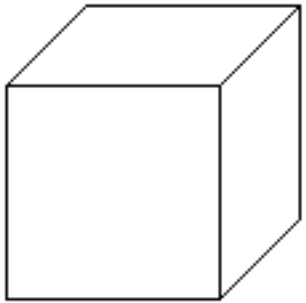
It's a form.

Retroactive authorization of pun use, to be exact. I'll never live down that "sub" gag without the appropriate papers.



Triangle and Robert

At least you waited until I was done the slides. Visual aids always break when they end up in the strip.

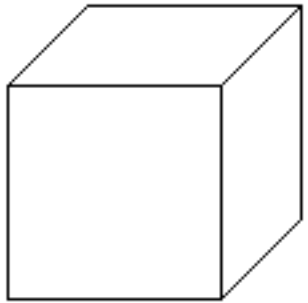


I guess you'll follow the ocean mission?

Maybe bits of it

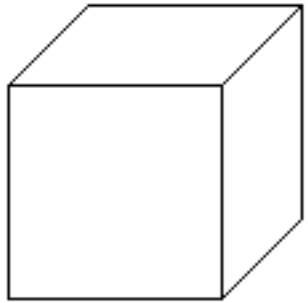
I think I know what I want t dramatically and gradually reveal, but I'm undecided on the process by which to reveal it

Go on, go on.



Revealing it right now in the form of a conversational slip is not my plan.

For all you know it's the best you'll be able to come up with, and it'll save a lot of time. At least consider it.



Triangle and Robert

Back already?

I'm sort of flipping around

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Have you ever considered a thing called narrative coherence?

You're the only one, aren't you

The only...

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Character in the strip who hasn't come to some sort of terms with my imposition on your universe. You're the last big inkwell, in a way.

That's one of the most ominous things anyone's ever said to me

INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

Robert has embraced his comic strip nature. Triangle doesn't like it, but has adapted and can accept me as a person, even though not as a demigod

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Cube is pragmatic about it and has four ways to deal with me. Orpheidex is patient and knows I must go away, sooner or later.

You want me to toe the line?

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

No. When your identity is something more than a sheep beggar, you defined yourself in terms of your detestation of me. I wrote that. It was my choice as much as it was yours.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

You're trying to take credit for deliberately engineering my disapproval of you?

I wrote it. I didn't plan to write it.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The consequence that we have no basis for discussion or negotiation is just something we both have to deal with and accept.

Or this is reverse psychology.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Do you really think I'm mentally competent enough to use reverse psychology?

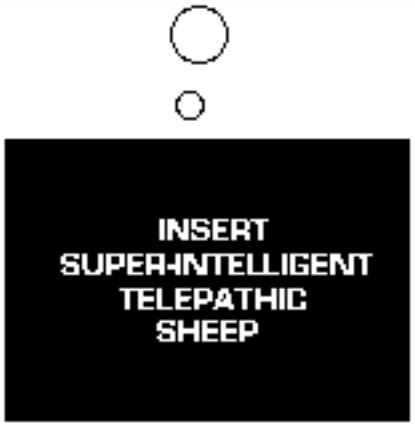
I cannot answer that question either positively or negatively without denying some premise of my own identity. Therefore, I must continue to hate you.

INSERT SUPERINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

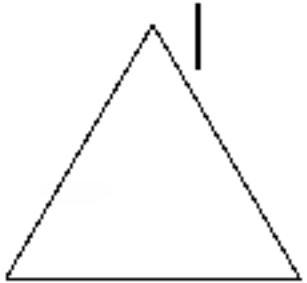
It's impossible for this
ere to [illegible] anywhere.

Entirely.



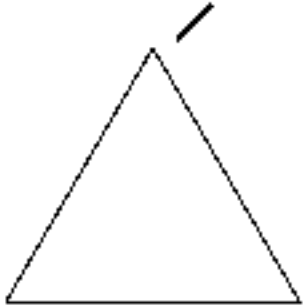
Meanwhile, Triangle awaits
a reply from the
mysterious, silent ICI

Yes this is me awaiting



Triangle and Robert

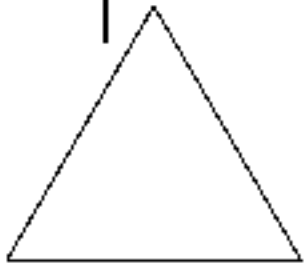
You know, the plot isn't going to move on its own w thout at least some m nima effort on your part If you want time to advance advance it



I don't know what happens next.

You say that I ke something particu ar is supposed to

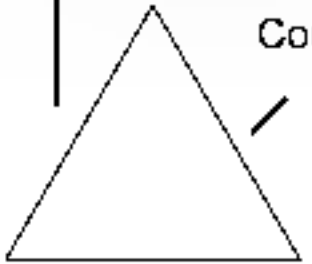
It feels like it



I have noth ng better to do I guess I can help you write

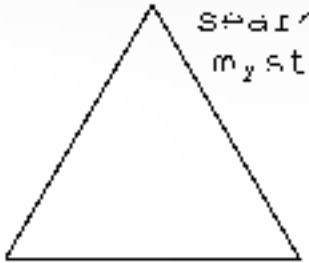
Thanks I know that the Sentries should start returning soon, but first your powers and Cube's spy thing need to resolve

Could they resolve together?



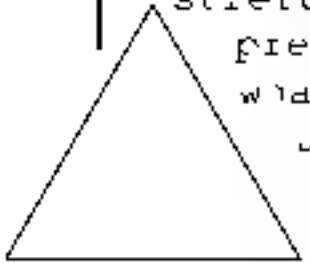
Triangle and Robert

The convergence of disparate plot threads is almost always a thing to be desired. How might this be achieved with respect to your desire to be depowered and Cube's search for the mystery agency



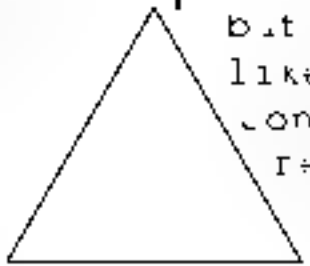
Whatever sort of bizarre plan the shadow agency is up to might it involve powerful ancient magic exposure to which would cause permanent alterations in cooking ability?

It'd be too big a stretch. I know pretty much what they're up to

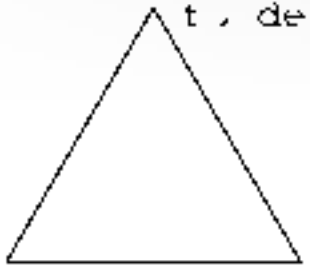


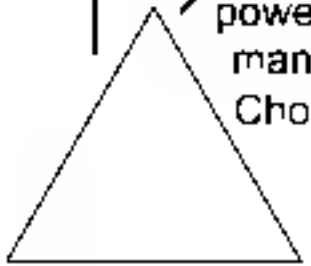
Fair enough Do you have any particular processes for depowering in mind yet? Would any have an impact on the RDCLBA's status if discovered and used?

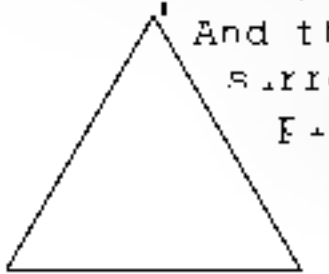
I can see one, but you wouldn't like the obvious consequence and neither would Cube



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

What are you afraid of?

I have no idea

I doubt that There's something

I know there's something, but not what

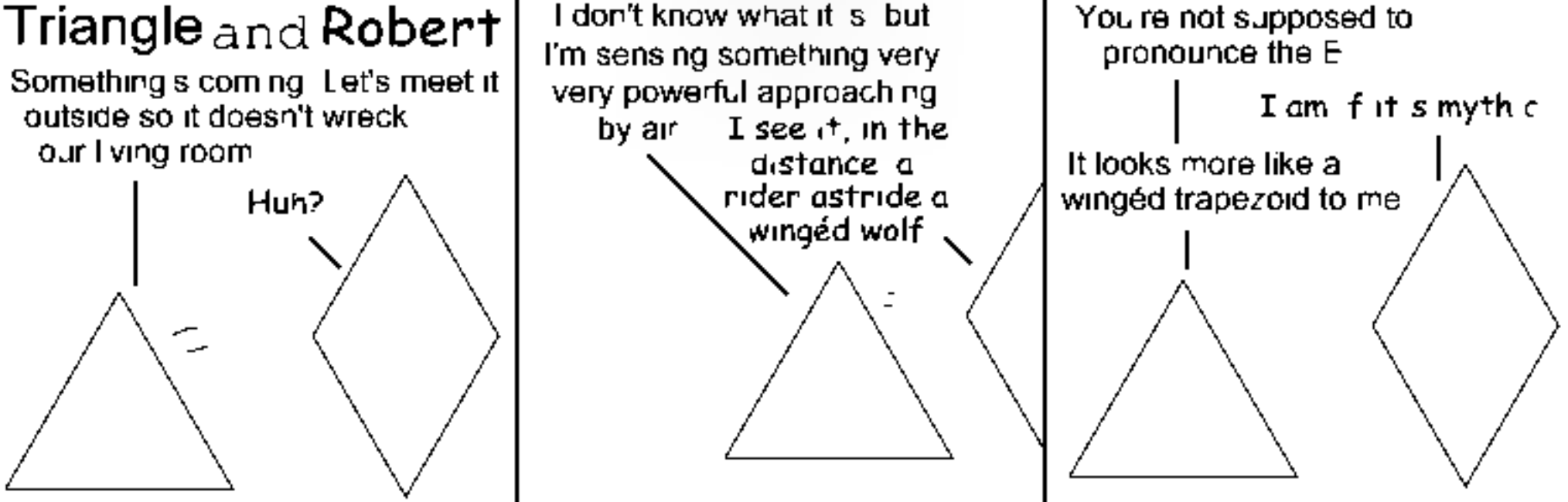
All this hesitation and avoidance of making things actually happen is bad for the comic. Be bold. Make something happen, even something dumb

You're probably right. I'll bring in Linda

Just don't ask her about the details of anything she doesn't volunteer. I haven't finished plotting it all

Now that's what I'm talking about!

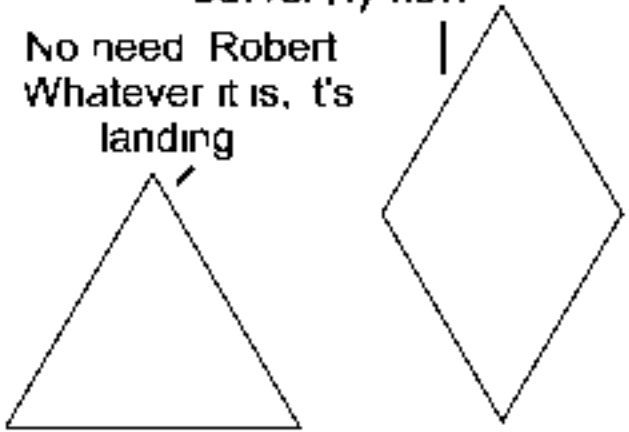
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

It's coming this way!
Should I get the oversized butterfly net?

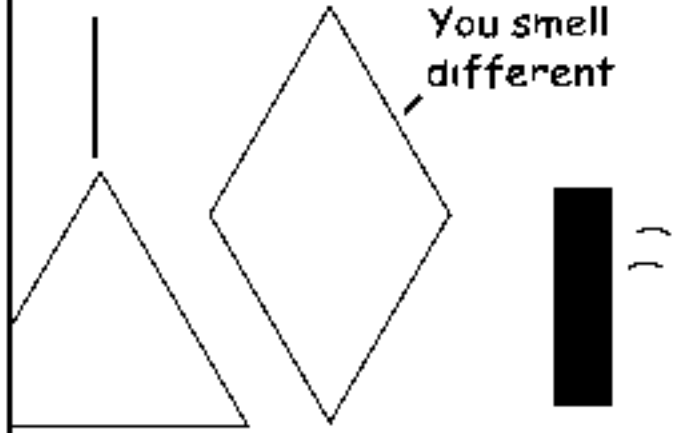
No need Robert
Whatever it is, it's landing



I think that s the Meat Sentry!

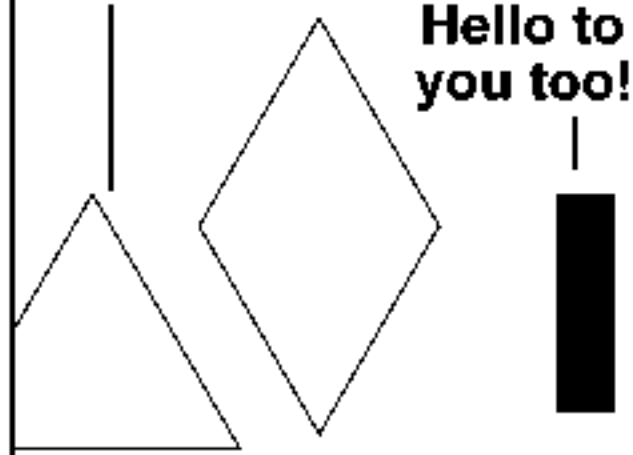
Linda? You look
You ook exact y
the same actual y

You smell different

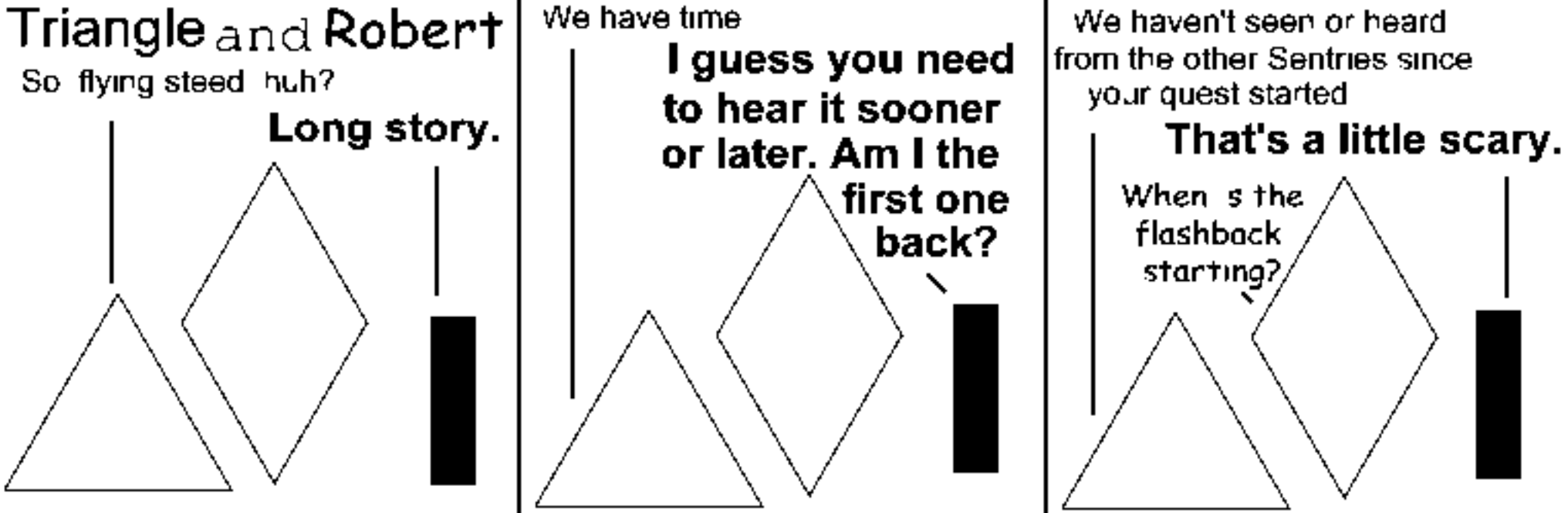


More than that, Robert. Her
her aura or something I
don't know what I'm sensing
but something's new

Hello to you too!



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

My tale begins years ago, in Memphis. I was apprenticed to the then Meat Sentry. You've heard all this before.

Tell it anyway. Get a running start.

Enormous and powerful, a robotic barbecue was to be the high point of the festival. It was a behemoth masterpiece, a crowning achievement in appliance engineering.

The weather was supposed to be fine. No one predicted otherwise. When rain began, we assumed it would pass. The lightning took everyone by surprise.

Triangle and Robert

One bolt of lightning struck the robot. The result is known to this day as the Memphis Barbecue Massacre. My mentor was one of those killed, and I became the next Meat Sentry.

Many years later, fighting alongside fellow Sentries, I faced a robot and froze up, overwhelmed by memory. I had not thought back to Memphis for a long time prior.

It was then that the warrior I had become considered what my younger self had witnessed, and came to a new and worrying conclusion: that no simple appliance could be that efficient a killer.

Triangle and Robert

I sought the creators of the robot which had slain my mentor. The search was not difficult; many in fact were among the ranks of the Meat Enforcers, of which I had briefly been an officer.

I was not to find my revenge so easily. It was not their doing. The robot's ability to kill was an inevitable emergent behavior, not a result of its design.

The true killer, then, was whoever or whatever sent that bolt of lightning and drove the robot mad. Knowing no villain with such an ability, I let the matter wait, assured that the workings of plot would eventually lead to a confrontation.

Triangle and Robert

As you know, when the Dairy Sentry brought forth the Fondue of Four Thousand Cheeses, it set before us a quest, not for the fate of the world but for our own benefit.

The Fondue saw that we could not function as a true team until we had faced our pasts and overcome them. After disposing of the Fondue and solving your hospital bill, we set forth together.

We should have realized how much of a mistake that was going to be in advance. Fortunately, we split up before long. What follows, I may have partially hallucinated. It gets strange.

Triangle and Robert

Who's that over there? She looks like me. She is me. We're doing a flashback. Got it.

I had thought that the workings of comic-strip narrative would lead me to the foe I sought, but the time had come for the confrontation and no leads had arbitrarily fallen from the sky.

I had to do research.

I have no idea what I'm doing. It's been years since I was in a library.

Which wasn't exploding.

Uh, do I need to say a title?

This library is needlessly baffling! I was looking at meteorology and now I'm in some other section entirely?

You! Do you work here? I think I'm lost.

Yes, and yes. You've wandered into the negative section.

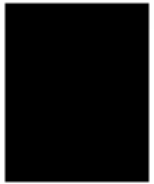
Explain yourself.

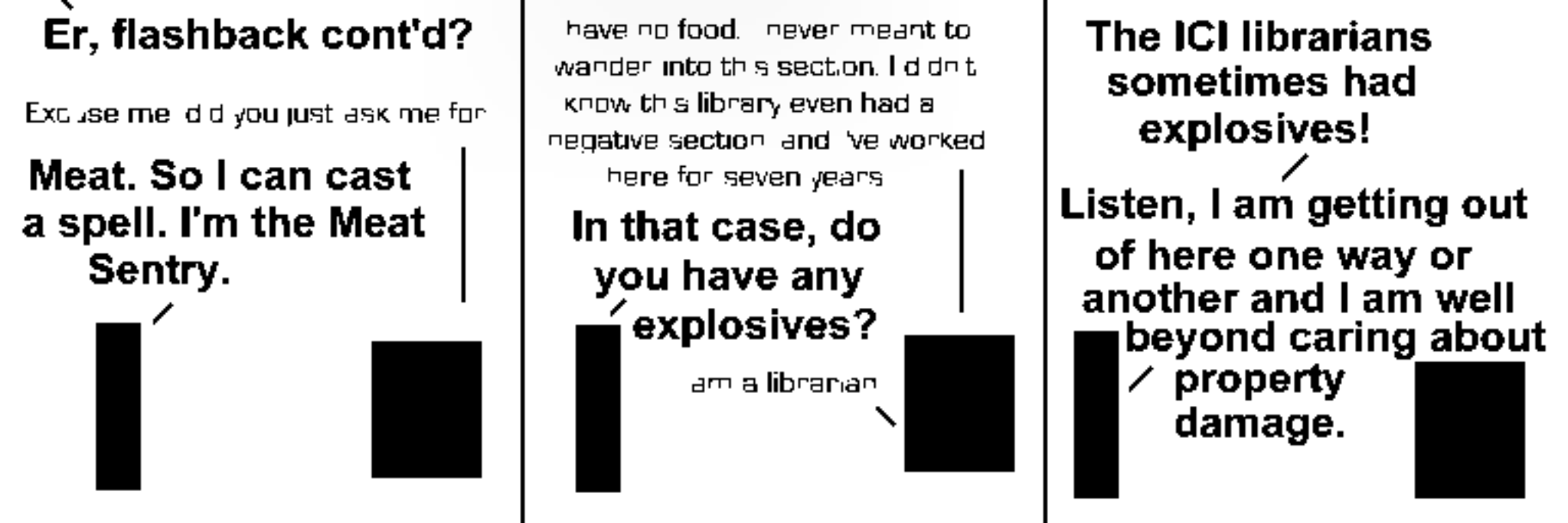
Are you aware of the Dewey Decimal system from 000 to the 900s?

A little.

Most normal books, and even most unnormal ones, can be classified within that range. This aisle is negative 1560 through the negative 1470s. You shouldn't be here. I shouldn't be here. I've been trying to find a way back for at least a day.

Do you have any meat?




Er, flashback cont'd?
Exc use me d d you just ask me for
Meat. So I can cast a spell. I'm the Meat Sentry.
have no food. never meant to wander into th s section. I d dn t know th s library even had a negative section and ve worked here for seven years
In that case, do you have any explosives?
am a librarian
The ICI librarians sometimes had explosives!
Listen, I am getting out of here one way or another and I am well beyond caring about property damage.

wo d not recommend risking damage to the books n this section Some of them are prone to acts of self-defense

So how do we get back into the normal part of the library?

Well?

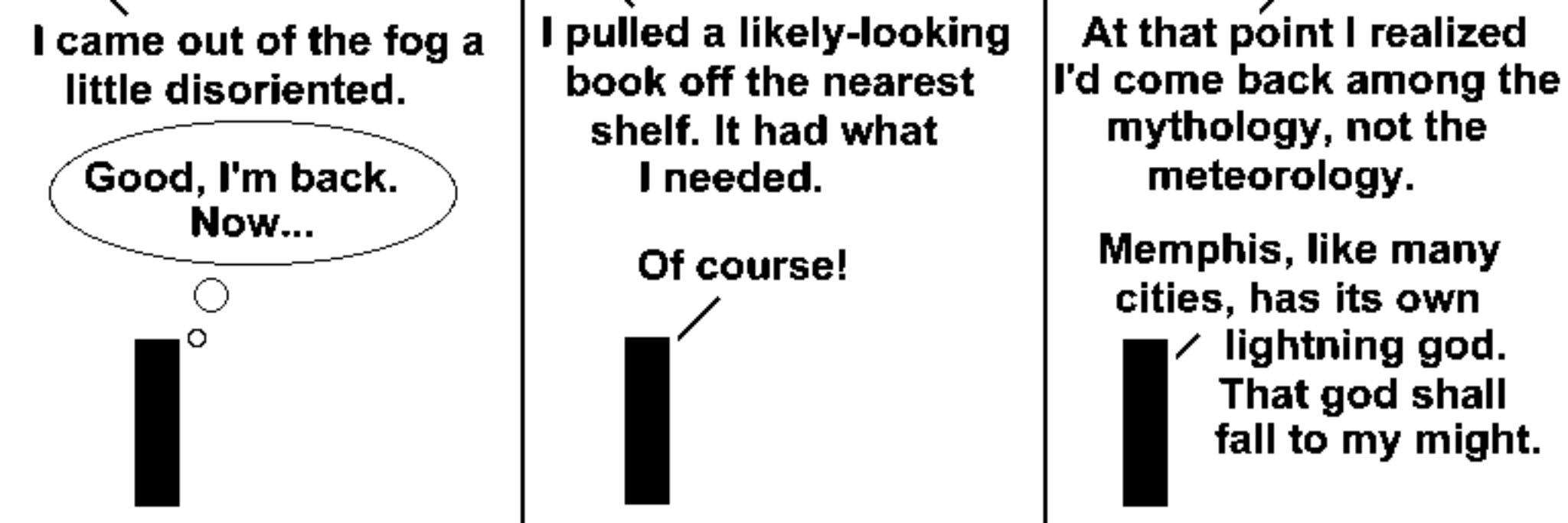
don t think we when m rushed

You don't think at all, ever, from what I've seen! Give me that book, with the mouths on it.

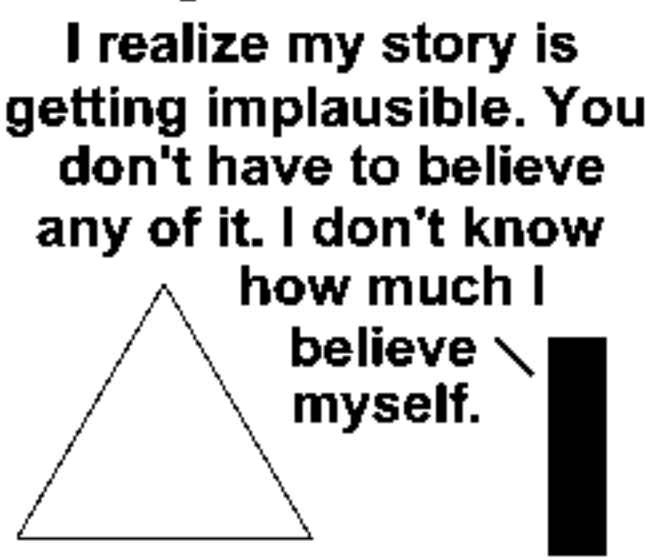
Don t hurt me

My interrogation skills were as sharp as ever. A few threats and the book emitted a weird fog, enshrouding us.

I hope this is the good kind of weird fog.


I came out of the fog a little disoriented.
Good, I'm back. Now...
I pulled a likely-looking book off the nearest shelf. It had what I needed.
Of course!
At that point I realized I'd come back among the mythology, not the meteorology.
Memphis, like many cities, has its own lightning god. That god shall fall to my might.

Triangle and Robert



Having chosen my foe, I studied further so that I would learn his weaknesses and how to access his domain.

I should have thought of this sooner.

Of course no mortal power could have felled my mentor so easily. I seek a god. Lightning was involved. That spells lightning god. It was in Memphis. Memphis has a lightning god.

The more I read, the easier this looks. I'll make some tengu a l'orange, teleport right into his celestial throne room, and get off a good three hits before he can even react if I time it right.

If I had known then what my quest was going to become, I would have still gone through with it, but not for the same reasons.

Today, you will be avenged!

Working my magic as planned, I materialized in...

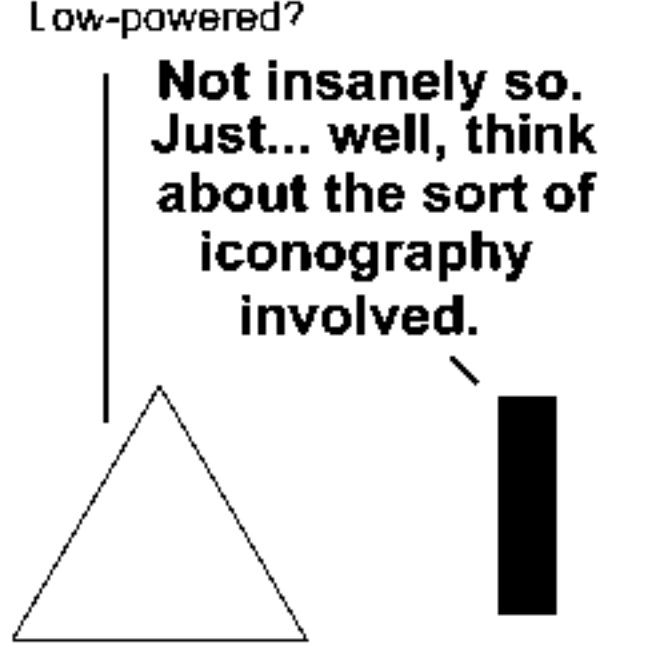
Right. I should have expected the scenery not to be drawn.

Can you just take my word for the majesty?

Not real y The on y d vin ties I've encountered had majesty shortages

I guess this one did too, but it was still impressive. A lot of slightly kitschy magical artifacts.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Triangle, she s scaring me.

How is the Meat Sentry scar ng you?

Because she's not scaring me. You re having a normal, quiet conversation I think she might be possessed or something

Robert actually has a point Care to expla n?

I will.

The wingéd steed, my lack of rage, I can account for these things. I would like to continue telling the story chronologically, however.

Okay We ll listen

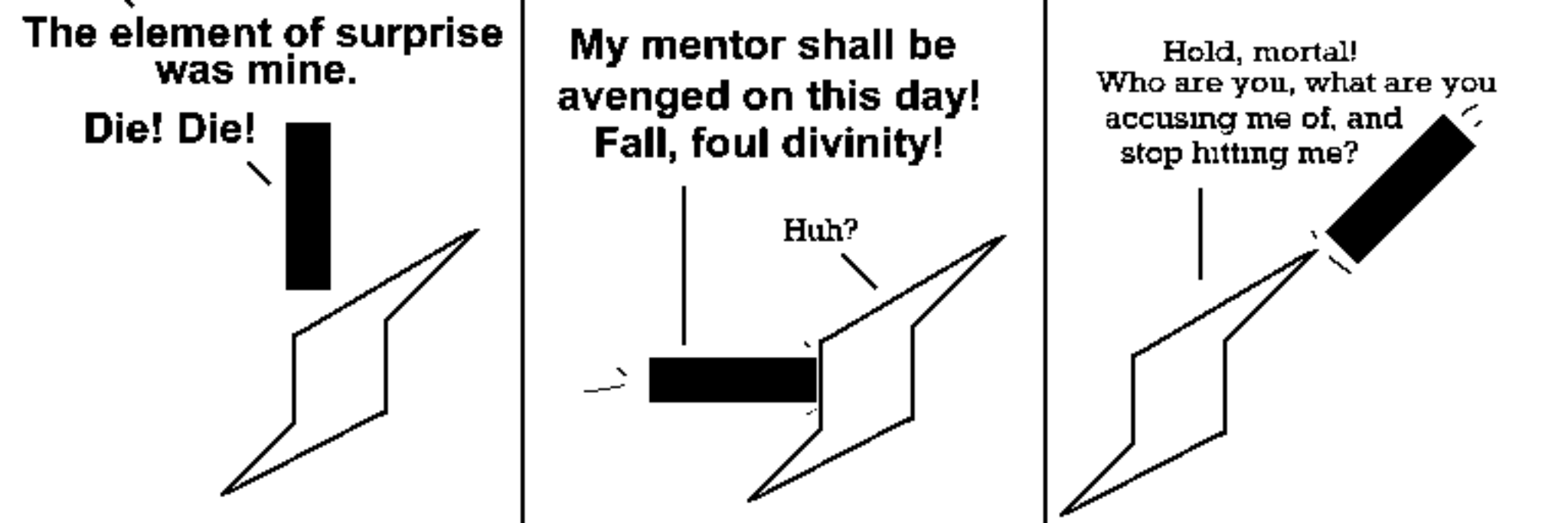
I was disoriented, but it passed before I was noticed.

I struck!

Hold on. Cartoonist? I didn't mean to use a whole panel for that line.

So you waste another panel mentioning that

Yes.


The element of surprise was mine.
Die! Die!
My mentor shall be avenged on this day! Fall, foul divinity!
Huh?
Hold, mortal! Who are you, what are you accusing me of, and stop hitting me?

Triangle and Robert

You don't even remember?

Remember what, mortal? Explain why you now confront me

The Memphis Barbecue Festival! The Meat Sentry!

I do remember that incident You overestimate me

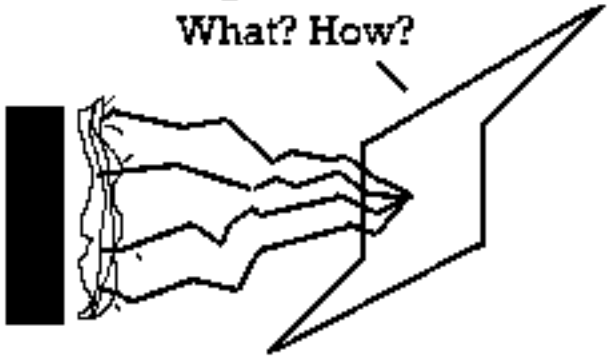
I don t sign off on every pair of clouds that rub together Sometimes lightning just strikes

Do you really expect me to believe

No, but it s no less true for that. You re going to attack me some more now

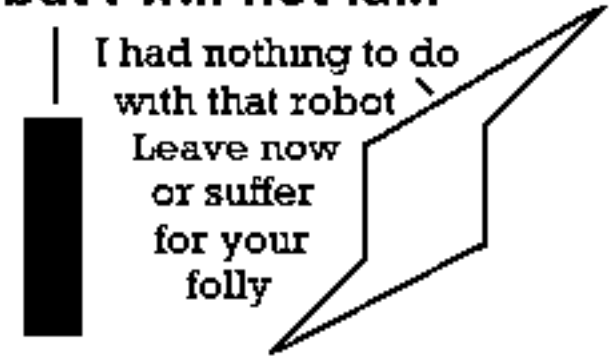
The god turned his power against me, but the magic at my command was the greater.

What? How?



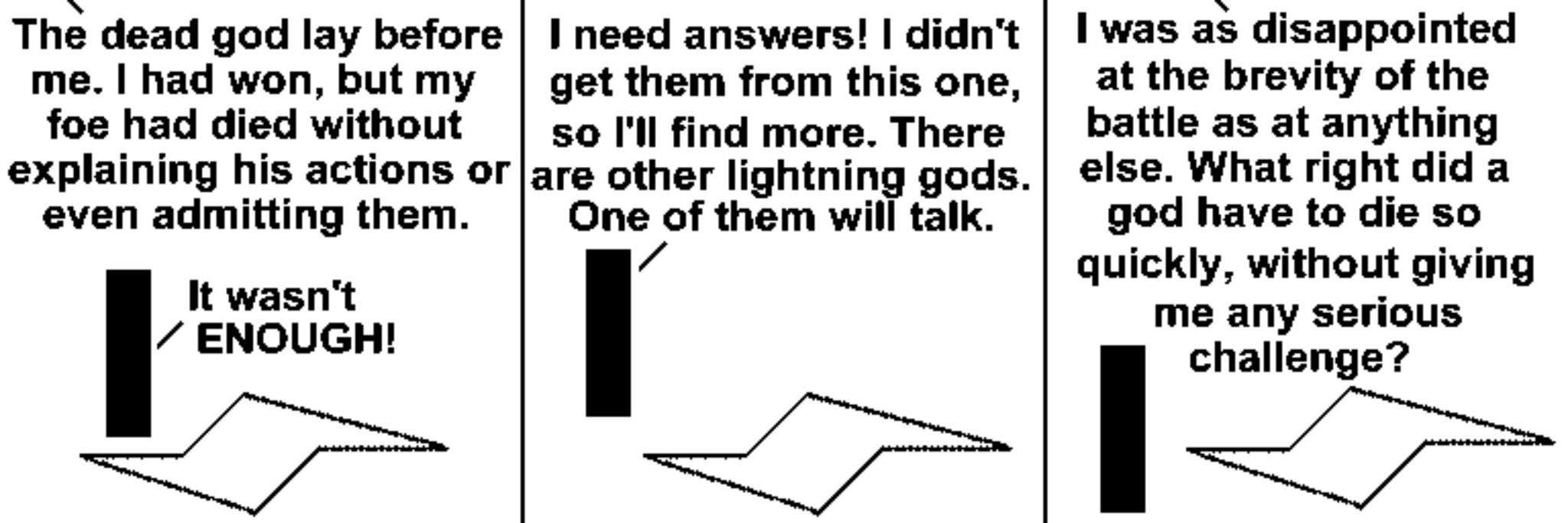
An invisible wall of invisible bacon. The Meat Sentry before me was unprepared for you, but I will not fall!

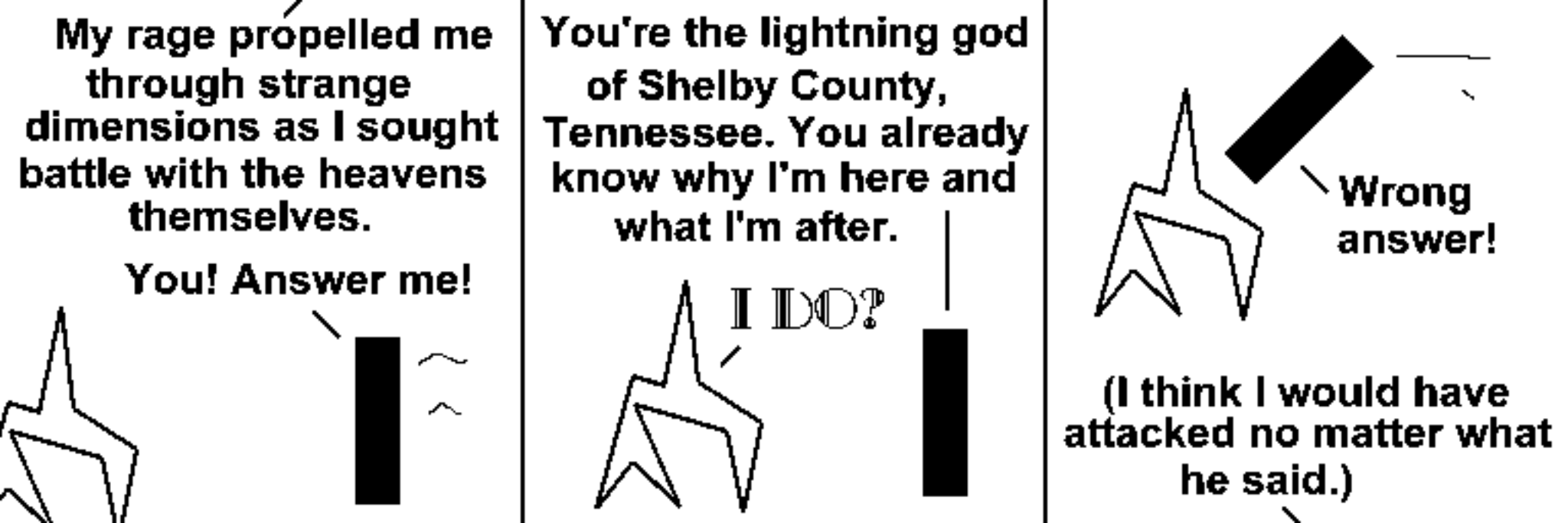
I had nothing to do with that robot Leave now or suffer for your folly



I'm not doing any suffering here.

I launched a hail of jerkydaggers. They hit. (Narrating on the bottom is okay, right?)


The dead god lay before me. I had won, but my foe had died without explaining his actions or even admitting them.
It wasn't ENOUGH!
I need answers! I didn't get them from this one, so I'll find more. There are other lightning gods. One of them will talk.
I was as disappointed at the brevity of the battle as at anything else. What right did a god have to die so quickly, without giving me any serious challenge?


My rage propelled me through strange dimensions as I sought battle with the heavens themselves.
You! Answer me!
You're the lightning god of Shelby County, Tennessee. You already know why I'm here and what I'm after.
I DO?
Wrong answer!
(I think I would have attacked no matter what he said.)

Triangle and Robert

I'll ask you again!

YOU DIDN'T ASK ME A'I ALL.

Wrong answer again!

WHAT'S THE QUESTION?

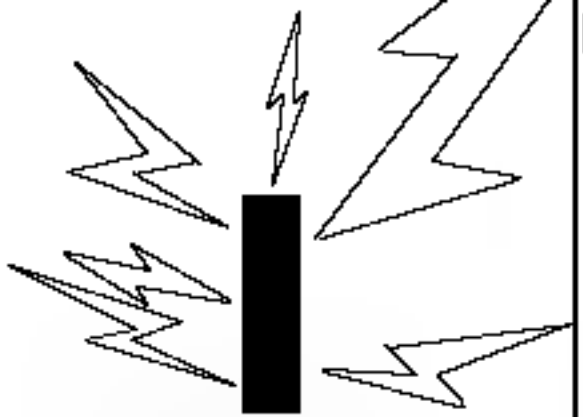
Uh-uh.

I'm glad that didn't kill you! The last god I tried it on died before I got answers!

WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH YOU, MORTAL?

Vanishing into mist won't protect you for long. You'd better tell me what I want to hear.

YOUR FOLLY IS ABSURD.



WHY ARE YOU NOT ELECTRO-CUTED?

I've taken precautions. I'll not suffer the fate of the Sentry before me.

THE WHAT? WAIT. ARE YOU LINDA CONCARNE? YOU SHOULD HAVE SAIL.

Triangle and Robert

You know who I am and why I'm here! Now tell me what I need to know or no disappearing act will save you from my vengeance!

YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN TOLD.

IT WAS NOT GOD-LIGHTNING. IT WAS JUST WEATHER.

If that's your only answer, prepare to defend yourself.

REALY.

THAT'S GOD-LIGHTNING.

Triangle and Robert

That was a good lightning bolt. I'm actually smoldering. This battle is going... to...

[redacted]

[redacted]

You even knew I was feigning weakness with artificial smoke flavor! The preliminaries are over. Now I use my really big recipes.

YOU'D HAVE TO STAND UP FIRST.

[redacted]

Triangle and Robert

Oh, I can stand up. And when I do, you give me some answers or you suffer.

YOU FOOL ONLY YOURSELF.

To me, mechanically separated nuggets of mortality! Come, crimson capicola of Cytorrak!

Heed my call, fiends of gristle and sinew! Strike at my foe before you!

The dark meaty forces pulled the god back into physical being at the same time they pulled him apart pixel by pixel. This isn't much of an illustration.

Triangle and Robert

You'd better still be conscious! I'm in an interrogating mood!

My hopes were thwarted. The lightning god of Shelby County was not technically dead, but I had no desire to wait for the obscure magical alignments which would allow him to recover from pulverization.

Would it be jumping to conclusions to suppose your story continues with the beating up of a third more powerful lightning god?

Not especially. I'll skip over some of it.

I forget exactly where the third one was the lightning god of. The battle was unmemorable.

Now talk!

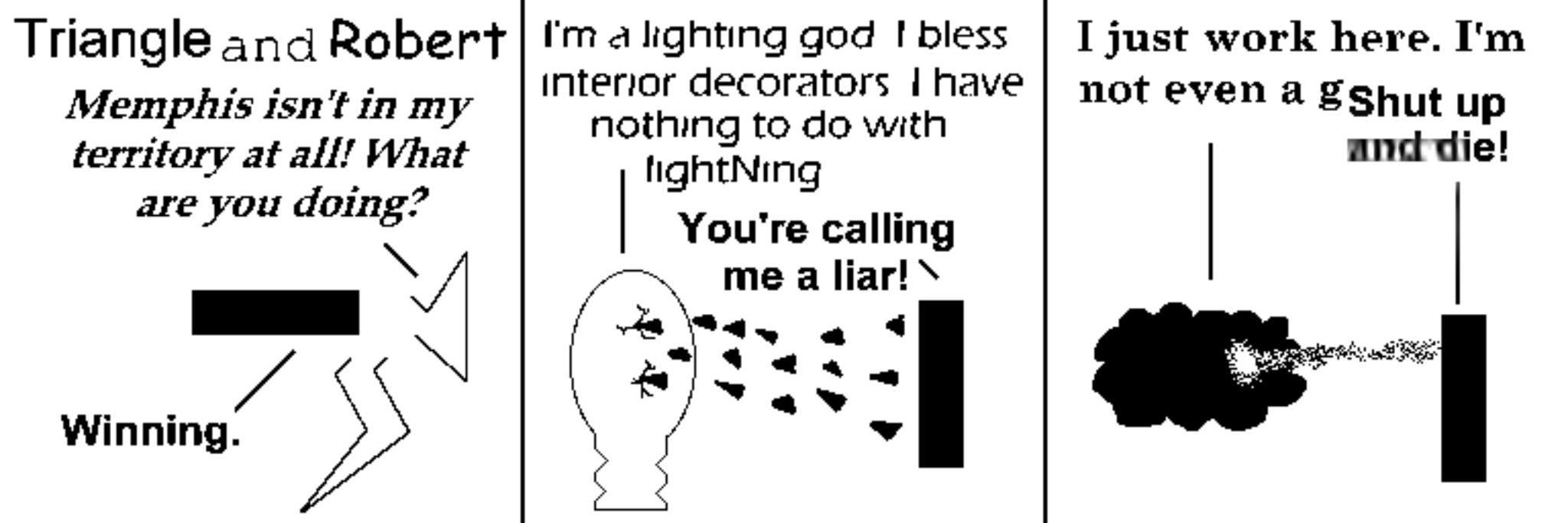
You've chosen a horrible path, Meat Sentry. What will you do when there are no gods left to blame?

Why won't you just tell me why? That's all I'm asking.

There was no why. The gods do not direct every fate, and death comes to all regardless of their station.

I'm not here for platitudes! I'm here for the truth!

No, you're here for a clear story about a murder you can avenge. What you're getting is the truth.


Triangle and Robert
Memphis isn't in my territory at all! What are you doing?
Winning.
I'm a lighting god I bless interior decorators I have nothing to do with lightNing
You're calling me a liar!
I just work here. I'm not even a g
Shut up and die!

Hundreds of these battles occurred.

I don't care HOW few city blocks you're a god of! You're a lightning god and I'm not backing down!

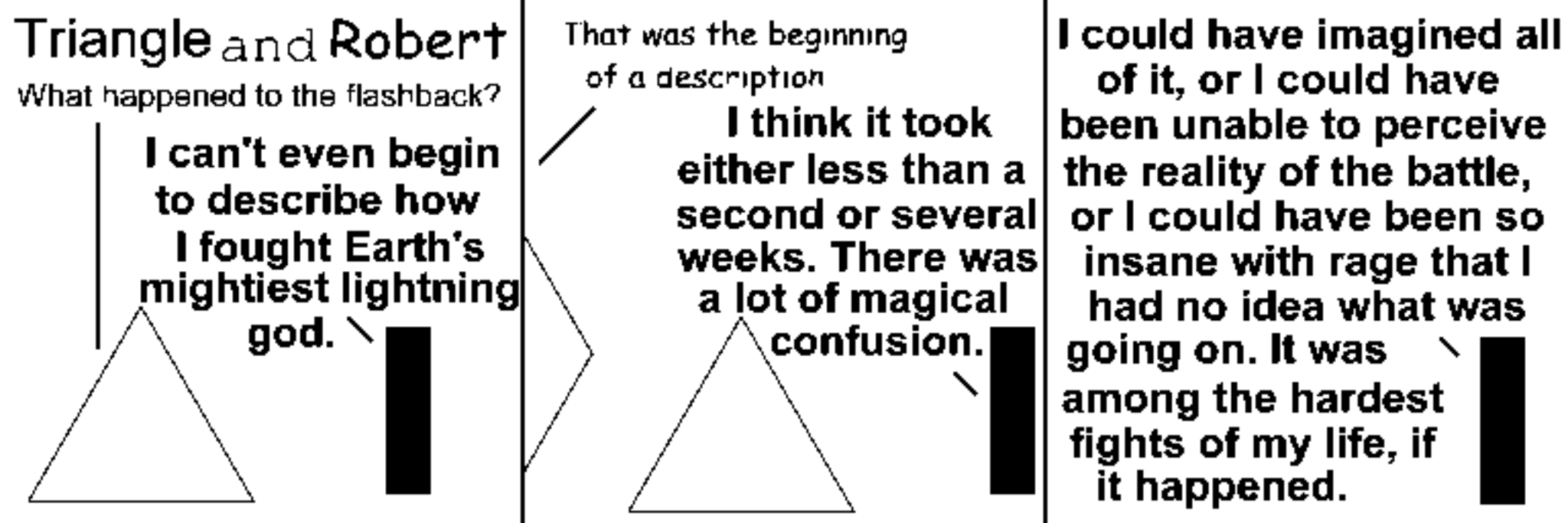
It's down to us.

Actually you missed Budapest

That's fine. I'm ready now.

You know the gods had nothing to do with any of this. You're on a crusade for nothing but your own satisfaction

This was the biggest one. This lightning god had domain over almost the entire Earth. If I was going to get my answers, it would have to be now. By the way, I did already mention that I may have hallucinated any or all of this?

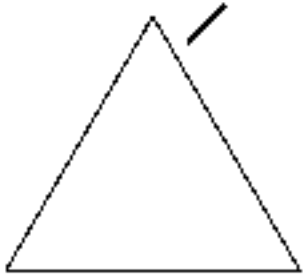

Triangle and Robert
What happened to the flashback?
I can't even begin to describe how I fought Earth's mightiest lightning god.
That was the beginning of a description
I think it took either less than a second or several weeks. There was a lot of magical confusion.
I could have imagined all of it, or I could have been unable to perceive the reality of the battle, or I could have been so insane with rage that I had no idea what was going on. It was among the hardest fights of my life, if it happened.

Triangle and Robert

Since you're alive, I take it you somehow managed to win the battle

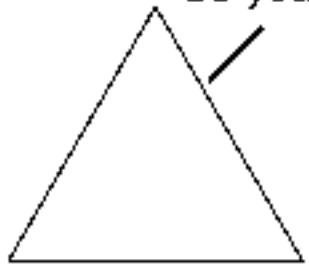
That doesn't follow.

You lost and survived?



No. I did win. You of all polygons should know that currently being alive doesn't imply having survived.

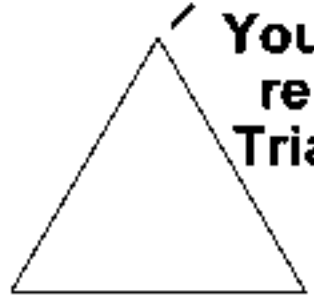
So you died?



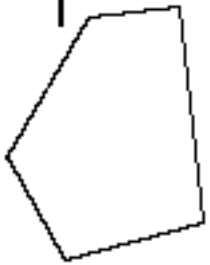
I survived that battle. May I tell my story in order?

Oh! I spoiled something! Sorry! Don't hurt me!

You can relax, Triangle.



Triangle and Robert



EEP.

You've obviously been expecting me.

Wait Hold the flashback This is Budapest now?

Yes.

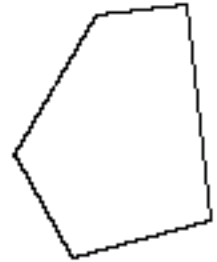
What happened after the big fight you were talking about?

I'm not positive. I think I ended up killing him because I couldn't subdue him.

Grossly anticlimactic

The climax is later.

PLEASE DON'T TORTURE ME. I DON'T KNOW A THING.



That's a good reason to torture you.

Triangle and Robert

Running away was a good decision. It didn't accomplish anything, but it showed intelligence.

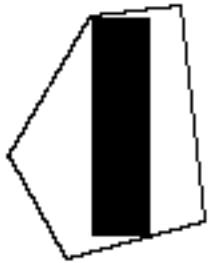
You've only bought yourself time! I will find you, and now I know you're hiding something!

I didn't know a thing. I'm sure you've all figured that out by now.

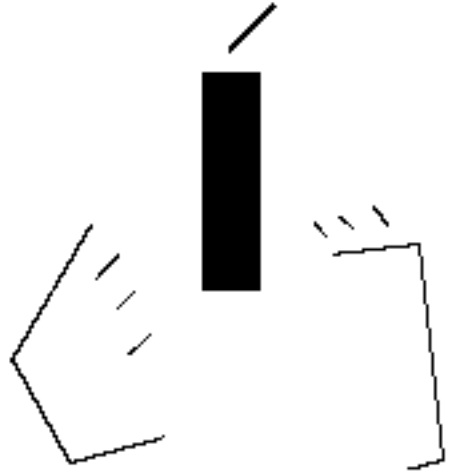
If I were chasing me, where would I hide?

Triangle and Robert

Telefrag!



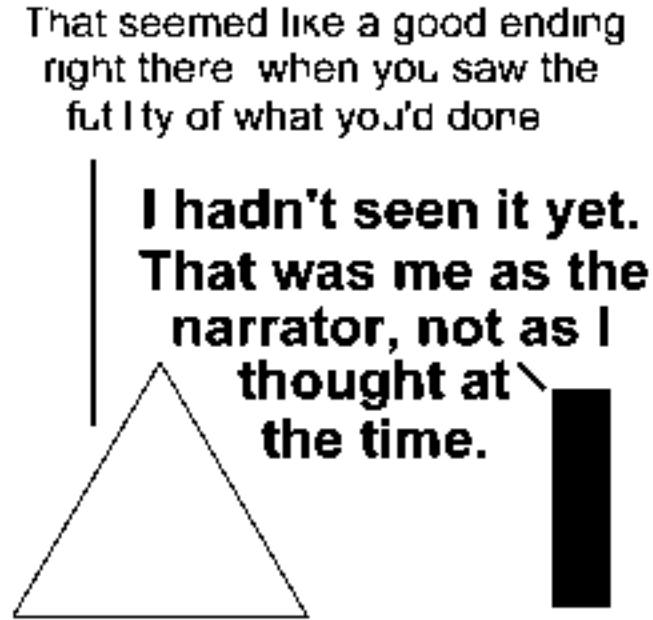
I think that was fatal. Now what do I do?

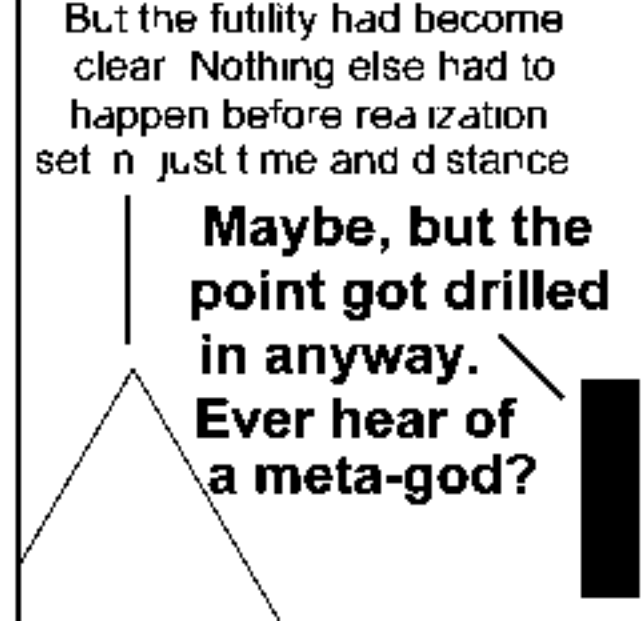


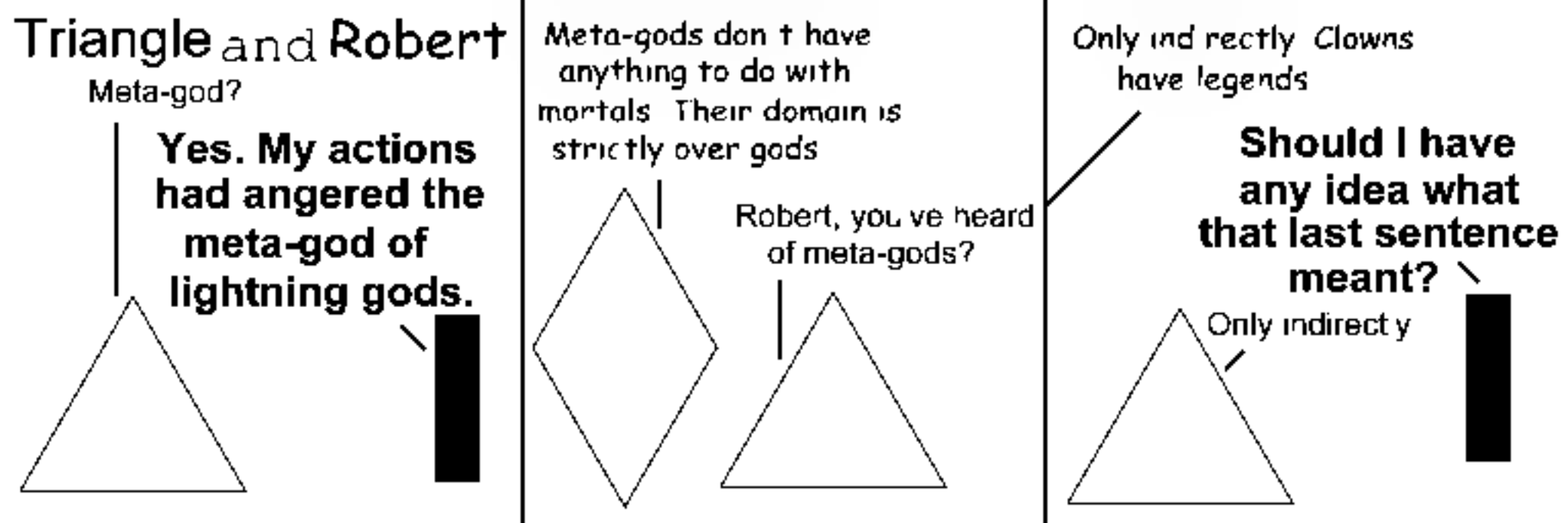
So what did you do?

I stood there for an indeterminate time.

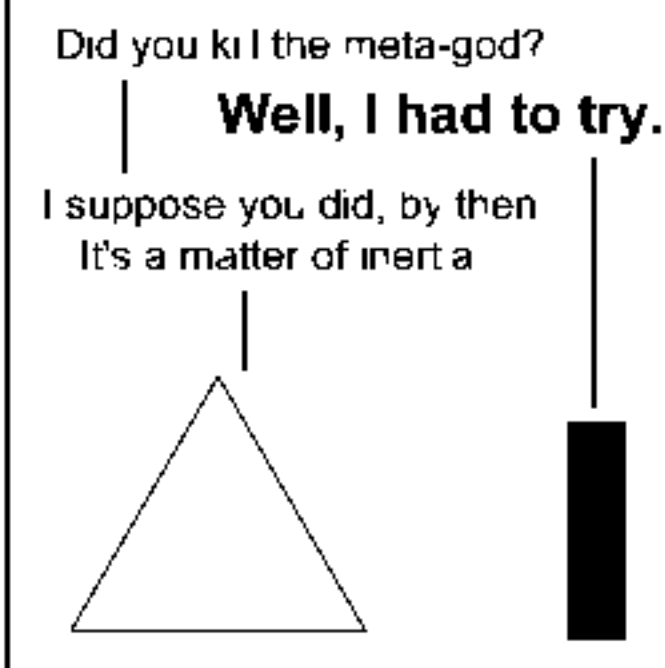
Triangle and Robert






Triangle and Robert
Meta-god?
Yes. My actions had angered the meta-god of lightning gods.
Meta-gods don t have anything to do with mortals Their domain is strictly over gods
Robert, you ve heard of meta-gods?
Only ind rectly Clowns have legends
Should I have any idea what that last sentence meant?
Only indirect y

Triangle and Robert



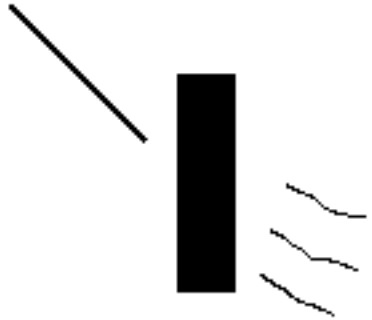
Triangle and Robert

Explain yourself Meat Sentry of the Seventh Race of Earth

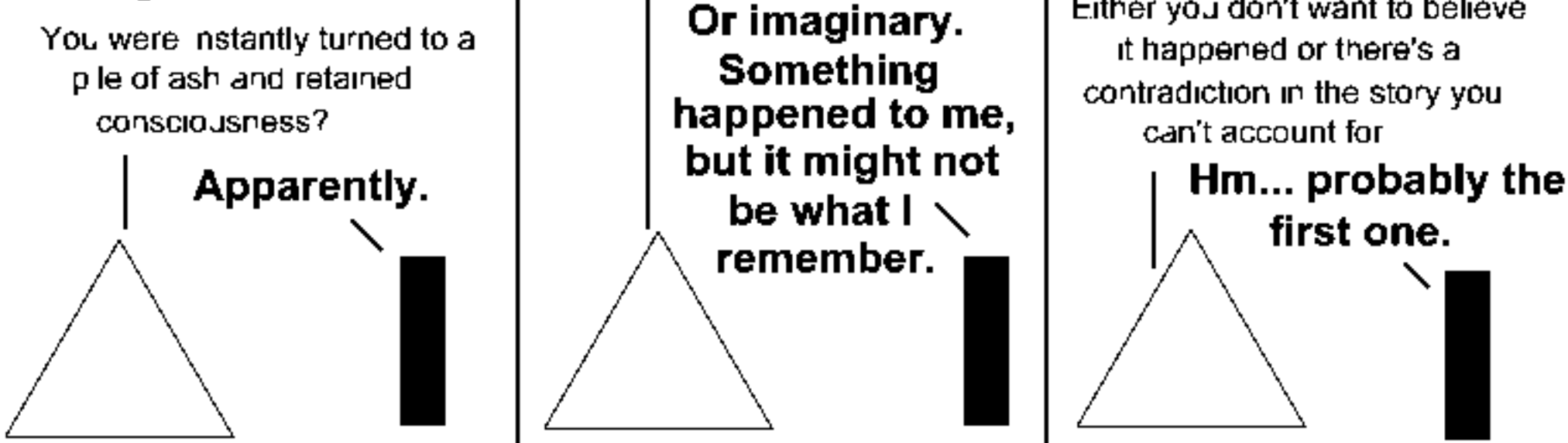
I have nothing to explain to you!

For your own safety do not attempt to harm me

Nice try!



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Let's operate under the assumption that your memories of these events were accurate

They're still imprecise.

I don't think time as we know it applied. A hundred years, a day, I don't know how long I spent as a pile of ash.

I think the meta-god of lightning gods was waiting for me to try to say something.

I had nothing to say.

Triangle and Robert

You have doomed your world. Sentry lightning gods do not exist solely to provide an anthropomorphic explanation for a natural phenomenon.

The horror started then. The lack of artwork in this flashback is sparing you. The meta-god took advantage of my semi-deadness to... to *talk* about the *weather.*

ALL the weather. Since the dawn of the Seventh Race. With diagrams. The meta-god of lightning gods had been rehearsing this presentation for millenia and finally had someone to inflict it on.

Triangle and Robert

Without lightning gods to regulate it, electrical activity in the atmosphere tends to build indefinitely.

It's to do with polygon physics being less stable than the physics of previous races. Every time history restarts the rules change a little and the rules we got were convoluted and broken.

Deities are actually essential to the ecosystem. That's the summary version. You don't want the long version.

Triangle and Robert

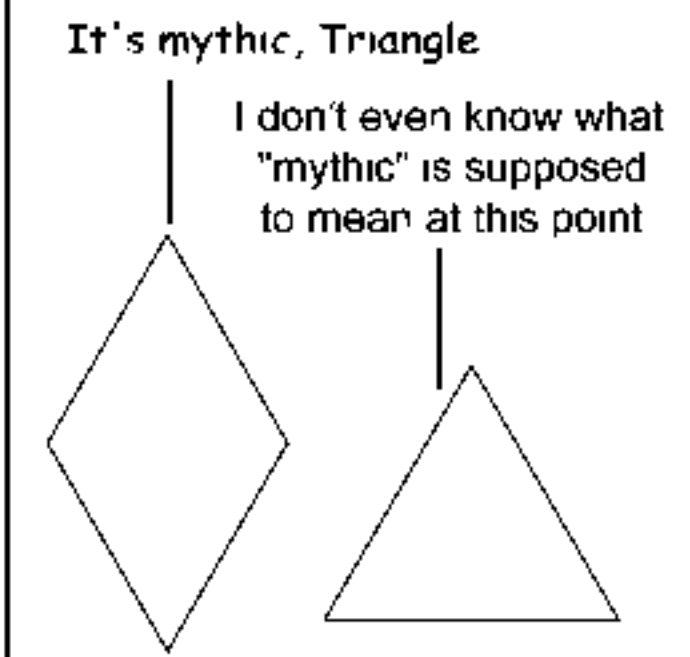
With the majority of your planet's lightning gods dead and the rest incapacitated all that you knew and loved will be consumed

Even if it was true there was no reason to be so smug about it.

I can only intervene in the affairs of gods not of worlds No one can save your Earth

I overpowered the lightning gods alone. Surely if I was that powerful, the other four Sentries together... no. I was stronger than all of them combined and I knew it. They had no chance.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

The gods must be revived. Scatter my ashes to them.

Finally you show some semblance of nobility. Meat Sentry of the Seventh Race

Can we go to panels of just text now

You're asking?

Well, if you need something in particular drawn, I really should draw it for this part. This is the climax, right

Yes. I'll let you know.

I'm infusing the gods with all my power and it isn't enough!

That s not al your power

What else is there? All my command of the world's meats. All my strength and speed. All my detective skills, not that they amount to much.

A that is but a fraction

I guess it's to save the world and I brought all this on myself. The last shreds of my life energy. Take all this, gods whom I have wronged, and forgive me.

That s not a of your power
Do you not understand
yourse f Meat Sentry?
You must give up what you
truly value

My life isn't enough to sacrifice? What do I "truly value"?

My my anger

What you never let go of even when you lost your identity. The fire at the heart of all your might

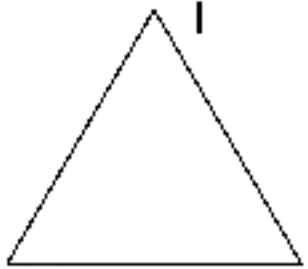
LIKE

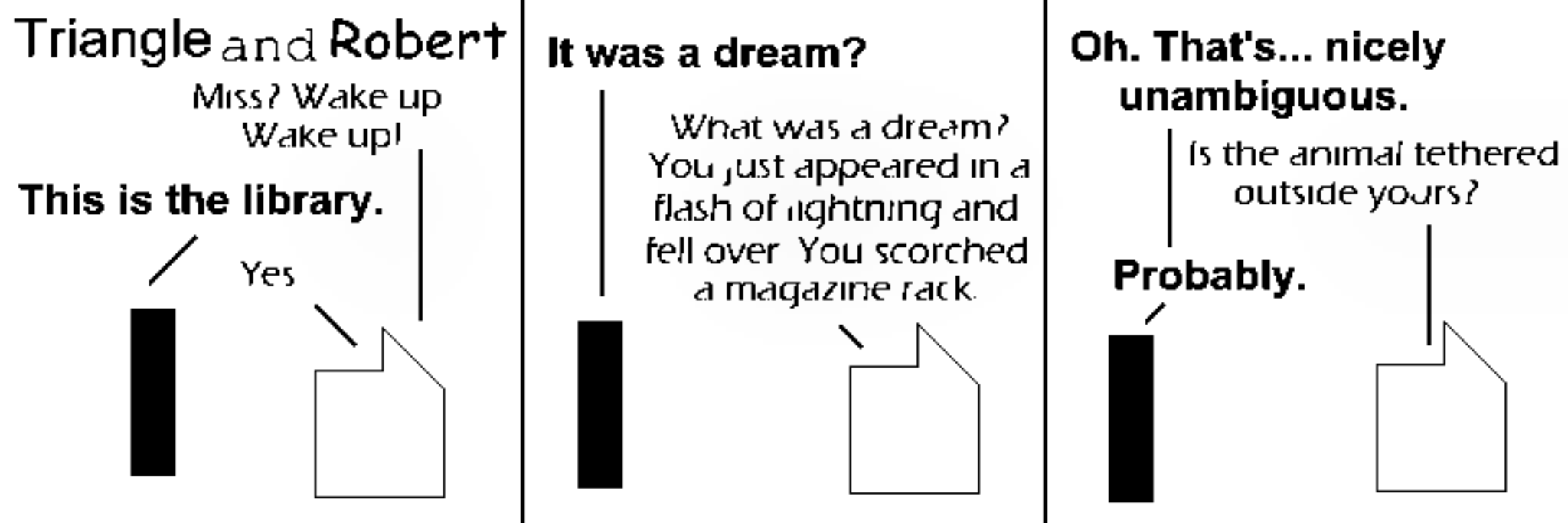
my anger!

Did you go through with it?

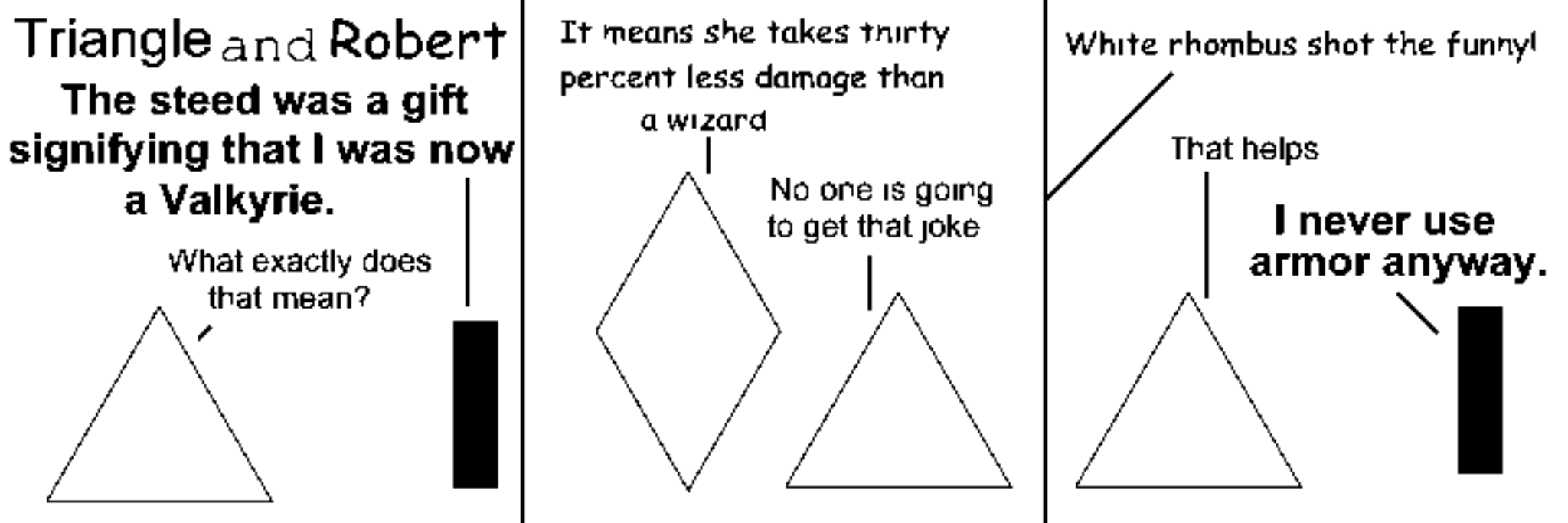
Yes. I gave up my anger to resurrect the gods I had slain.

I guess that was very mythic of you




Triangle and Robert
Miss? Wake up
Wake up!
This is the library.
Yes
It was a dream?
What was a dream?
You just appeared in a flash of lightning and fell over. You scorched a magazine rack.
Oh. That's... nicely unambiguous.
Is the animal tethered outside yours?
Probably.

Triangle and Robert

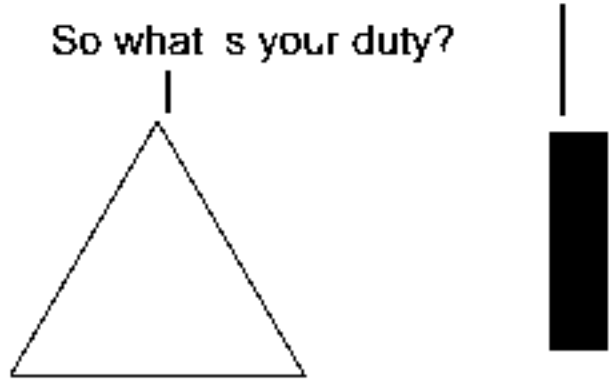


Triangle and Robert

The steed's the biggest perk of being a Valkyrie. It can find its way to any battlefield, no matter how small or hidden.

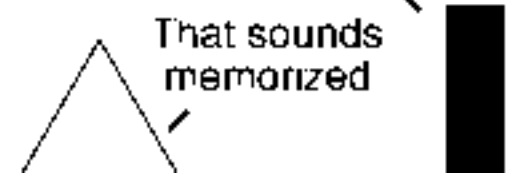
It can also travel through the Zone of No Pudding, but I'm not supposed to do that except on duty.

So what s your duty?

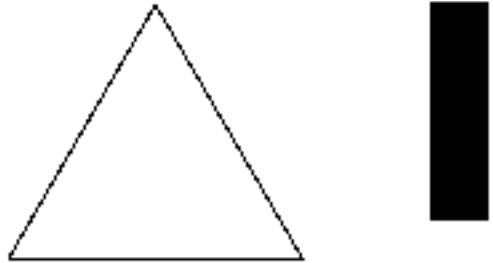


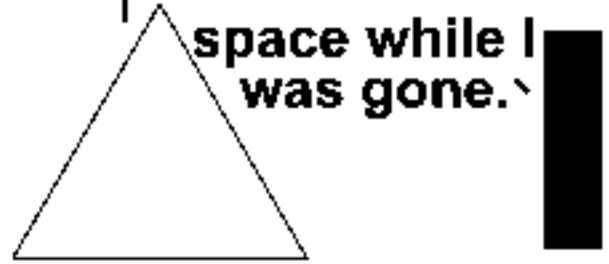
Whenever a sufficiently brave warrior dies in battle, the geographically nearest Valkyrie is required to offer that warrior transport to the afterlife, bypassing the processing queue.

That sounds memorized

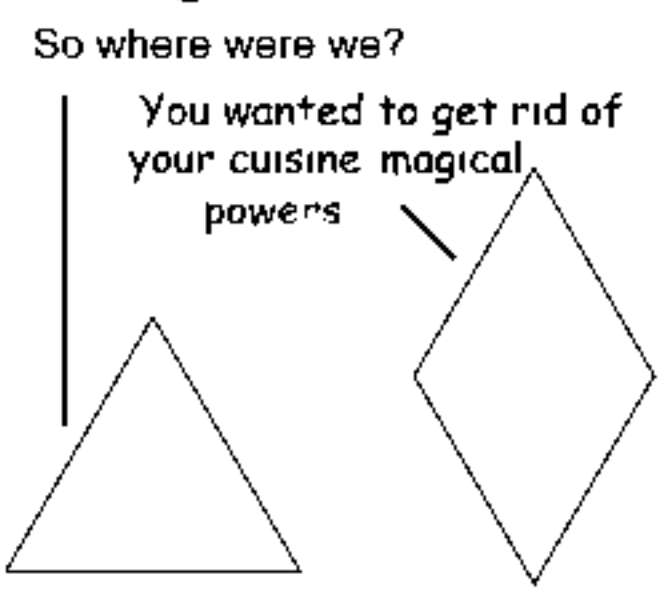


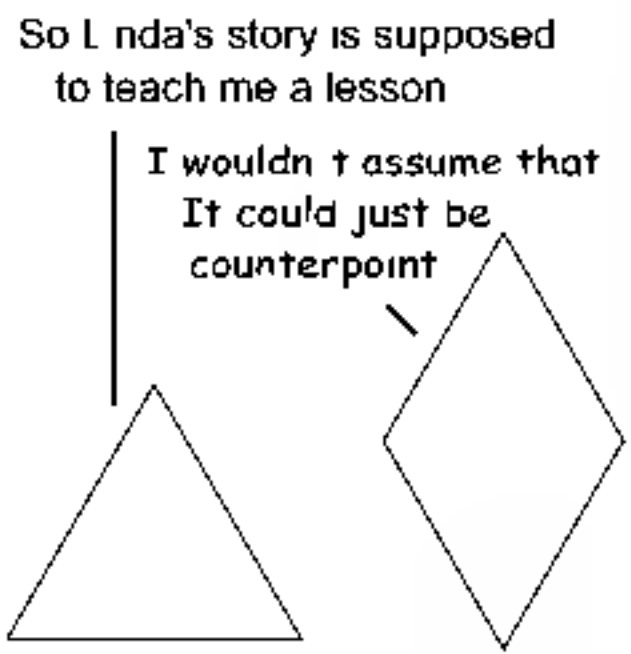
Triangle and Robert

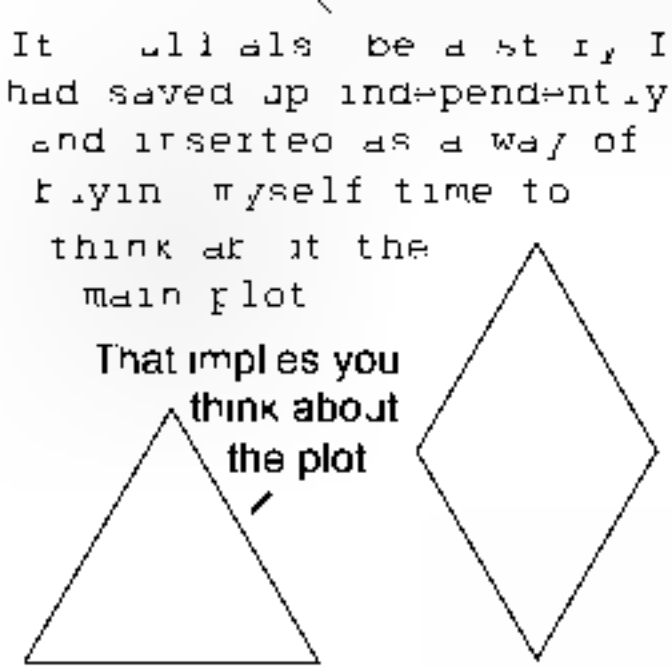




Triangle and Robert



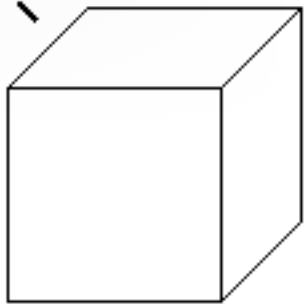




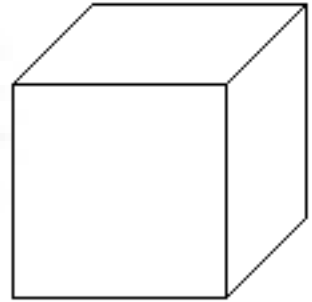
Triangle and Robert

Within the cramped quarters of a submarine somewhere deep in the Asymptotic Ocean

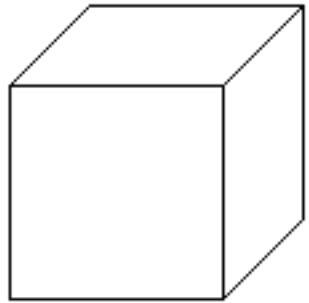
Oh, no. "Somewhere"?



Commander! I think the Cartoonist just confirmed that we're nowhere near Tetris!



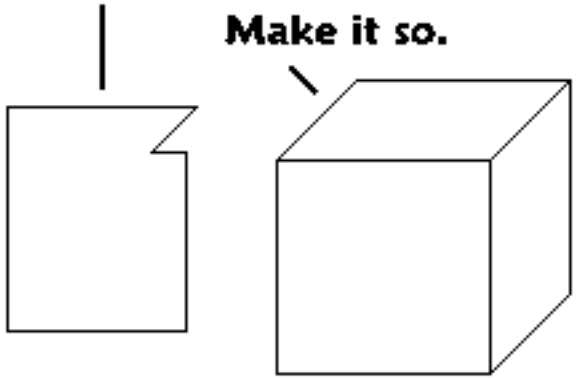
Where's the com... I'm the commander. I'm the commander, and I should not have ordered halved oxygen rations. I lose at submarine. At least now I know we're lost, as opposed to something crazier.



Triangle and Robert

Commander, now that we know that we don't know where we are, I recommend that we surface

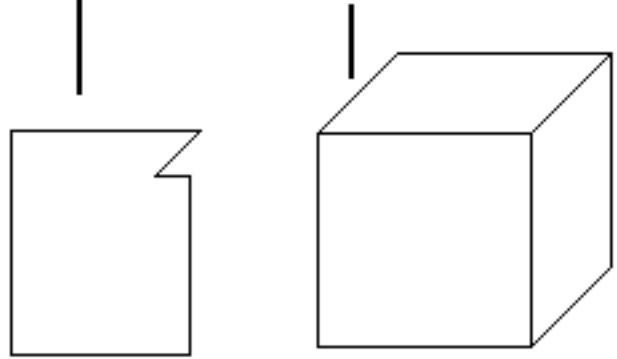
Make it so.



All hands prepare to surface!

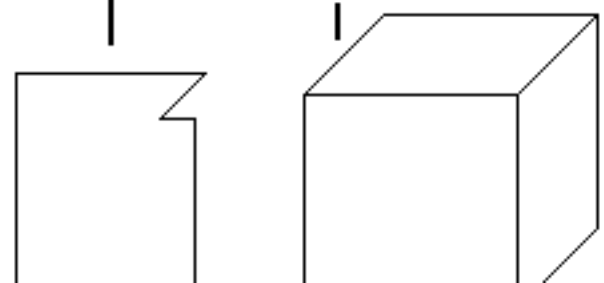
Hands?

Never mind that. Do you have any theories about how we got off-course?



Either our instrumentation or geography is broken. Instrumentation failure seems more likely

But with Fourth Race technology involved, it's better not to rule anything out.

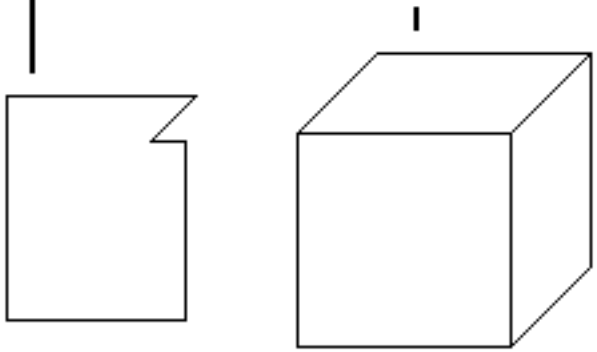


Triangle and Robert

We've surfaced.
At least we're on Earth.

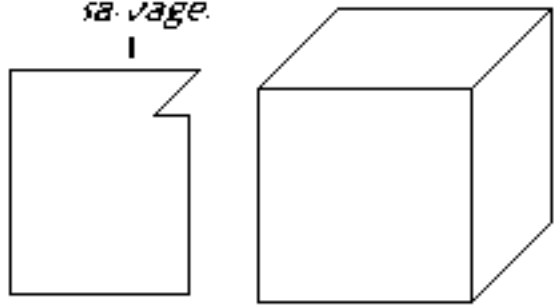
Was that in question?

Everything is in question.



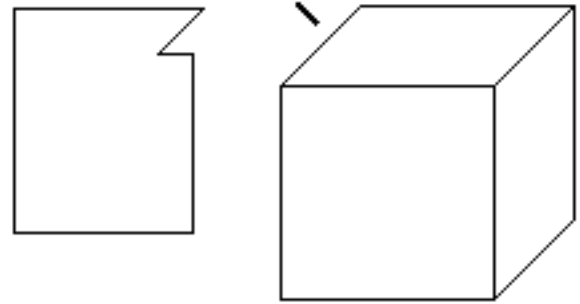
You haven't been on too many missions, have you?

This is the my first hazardous one. I've mostly done undersea sa·vage.



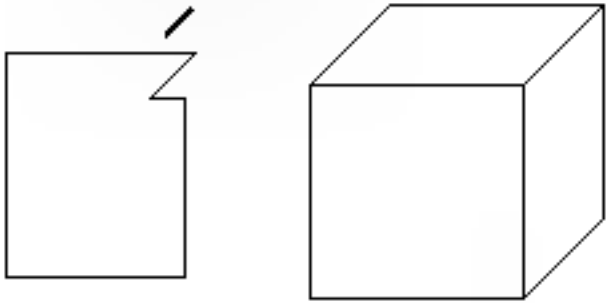
I've been with the RDCLBA since the Pentagon days, though. You can rely on me as a sub pilot.

Right. Check the instruments. Find out what broke and where we've ended up.



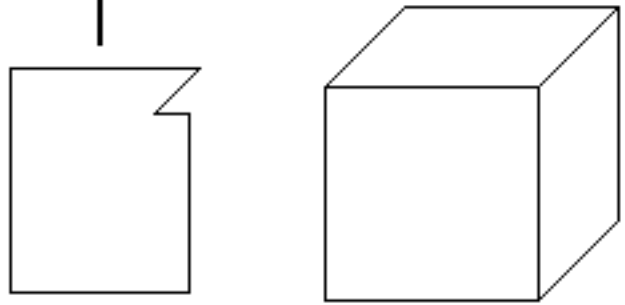
Triangle and Robert

I've checked everything over, as much as possible outside of dry dock. I still have no idea where we are. Our navigation system has definitely been sabotaged.



It's fixable, but without a known position to calibrate from it's useless.

What do you see as our options?

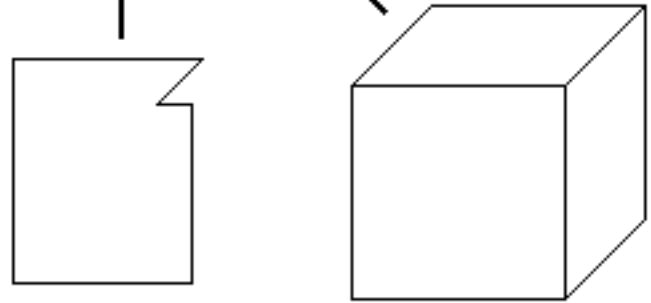


Wait for night, get latitude from the stars, stay surfaced and navigate manually until we sight land.

I asked for options.

What's wrong with that one?

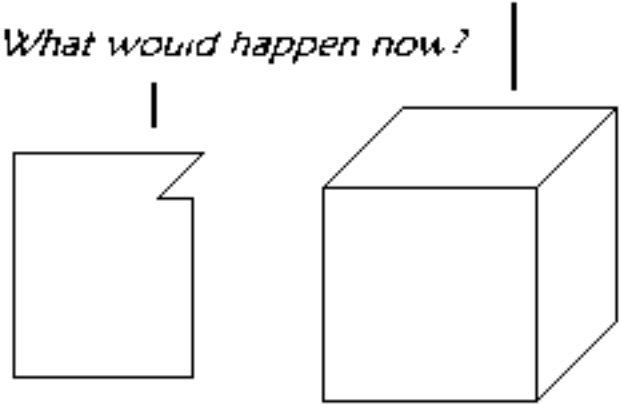
Lack of style.



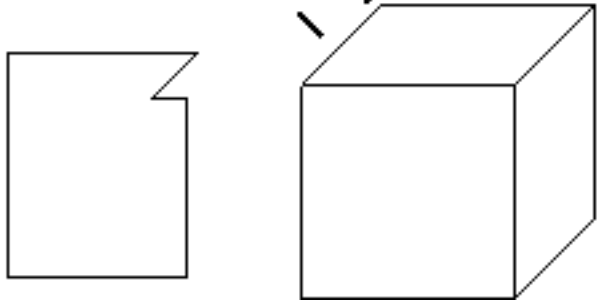
Triangle and Robert

If the Cartoonist hadn't gotten involved, your boring plan would be the correct one.

What would happen now?

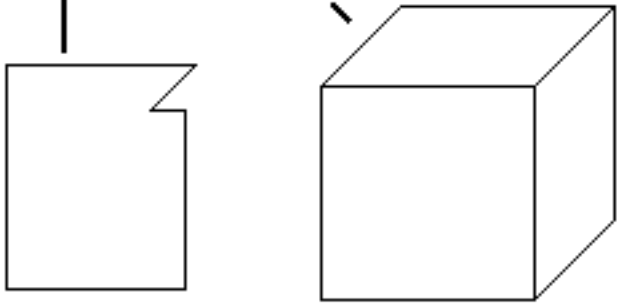


The Cartoonist writes conflicts. Sometimes they're quiet internal ones, but usually there's chasing or violence. If we don't leave room for a conflict to develop naturally, the Cartoonist will pick one for us, probably one we're not ready for.

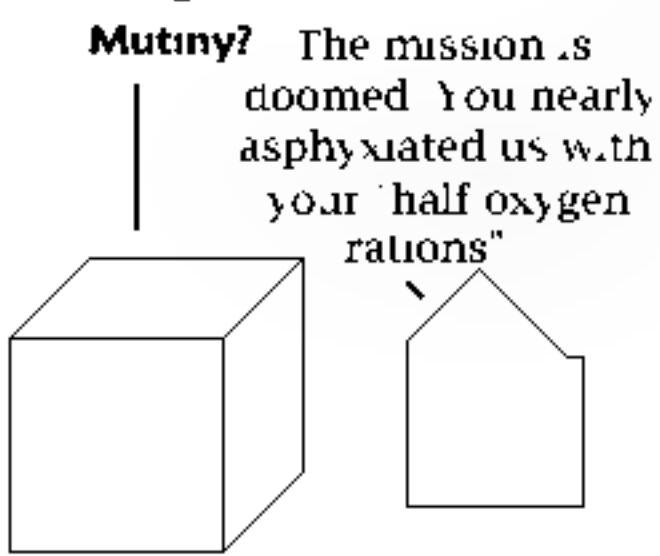


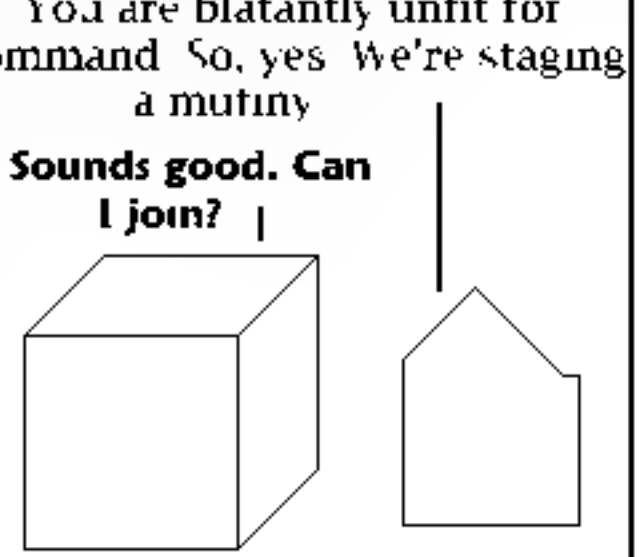
What conflict could possibly develop naturally from a well-equipped submarine with a full crew being slightly off course at peacetime?

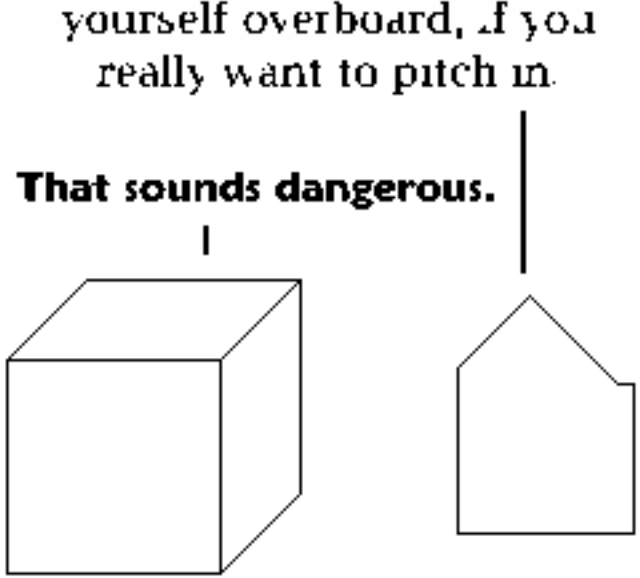
We'd better think of one before he does.



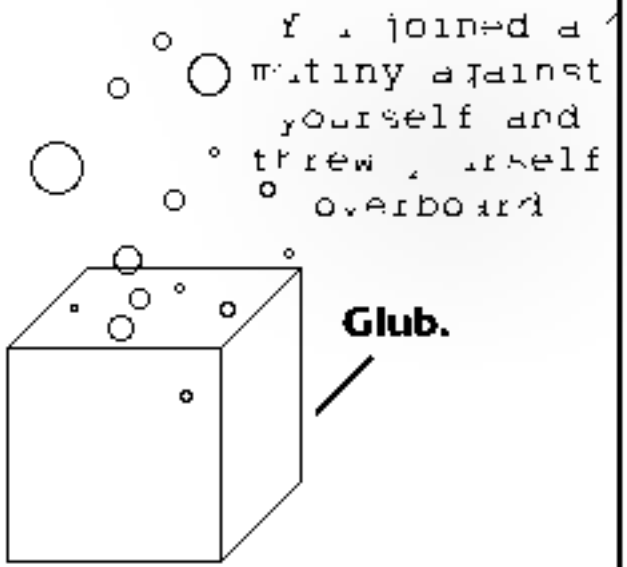
Triangle and Robert

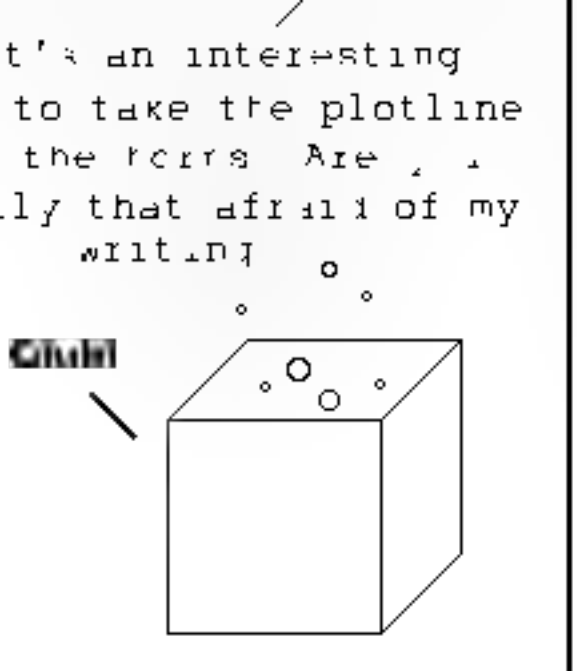


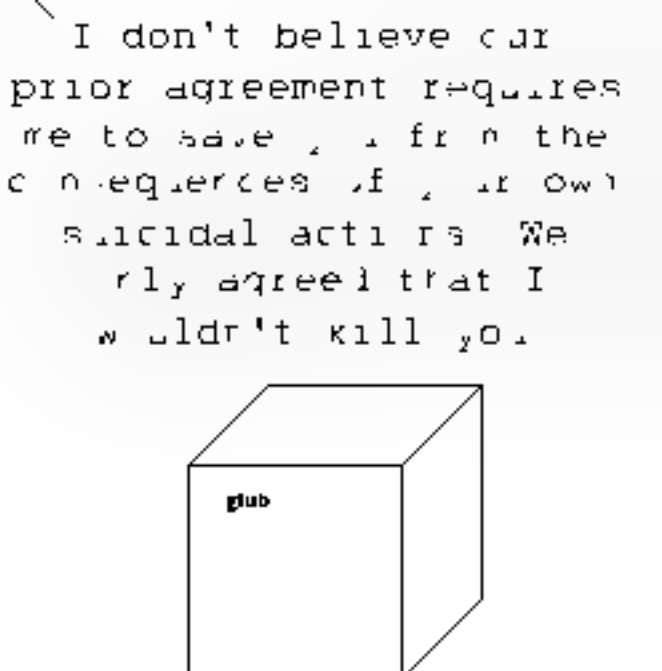




Triangle and Robert

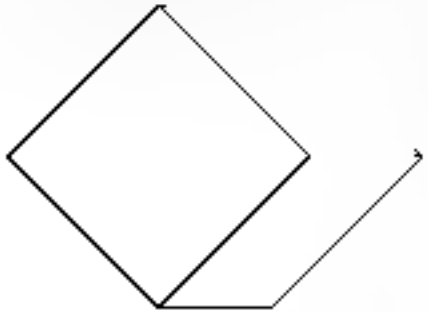




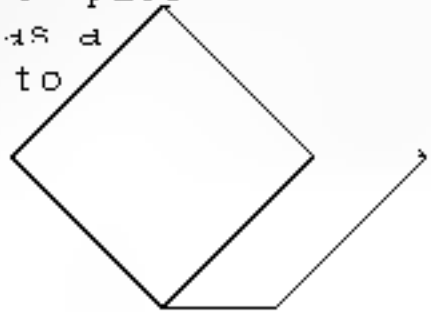


Triangle and Robert

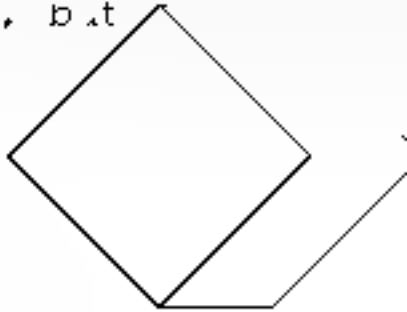
On the other hand, there are ways it could be argued that I AM killing you



Triangle was once worried that a suicide by Orpheidex would count as a killing by Triangle for magical purposes, and your jumping overboard was a reaction to me in much the same way Orpheidex's space launch was a reaction to Triangle

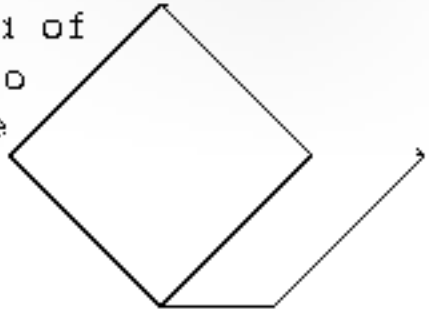


It could also be argued that any event I write is ultimately my doing and not that of the characters. This brings up philosophical issues I don't want to address in this comic, but it is an argument

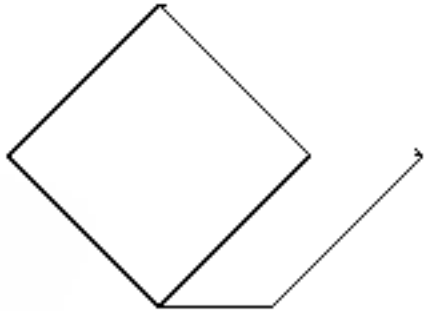


Triangle and Robert

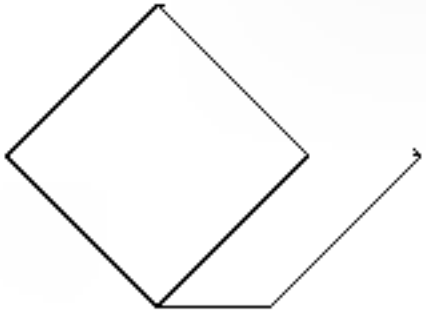
Inaction might count to
If I am aware that you are
drowning and have the
power to save you,
delivering a monologue
instead of
doing so
could be
"killing"



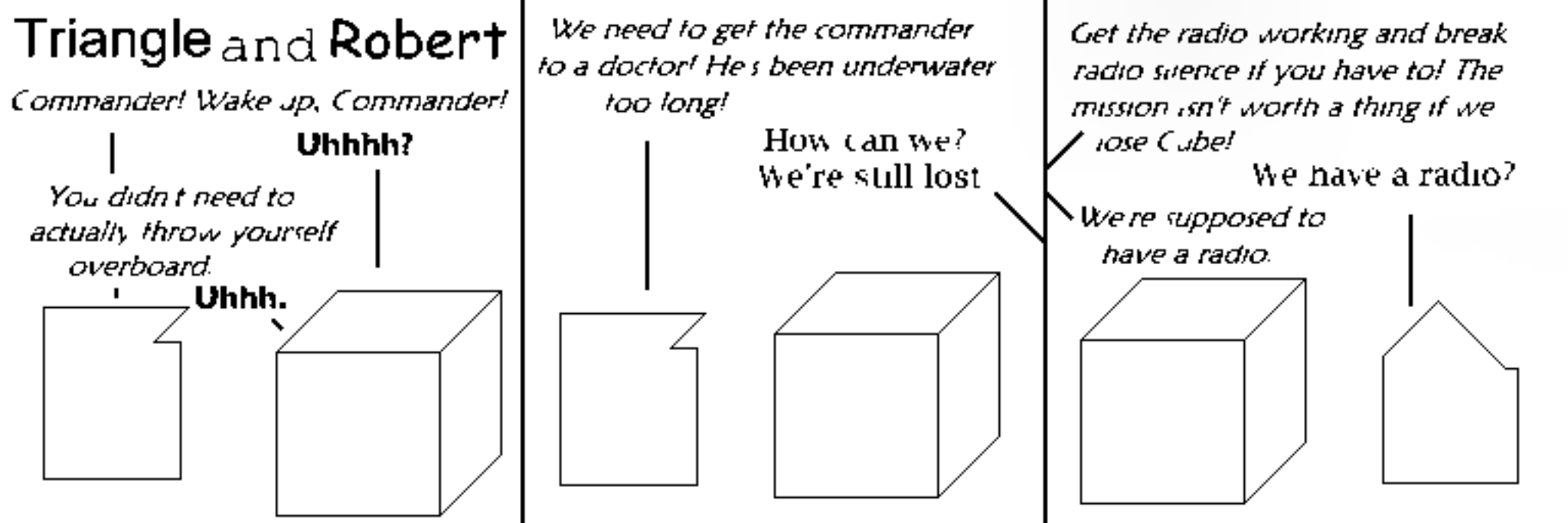
I guess you survive
I have no idea how yet



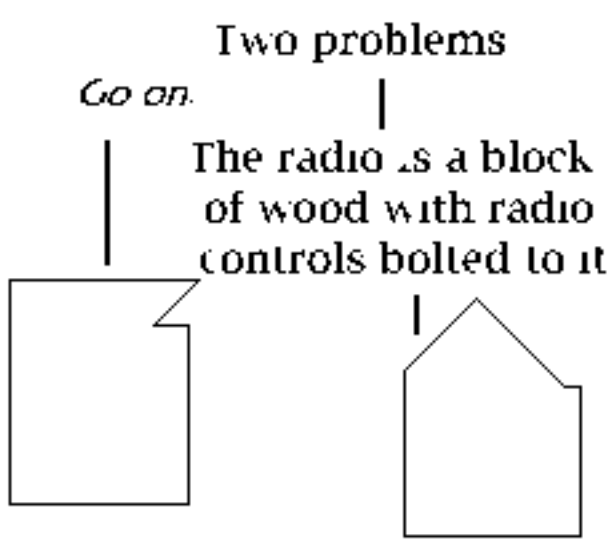
It's not like there's a
submarine or something
around to [illegible] um
right. That'll work then

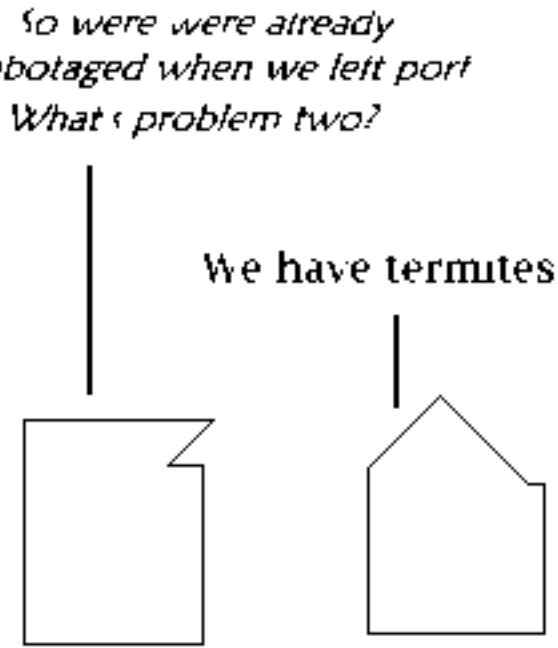


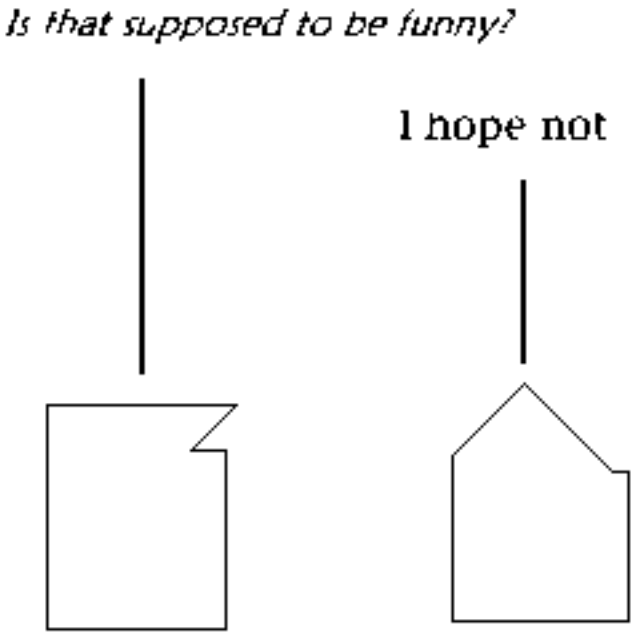
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I don't think termites are going to be a significant threat. Navigation is the problem.

What if there was more sabotage than we know?

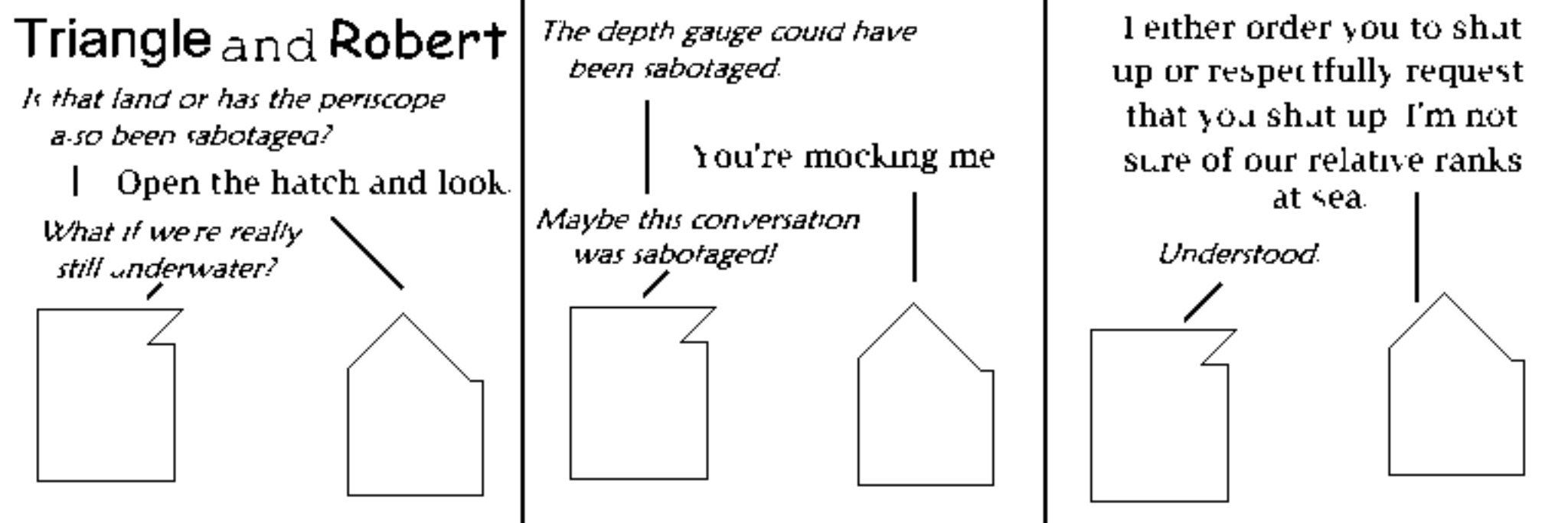
What can we do about it? We have to get Cube medical help as soon as possible.

I know that, but how? We can't navigate. We can't communicate. If we wait for the stars it could be too late.

Set random course! Full speed somewhere! We have plenty of fuel, right?

The instruments say we do, but don't trust them.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Excuse me, could I give a little exposition about ourselves. It looks like you might become important characters

The Cartoonist!

Don't kill us!

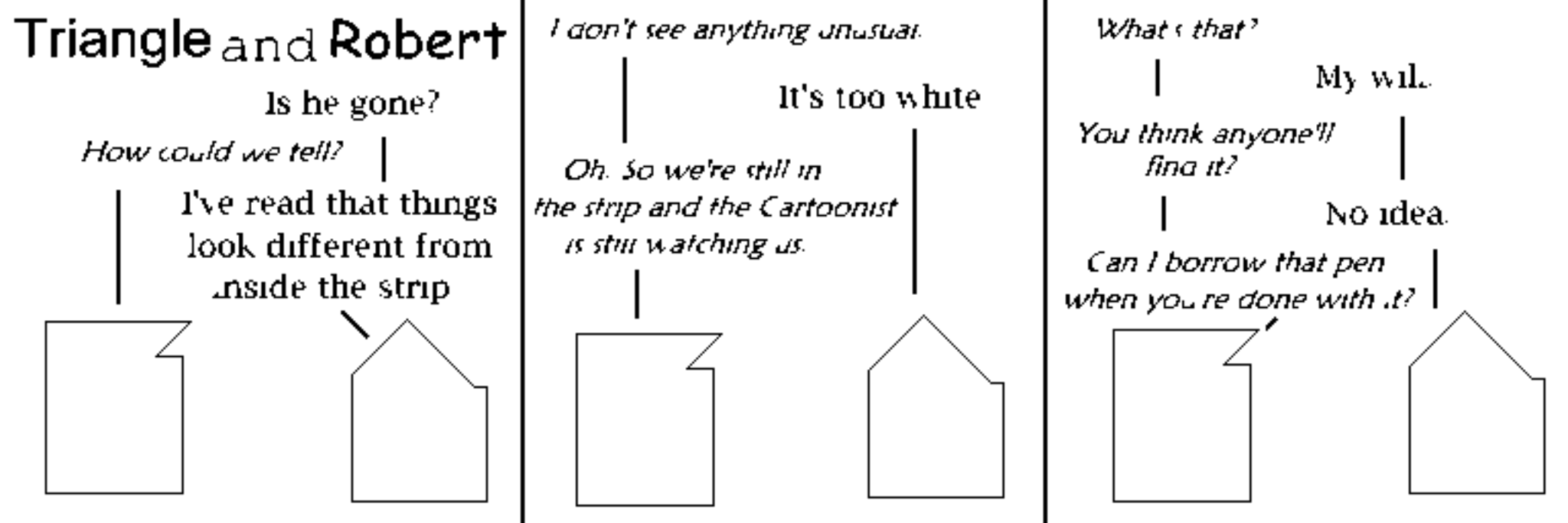
Statistically, on panel is the safest place to be. Most of the mass deaths happen between strips

What do you want with us?

This is more open terrain that I'm used to. Maybe I should come back later

I might have time to update my will.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Did you hand me the pen?

Yes, I handed you the pen.

I don't see it

You didn't see it while I was holding it either

Then how did I know you had it?

Those who the gods would kill, they first make mad.

Is that what's happening?

The safest thing to do might be to kill ourselves now to avoid becoming pawns

I don't know about that

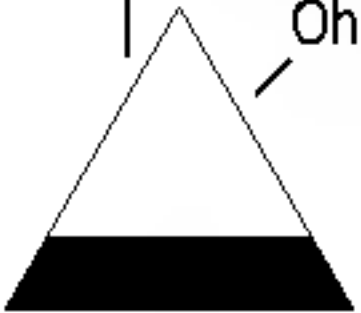
It might be premature.

Triangle and Robert

Where'd my palm tree go?

I would prefer not to draw it

Oh It's you

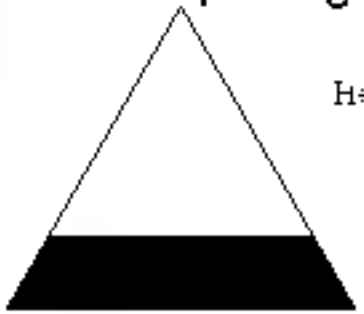


Can I ask you a question?

You can always ask.

What's that submarine doing?

Hesitating



Is it here to rescue me?

Not on purpose. If they decide to land they probably will

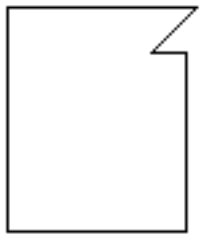
I can swim out to meet it.

Triangle and Robert

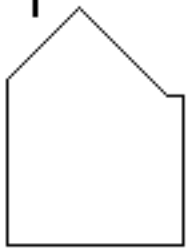
There's a thing approaching us

Fire torpedoes! Fire torpedoes!

Dive!



They're jammed!



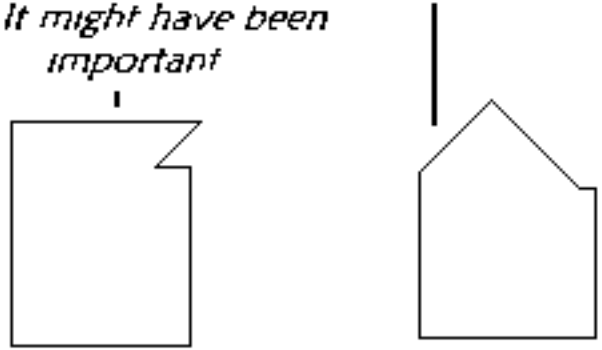
Yeah. They're not here to rescue you.

Triangle and Robert

What was that thing?

Something impossibly dangerous, I'm sure

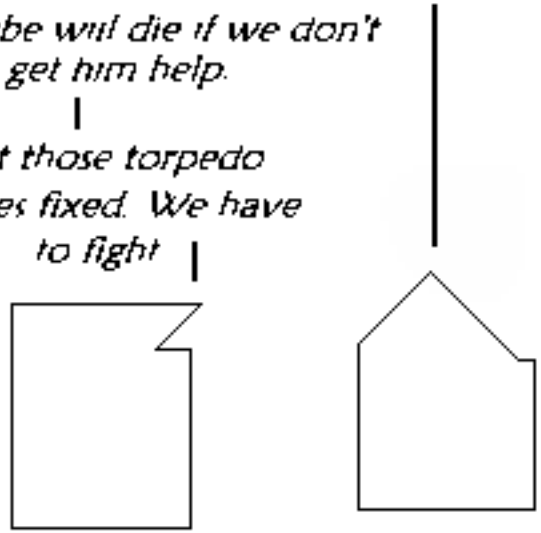
It might have been important



Not dying is important

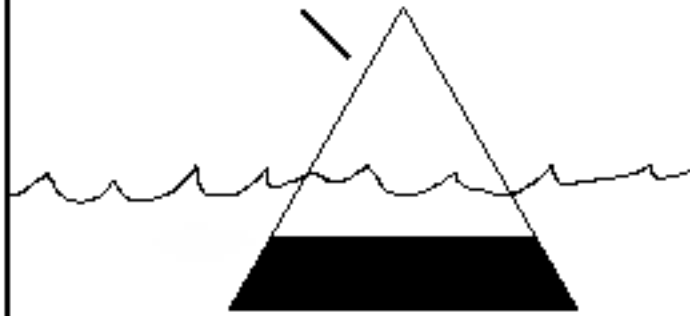
Cube will die if we don't get him help.

Get those torpedo tubes fixed. We have to fight



Do you happen to be able to survive a direct hit from a 21 inch torpedo

Not a question I wanted to hear.



Triangle and Robert

Faster!

Can you tell me what's going on?

Some very confused and frightened RCLBA agents in a submarine are lost and assuming anything that moves is hostile

Cowardly RDCLBA? Atypical.

The submarine was somehow damaged before they embarked, Cube nearly drowned, the pilot has never had hazardous duty, and finding out all this was in the comic put them over the edge. I don't think it's cowardice

Triangle and Robert

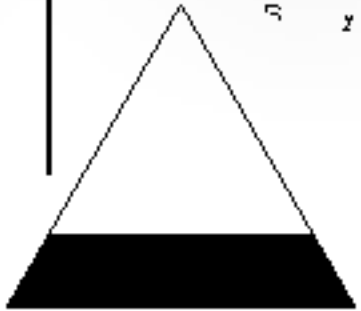
Triangle and **Robert**

Are you planning for me to return to civilization soon?

What I plan and what happen are largely uncorrelated

That lack of an answer sounds deliberate.

I'd like t tie up the F ile quests a s on as practical, s yes



Am I done my quest?

As far as I know

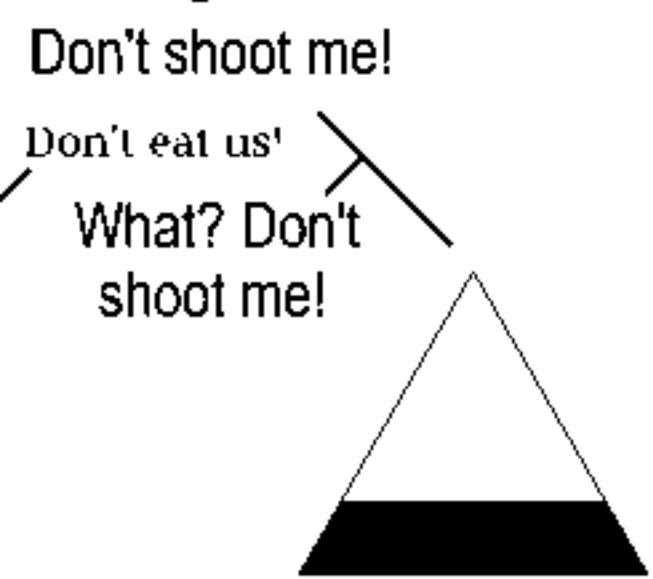
Lousy ending then.

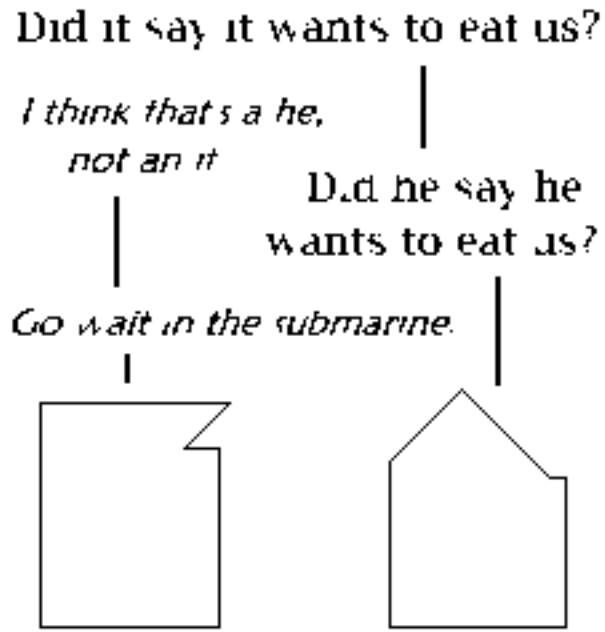
I're ambulatory.

I have nowhere to ambulate.

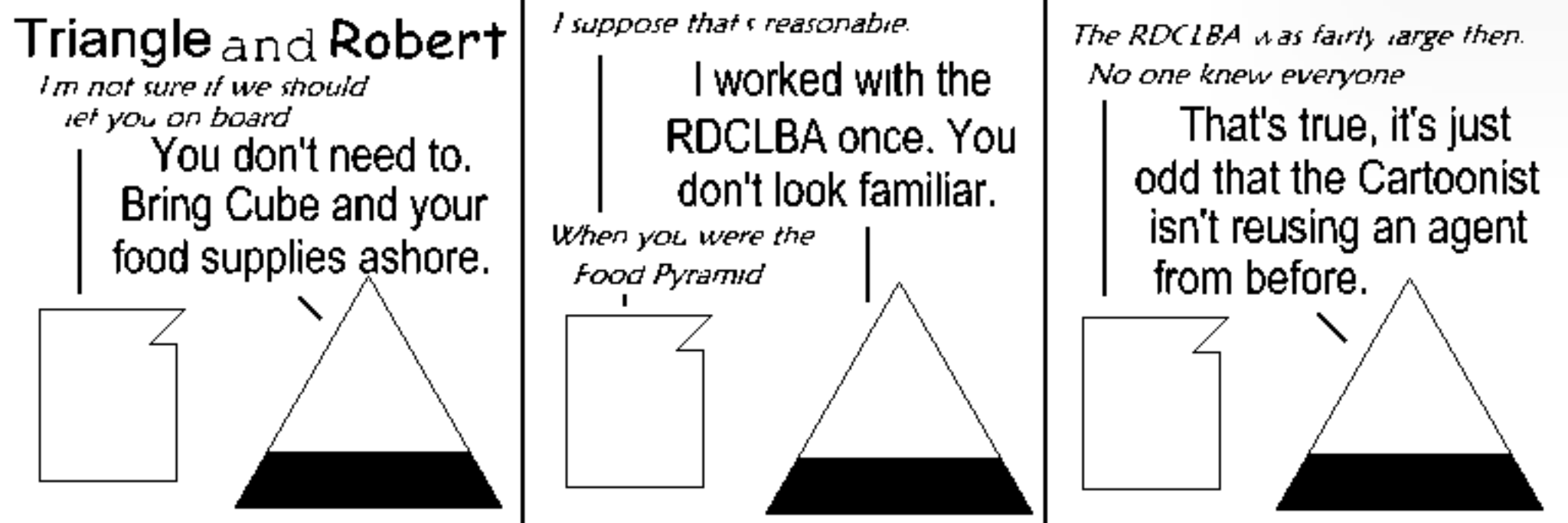
Triangle and Robert
We'll be seen if we surface again.
We can't stay down forever anyway
Don't shoot! I'm harmless!
Gloss over it.

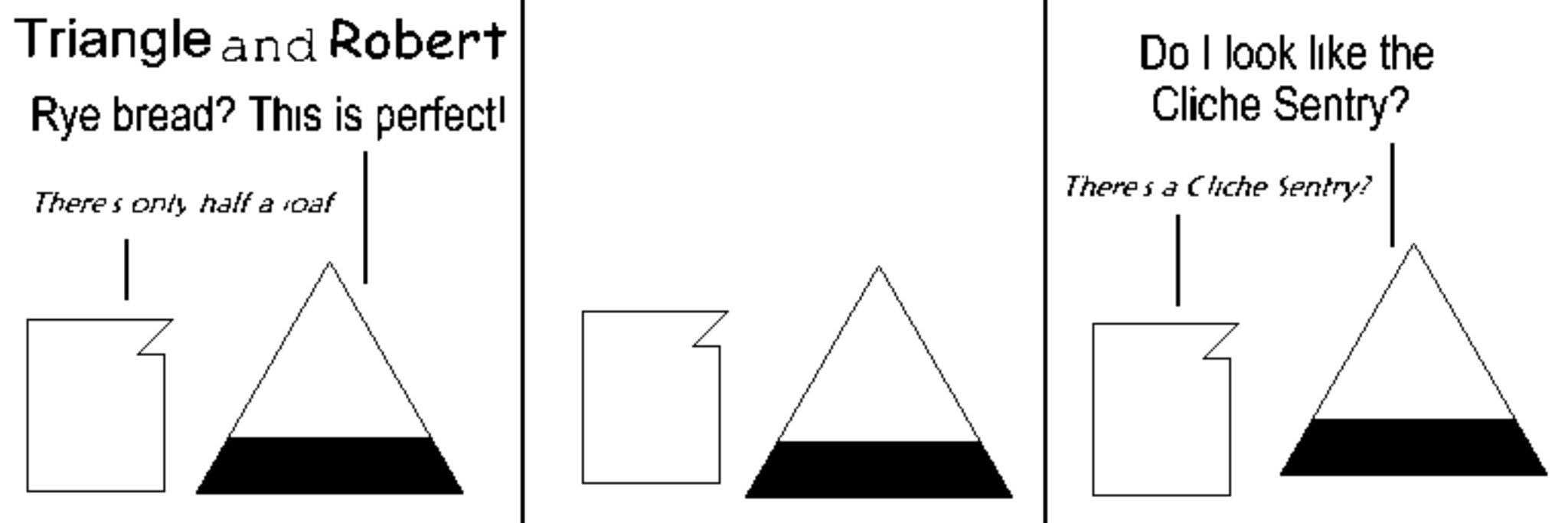
Triangle and Robert

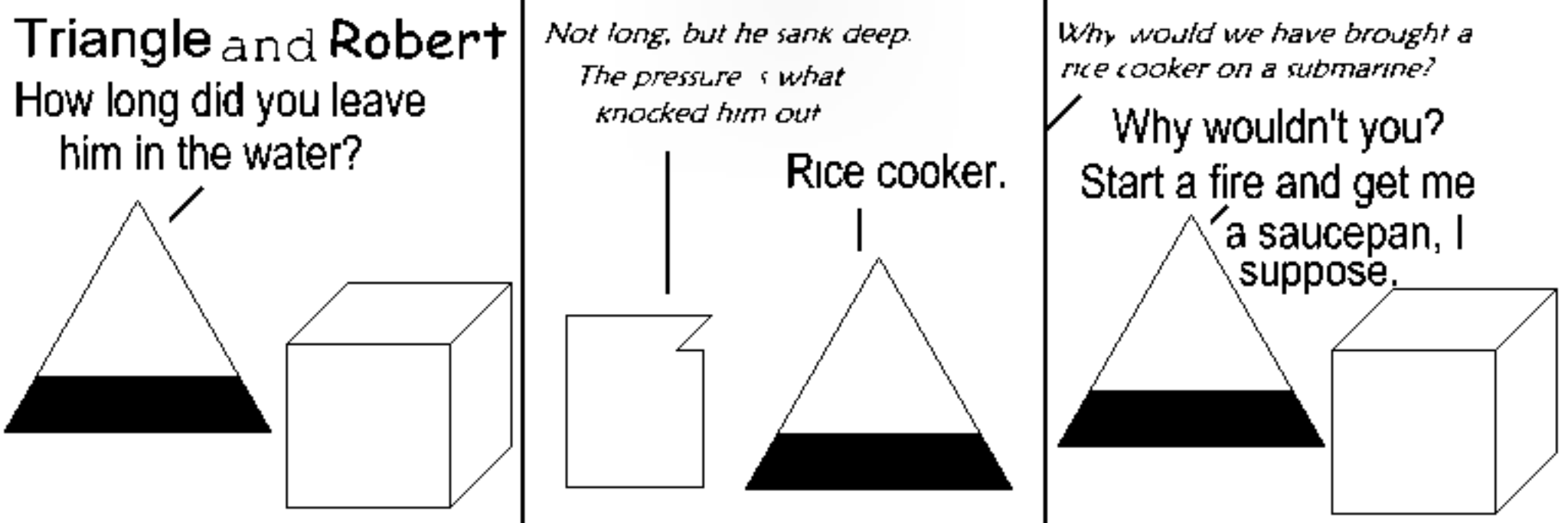


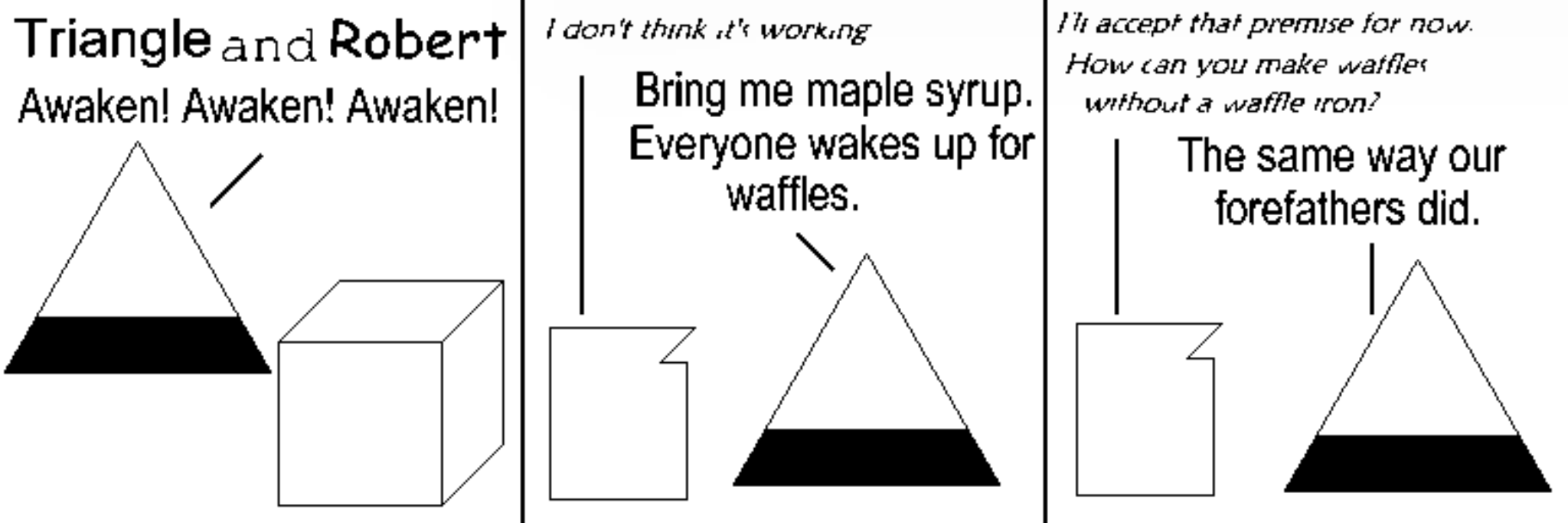


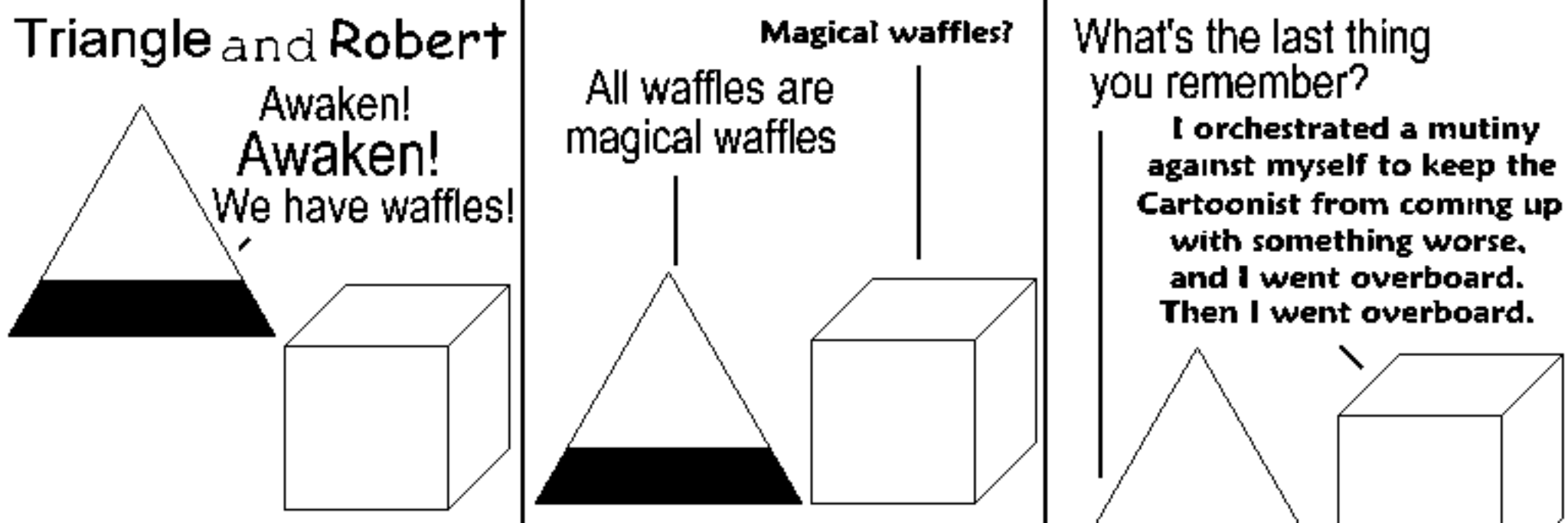
Triangle and Robert




Triangle and Robert
Rye bread? This is perfect!
There's only half a loaf
Do I look like the Cliche Sentry?
There's a Cliche Sentry?


Triangle and Robert
How long did you leave him in the water?
Not long, but he sank deep. The pressure is what knocked him out
Rice cooker.
Why would we have brought a rice cooker on a submarine?
Why wouldn't you? Start a fire and get me a saucepan, I suppose.

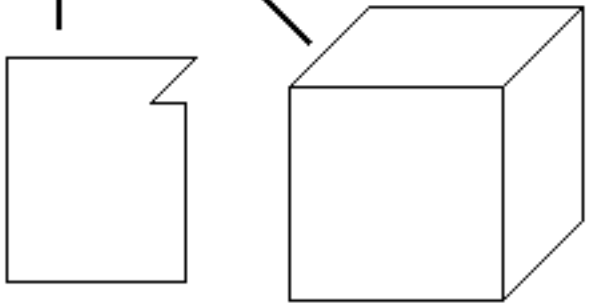

Triangle and Robert
Awaken! Awaken! Awaken!
I don't think it's working
Bring me maple syrup. Everyone wakes up for waffles.
I'll accept that premise for now. How can you make waffles without a waffle iron?
The same way our forefathers did.


Triangle and Robert
Awaken!
Awaken!
We have waffles!
Magical waffles?
All waffles are magical waffles
What's the last thing you remember?
I orchestrated a mutiny against myself to keep the Cartoonist from coming up with something worse, and I went overboard. Then I went overboard.

Triangle and Robert

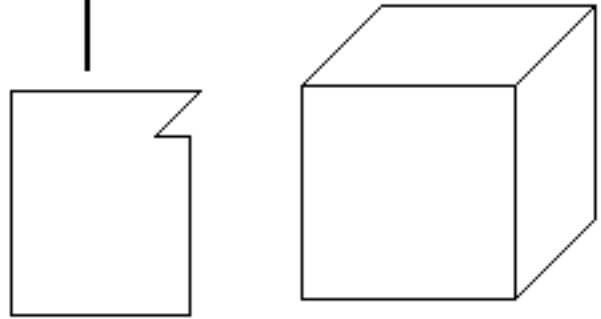
Rest now

How can I rest when I don't know where we are or what's wrong?



We'll take care of it just worry about regaining your strength.

Tell me what's going on.



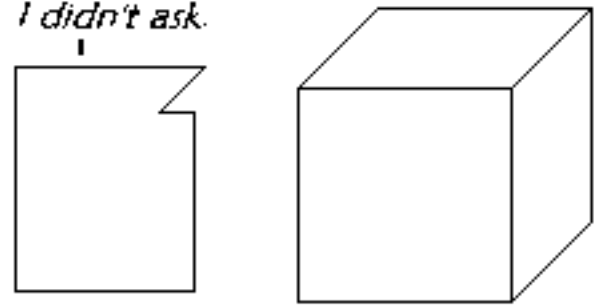
We really don't know yet

And where are we?

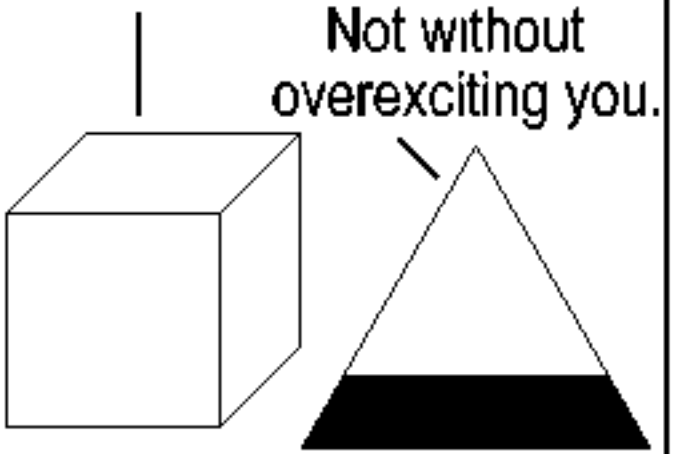
Haven't pinned that down.

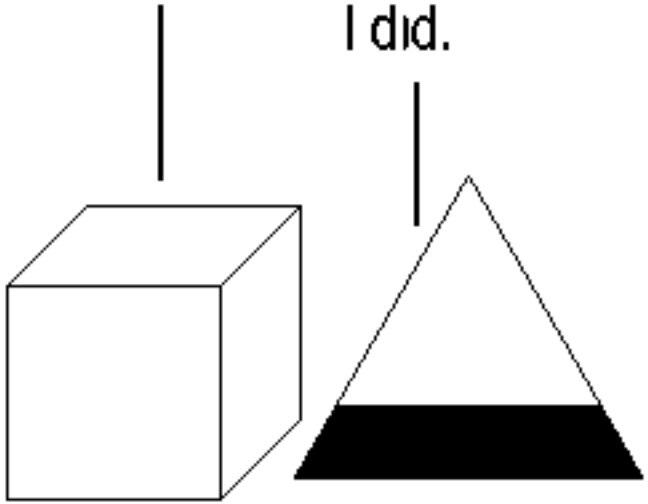
What's the Grain Sentry doing here?

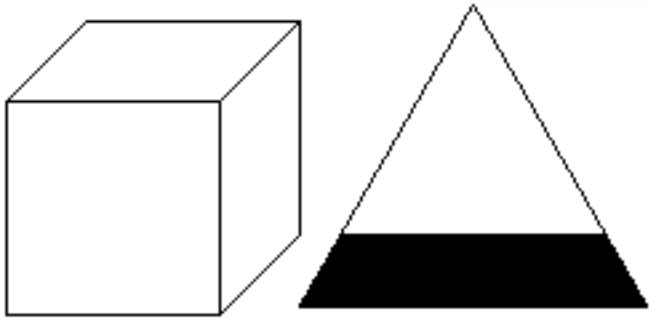
I didn't ask.

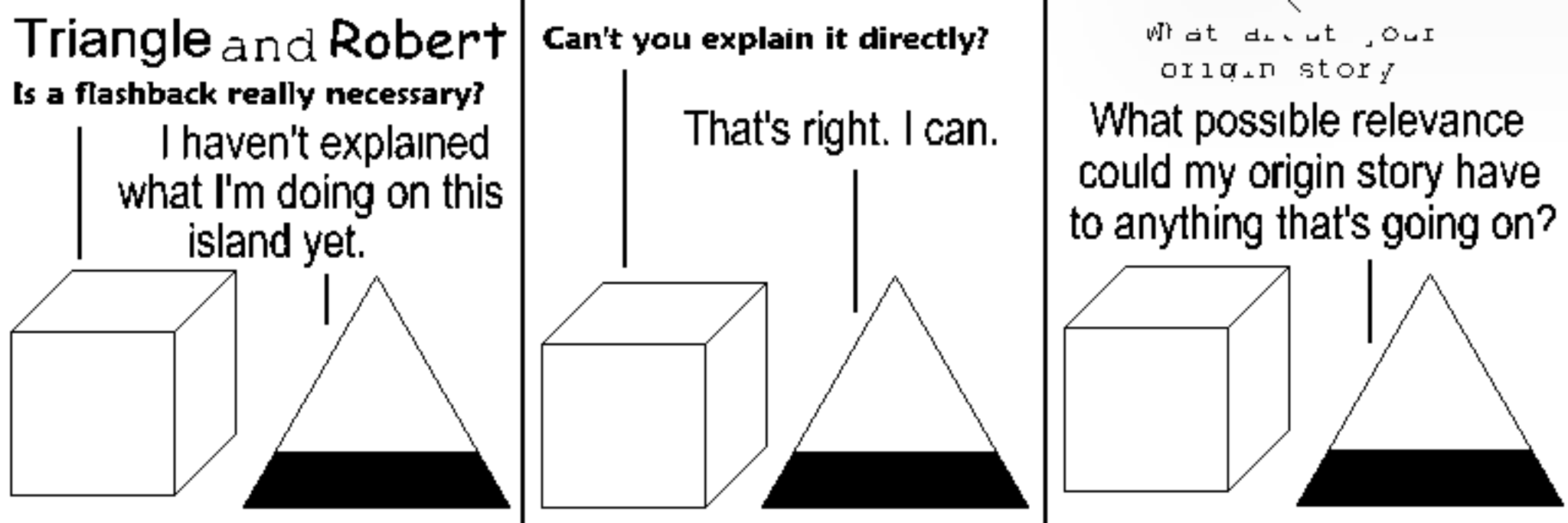


Triangle and Robert

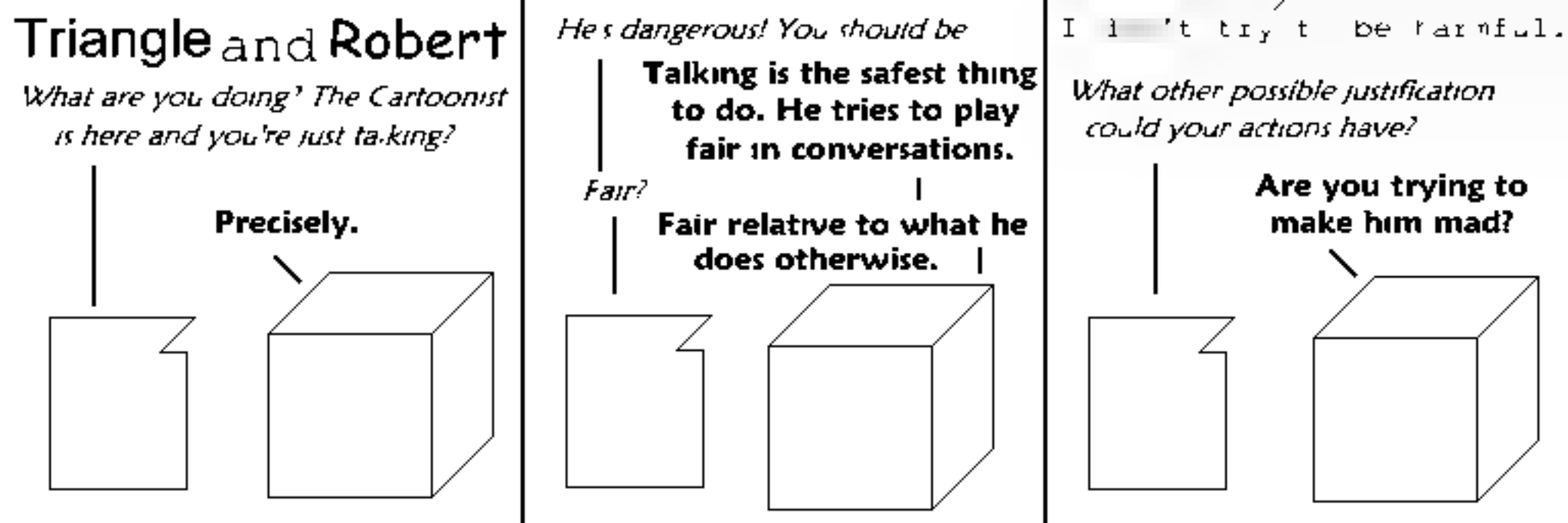




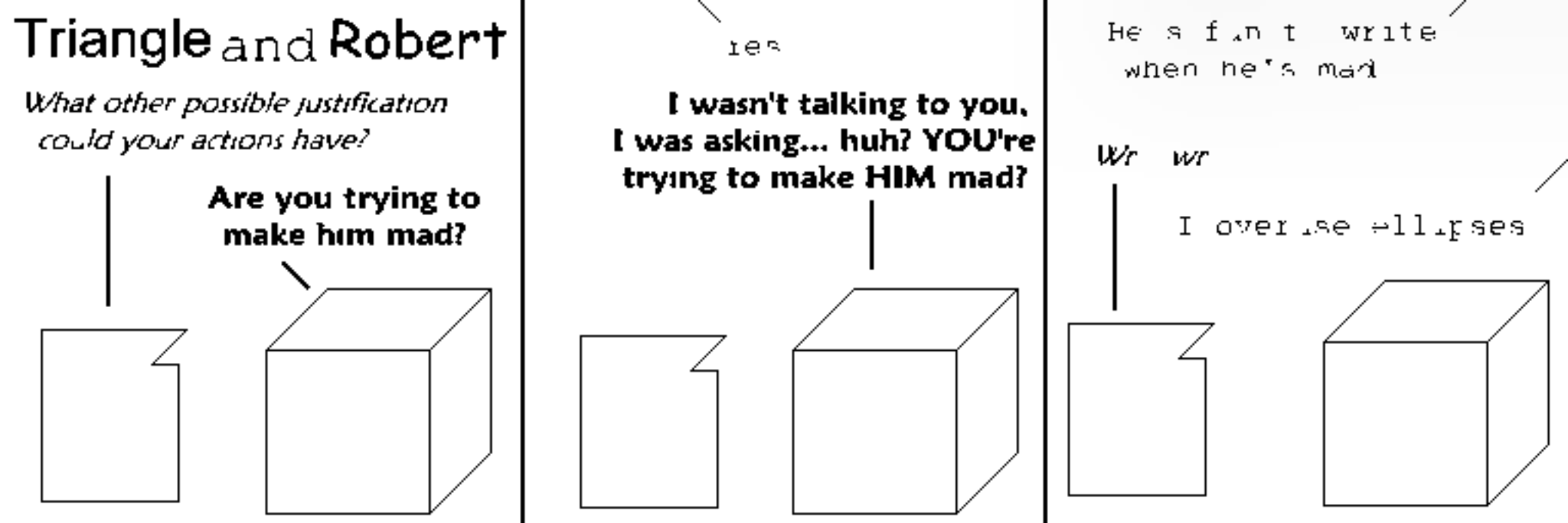



Triangle and Robert
Is a flashback really necessary?
I haven't explained what I'm doing on this island yet.
Can't you explain it directly?
That's right. I can.
What about your origin story
What possible relevance could my origin story have to anything that's going on?

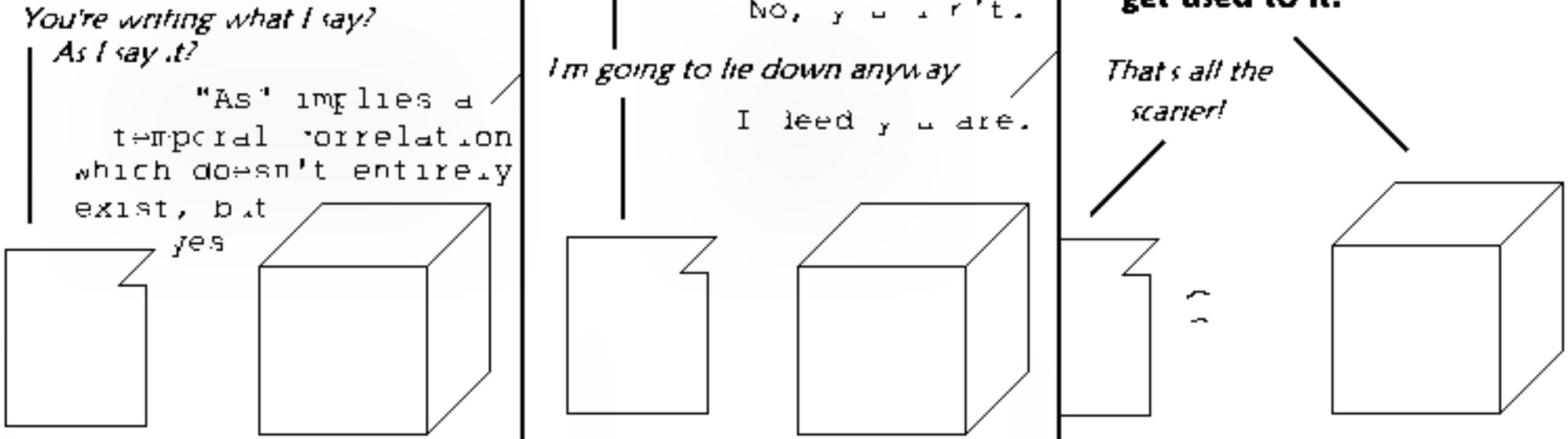
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



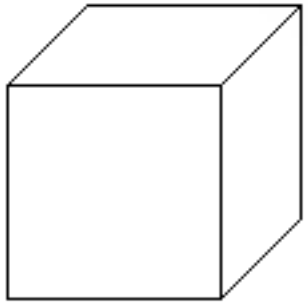
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

I'm sure you're not just here to torment a poor submariner.

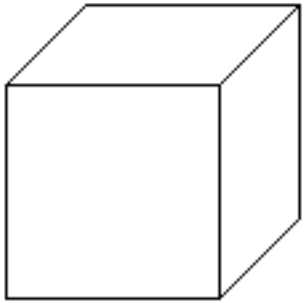
True



So what are you here for?

You're asking me what I'm doing

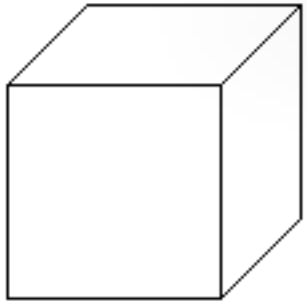
Those weren't my exact words, but I suppose I am.



What makes you think I know what I'm doing

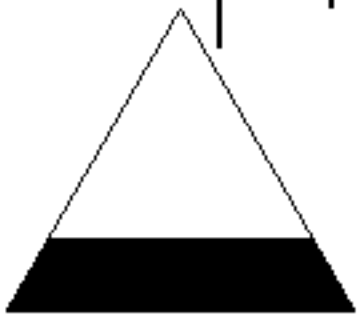
I see. It's one of those stories.

Yes. Everyone get out of the plot and help me pack.



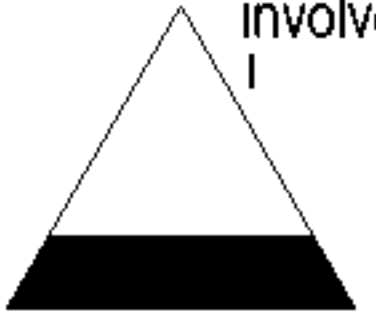
Origin of the Grain Sentry

What? Why? Who said? I can't put my past in the strip.



You can leave out identifying information

I still don't know if that'd be safe for everyone involved.



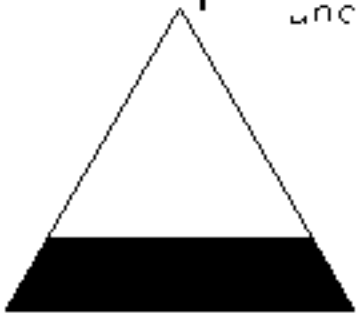
Leave out everything between the first Sentry encounter and the hardtack. The main story should still work.

You're worryingly eager to have me tell this.

Origin of the Grain Sentry

I'll start narrating. I may not go through with it.

Stop if you're uncomfortable



Where should I begin? The most obvious place would...

Reveal too much about your loved ones, I know.

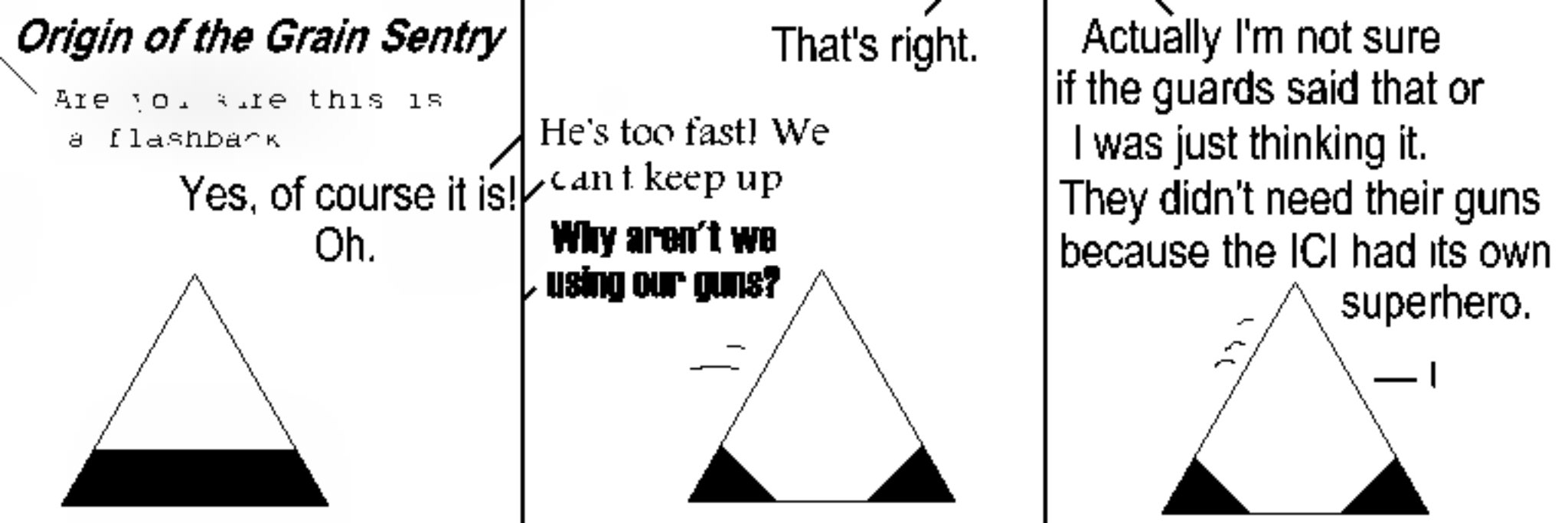
Start fleeing down a hallway near the ICI central archive, pursued by armed guards.

That's not narrowing things down much.

The FIRST time

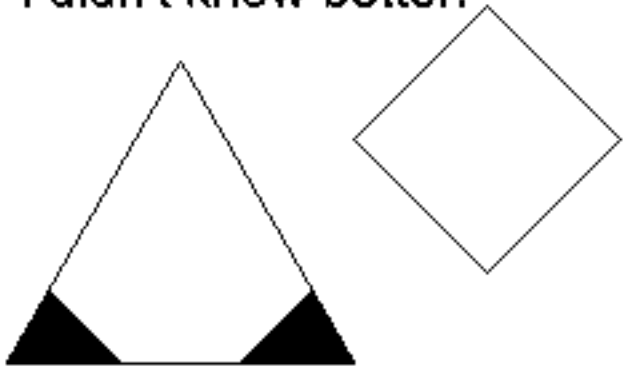
– That could work.

Origin of the Grain Sentry
Stop and we'll shoot!
OR!
Or we'll shoot!
This is a flashback
r w, right
Yes, this is a flashback.
Disjunction!
What did I do?
There's some sort of misunderstanding! I was just asking a simple question about two of your employees!
Maybe it's exclusive-or!


Origin of the Grain Sentry
Are you sure this is a flashback
Yes, of course it is! Oh.
He's too fast! We can't keep up
Why aren't we using our guns?
That's right.
Actually I'm not sure if the guards said that or I was just thinking it. They didn't need their guns because the ICI had its own superhero.

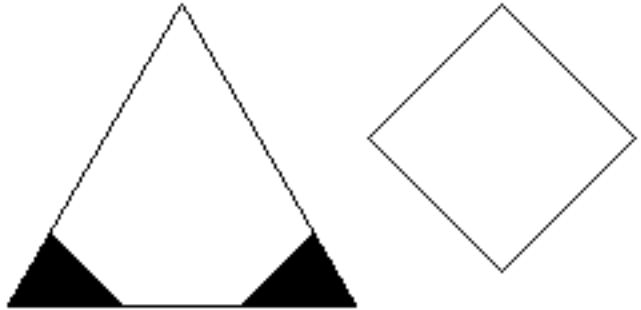
Origin of the Grain Sentry

He seemed a little small for a Sentry, but only because I didn't know better.



Halt, evildoer!

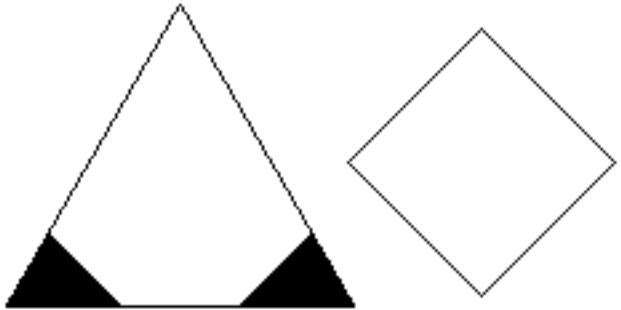
That was seriously the first thing he said to me.

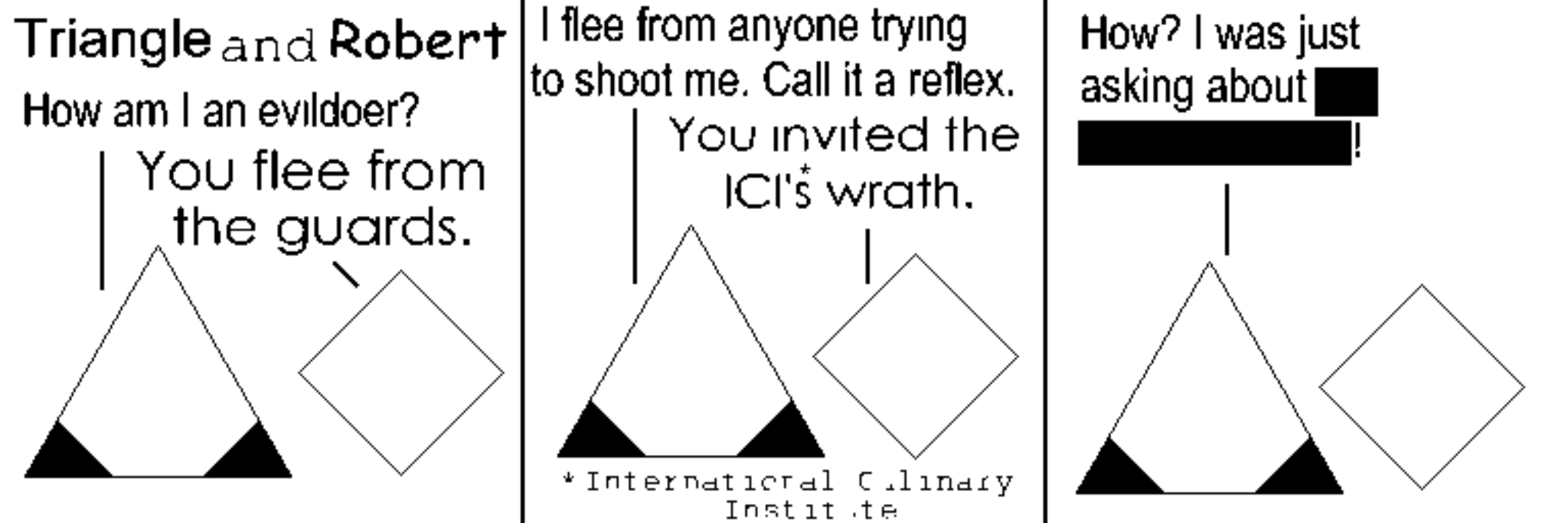


It wasn't in 20-point Century Gothic though

It was pretty close.

It'll do.

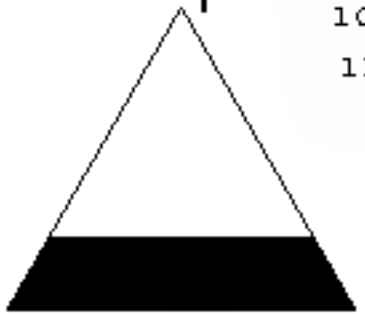



Triangle and Robert
How am I an evildoer?
You flee from the guards.
I flee from anyone trying to shoot me. Call it a reflex.
You invited the ICI's* wrath.
*International Culinary Institute
How? I was just asking about [redacted]!

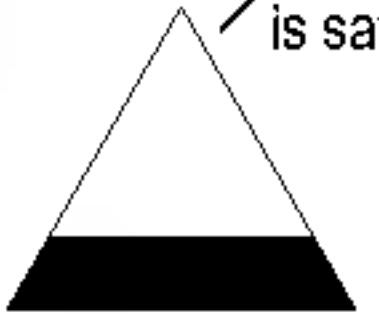
Triangle and Robert

Did you just censor my flashback?

I didn't want personally identifying information in it

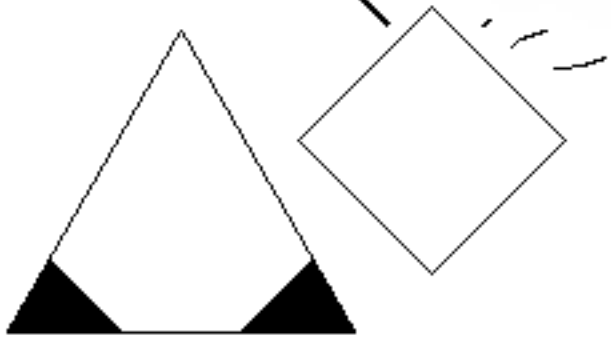


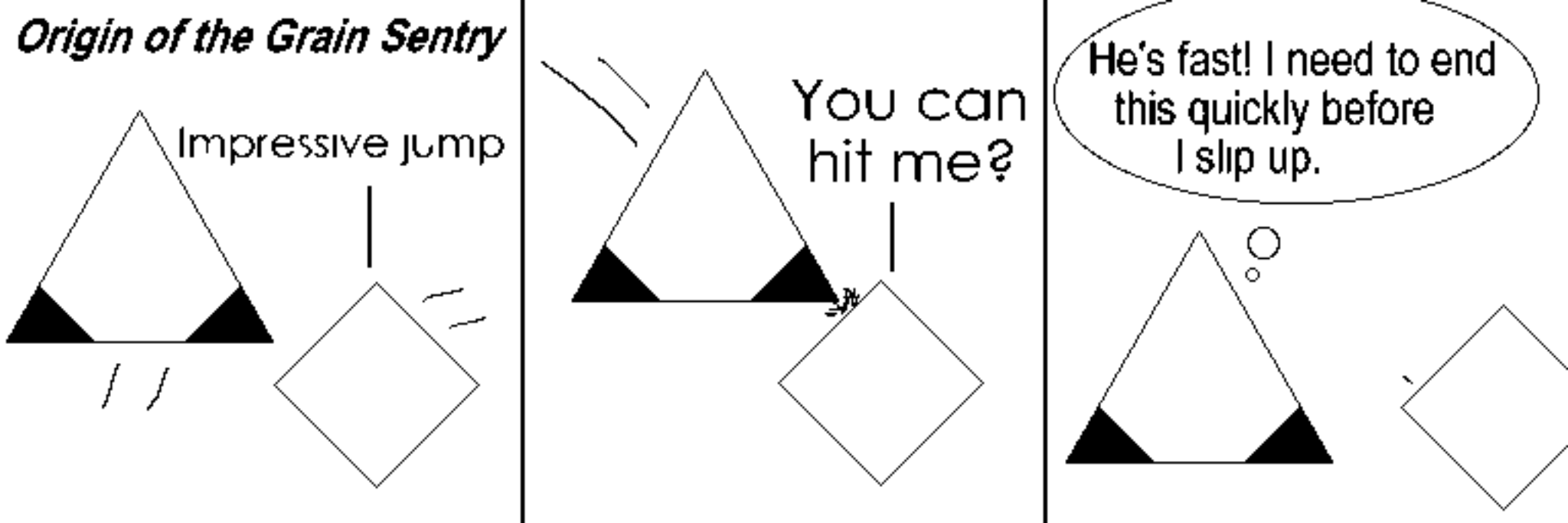
True. Take out their names and locations if they appear, but don't black out the phrase "my aunt and uncle". I think that much is safe.



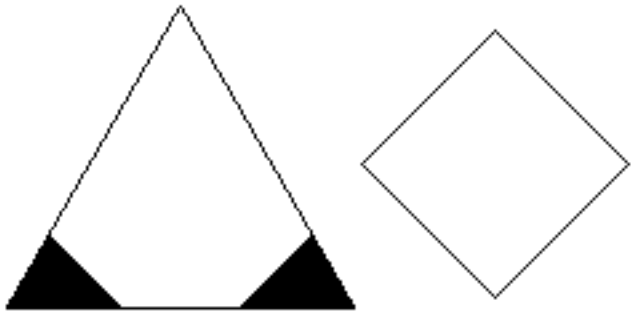
Right. Sorry if I offended

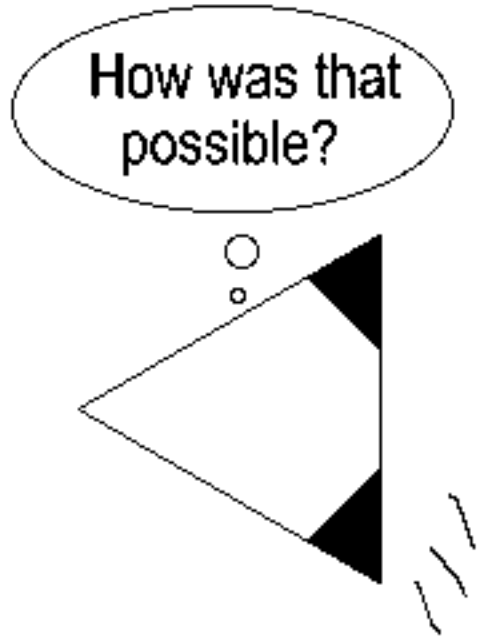
I've no reason to listen to you!




Origin of the Grain Sentry
Impressive jump
You can hit me?
He's fast! I need to end this quickly before I slip up.

Triangle and Robert

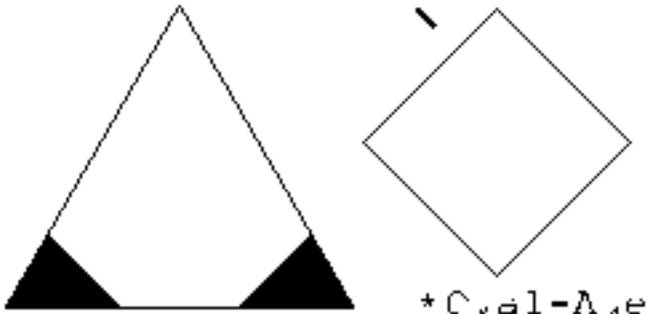




Origin of the*Grain Sentry

Was that magic? You're one of those...

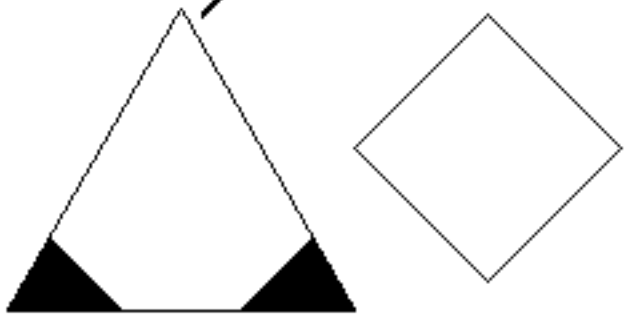
Sentries.



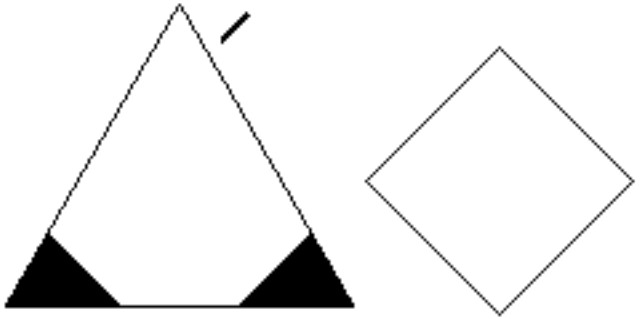
*Cual-Ae

The Grain Sentry. Will you surrender now?

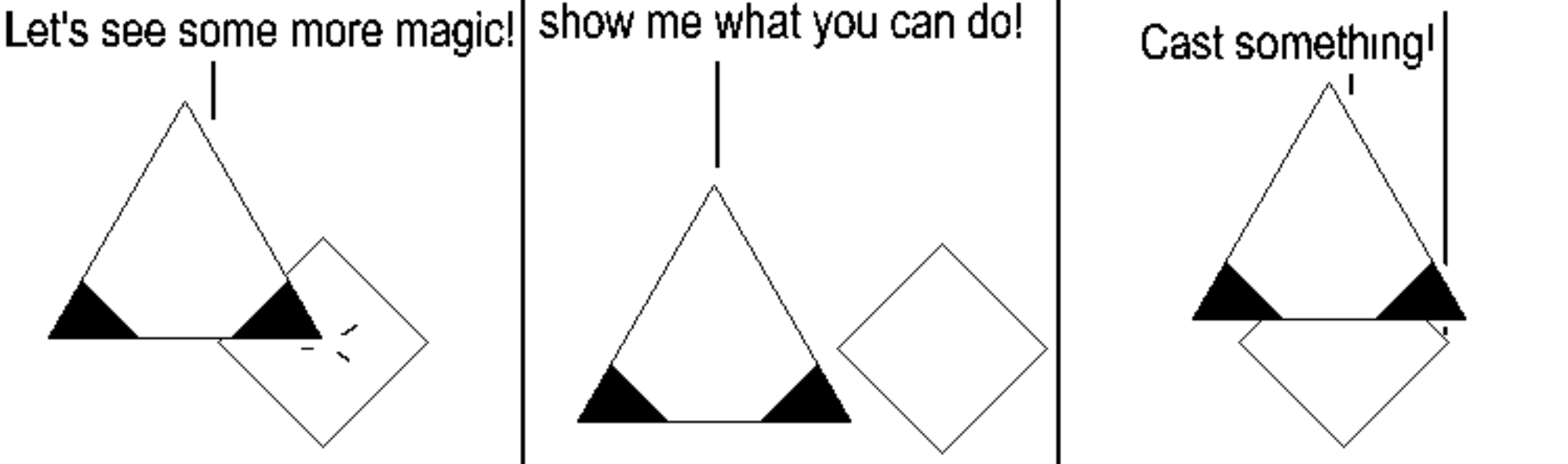
Surrender?



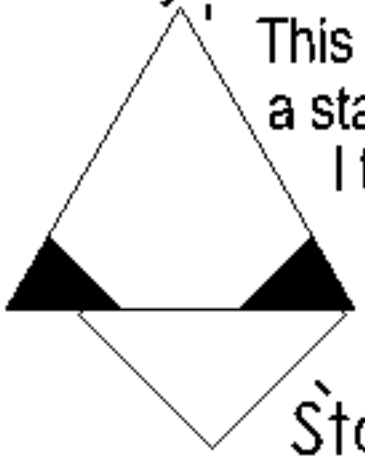
I've never seen cuisine-magic up close before. Even if I had intended to surrender, I'm too interested now.

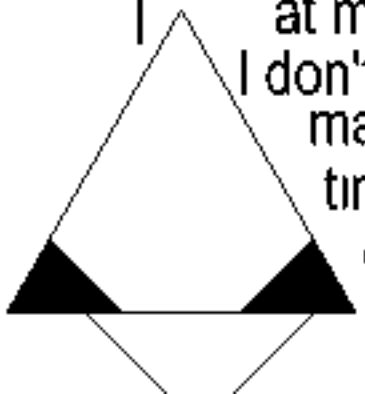


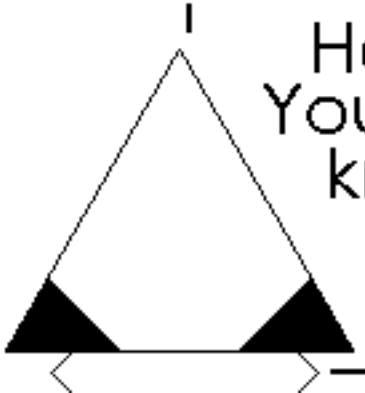
Origin of the Grain Sentry



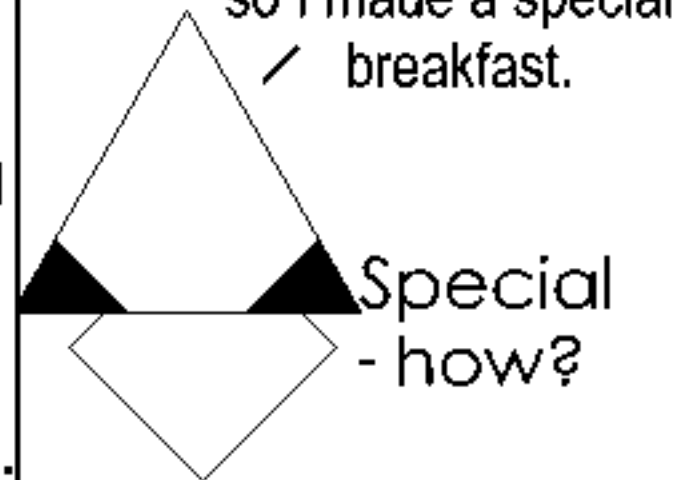
Origin of the Grain Sentry

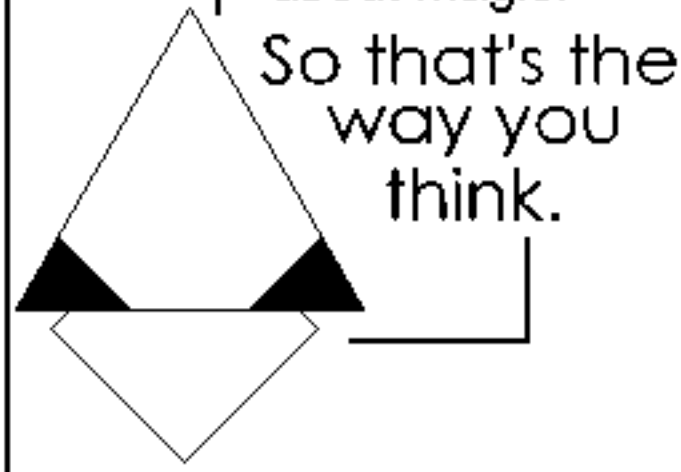






Origin of the Grain Sentry





Origin of the Grain Sentry

Your abilities go we beyond those granted by simple good nutrition. What you call your 'diet plan' is a powerful application of ritual magic

You changed the font

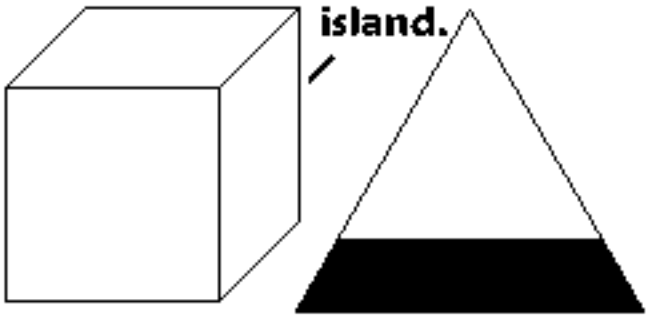
I don't have the font he was really speaking in in the first place. This one lets me fit more dialogue, an advantage wasted by using this panel to talk about it

There's a lot you don't know. I can help you find your answers

No, I want to find my relatives.

Origin of the Grain Sentry

Your origin story is mildly interesting, but it's not getting us... no, it's not even mildly interesting AND it's not getting us away from this island.

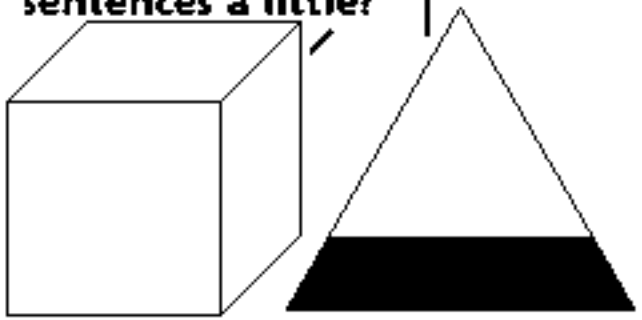


It wasn't my idea!

Do you have cornstarch?

Let's get in the submarine.

Would you mind connecting those sentences a little?



Later, aboard the submarine

There. Magical sextant.

How do we use it?

Do you know how to use a normal one?

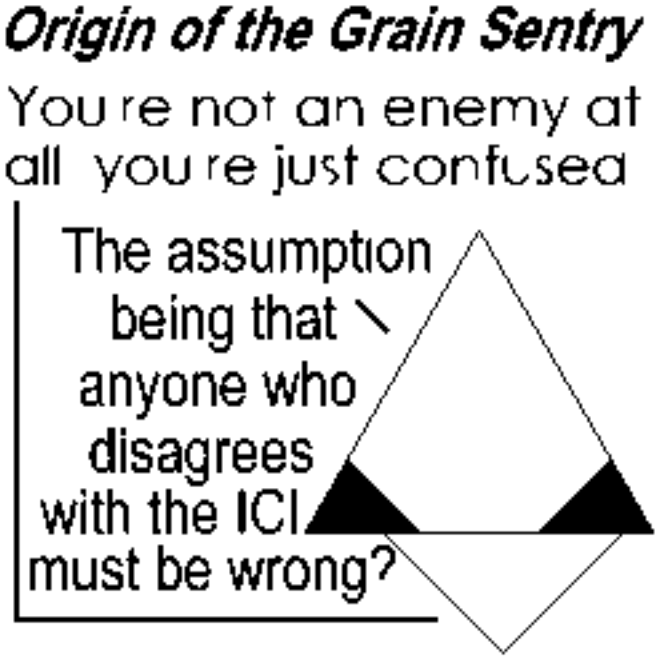
Of course.

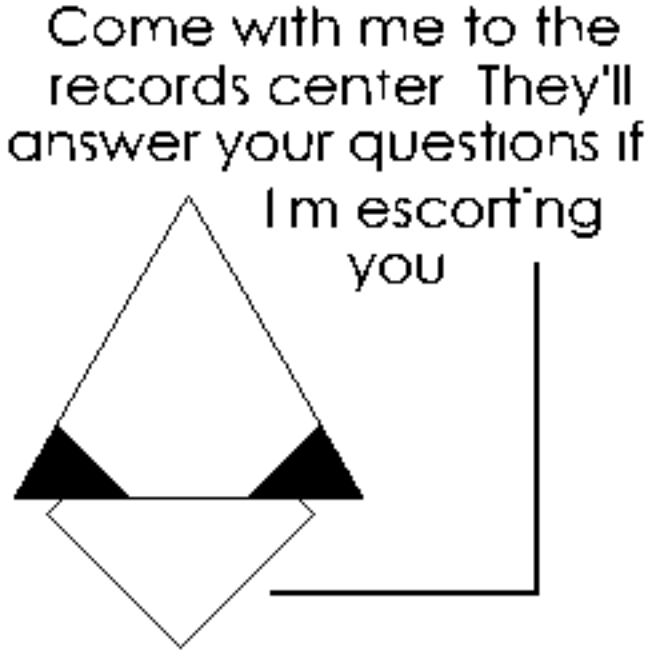
Good. I don't.

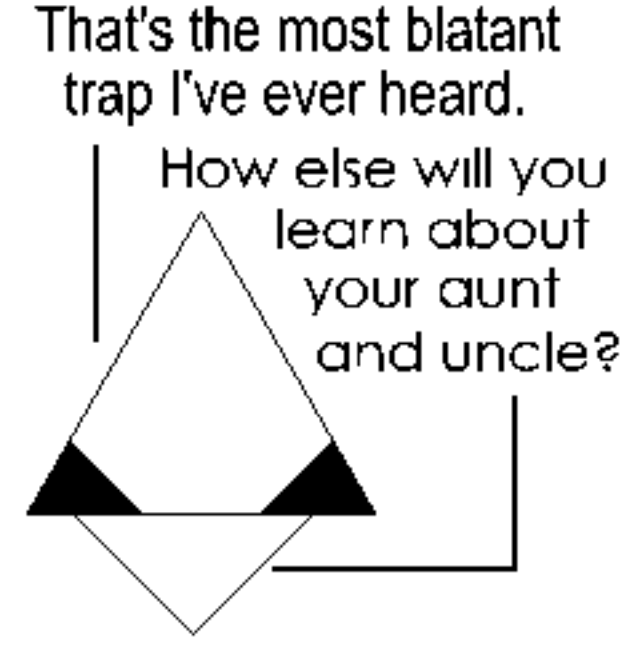
I think it's working.

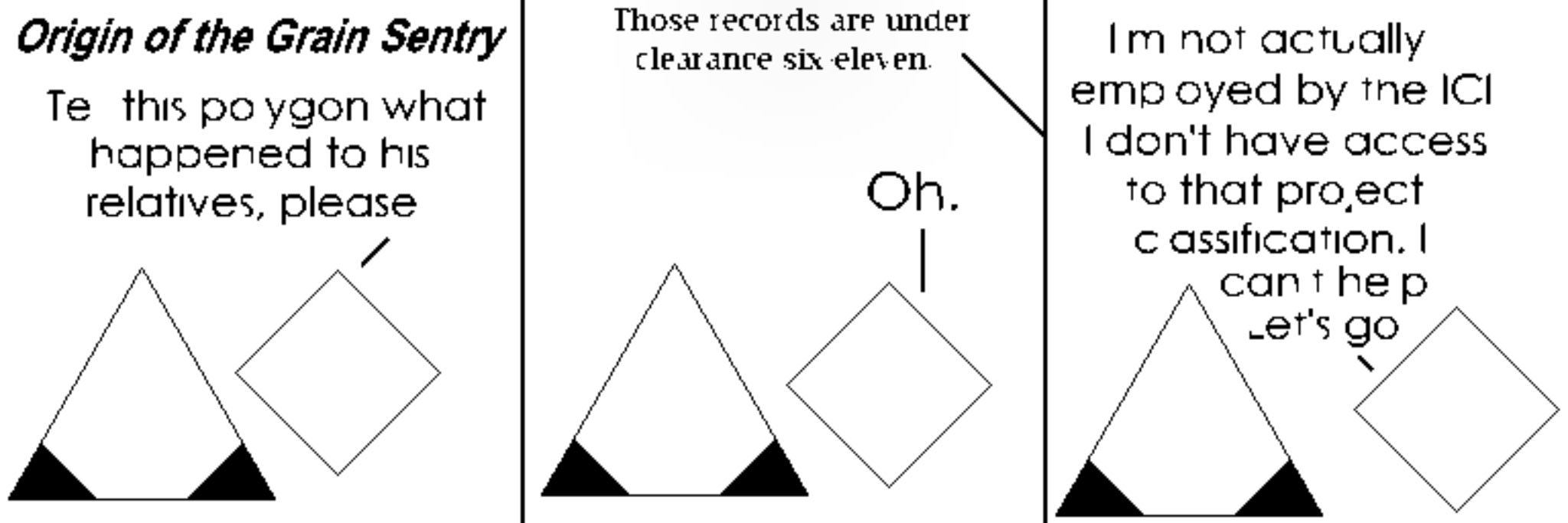
It's working. We have coordinates!

Origin of the Grain Sentry

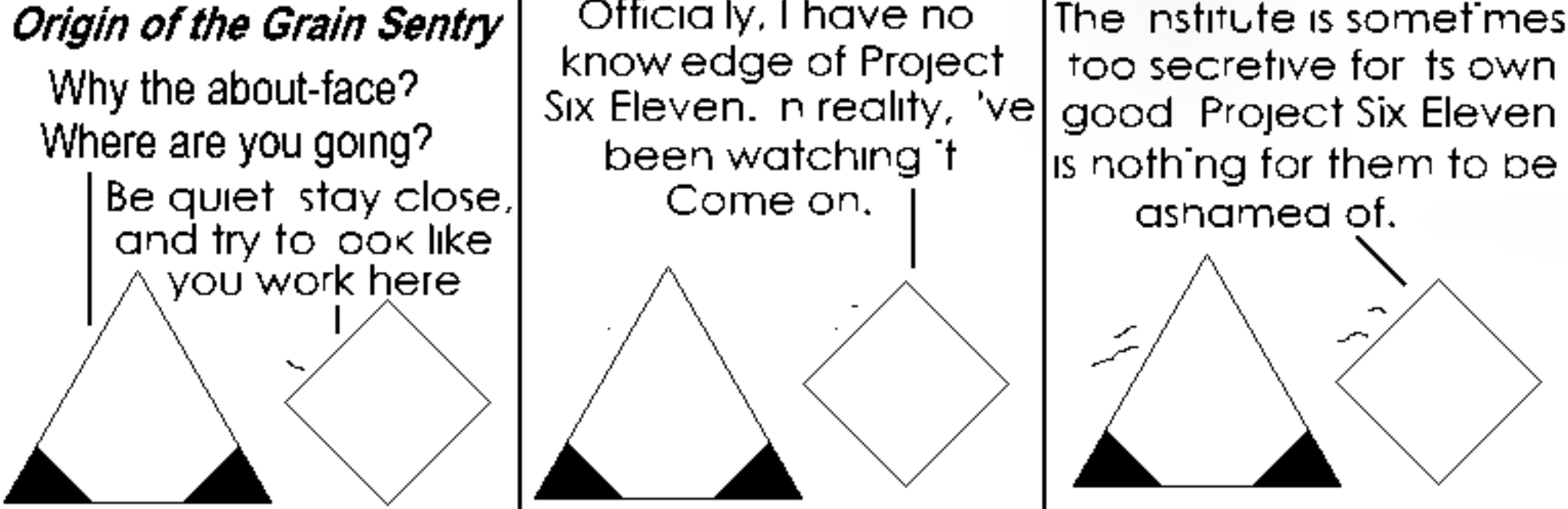




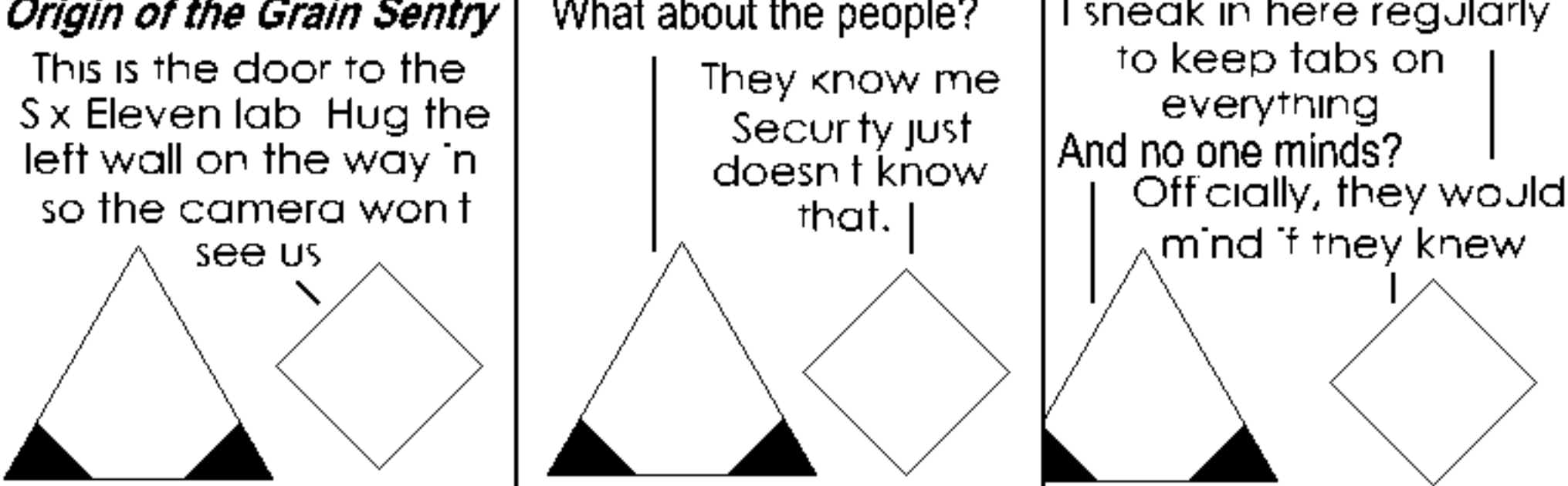



Origin of the Grain Sentry
Te this po ygon what happened to his relatives, please
Those records are under clearance six-eleven.
Oh.
I m not actually emp oyed by the ICI I don't have access to that pro,ect c assification. I can t he p
Let's go

Origin of the Grain Sentry



Origin of the Grain Sentry

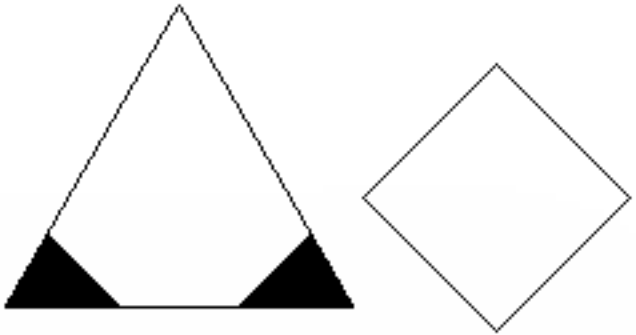


Origin of the Grain Sentry

Hey Sentry, long time no see

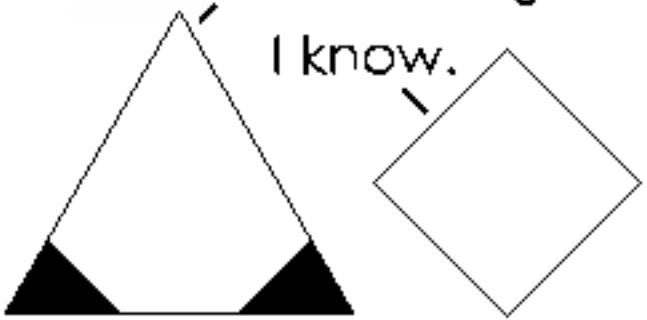
Can you help me with this quinoa?

Have you looked over that rice paper yet?



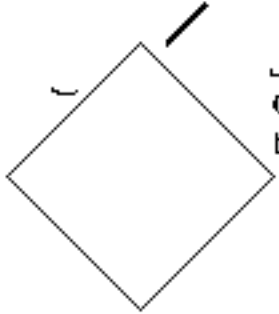
This is the lab that's so secret they were shooting at me on the off chance I guessed that it might exist? It's not ominous enough.

I know.



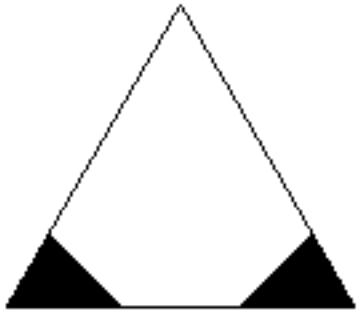
Who has the personnel file? Not the regular one, the accurate one that they keep having you swallow.

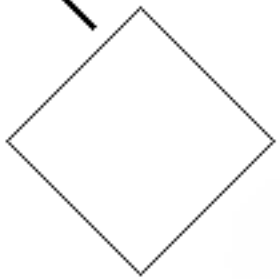
Let me make a quick trip to the bathroom and I'll have that for you.



Origin of the Grain Sentry

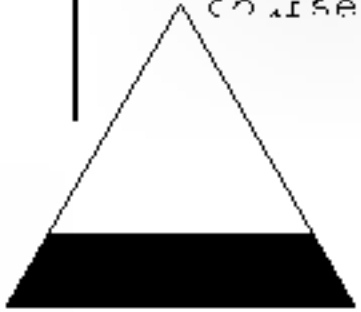
How can I best explain the project to someone with no formal training?





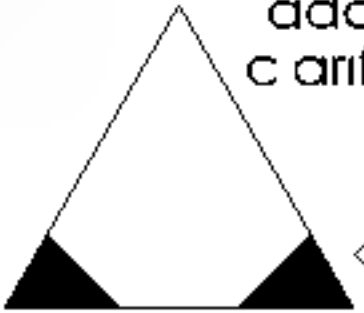
Stop the flashback!

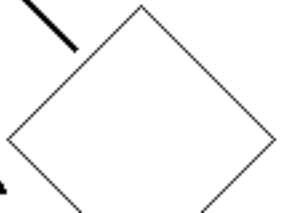
Right. The specifics, plus some detective work, would endanger your daughter. Narrate the general course of events



[rough but accurate summation of project]

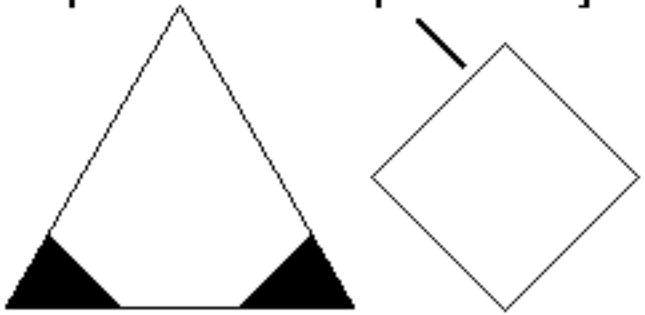
[expression of surprise at accuracy, additional clarification]





Origin of the Grain Sentry
[some details elided]

[partial information on past status of the missing persons in question]



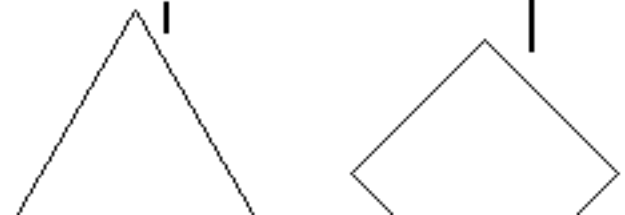
That's it?

I'm sorry there isn't more to tell you

Do you think they're still alive?

[solid justification to believe they are largely unharmed]

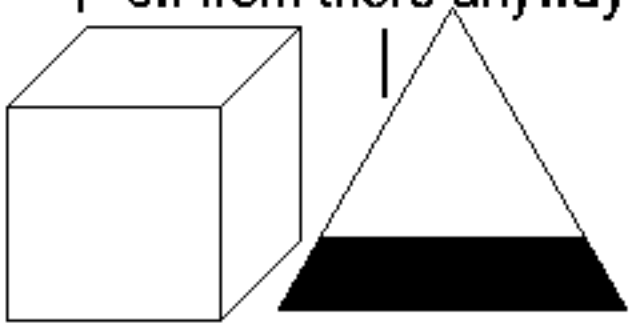
I see. That's an aspect of cuisine-magic my nutritional studies never happened to encounter.



Triangle and Robert

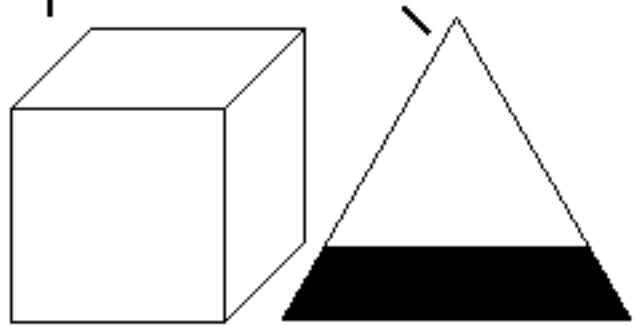
We're approaching dock.

The first part of my flashback just trails off from there anyway



It was getting muddled.

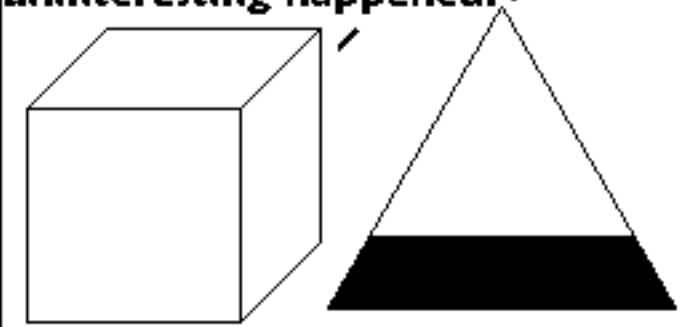
The next part's about a year later, a few months after I'd tracked down my aunt and uncle.

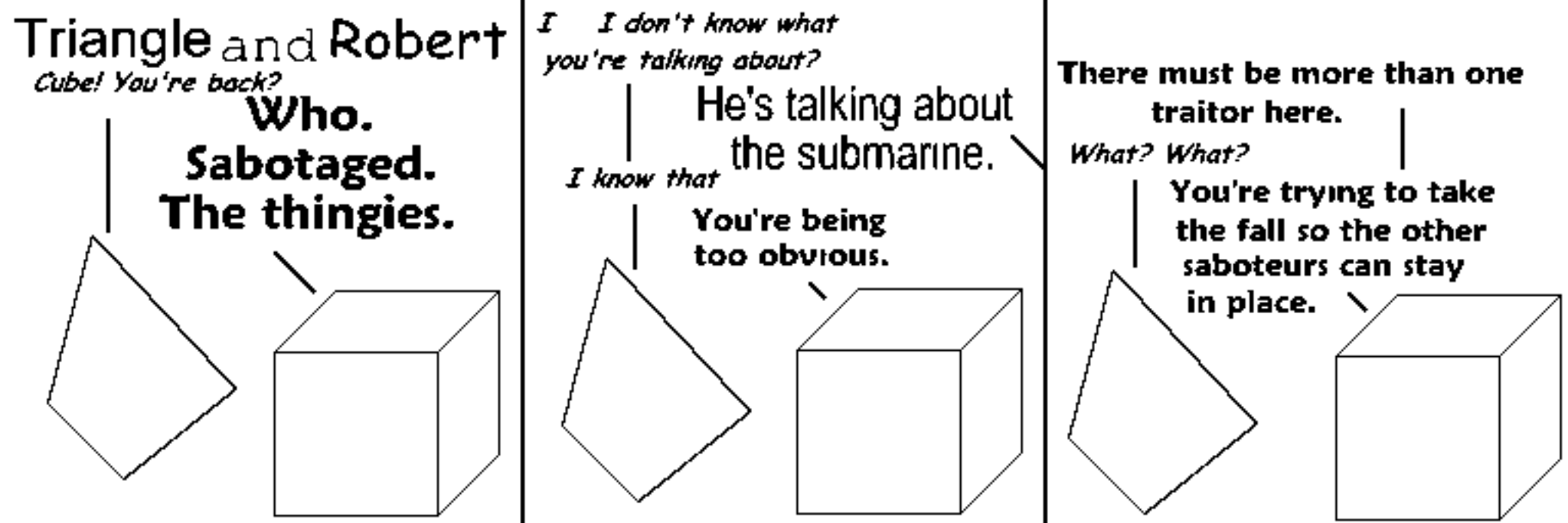


So were you that Grain Sentry's sidekick?

No. I hadn't had any contact with him since that first meeting

And then something uninteresting happened.



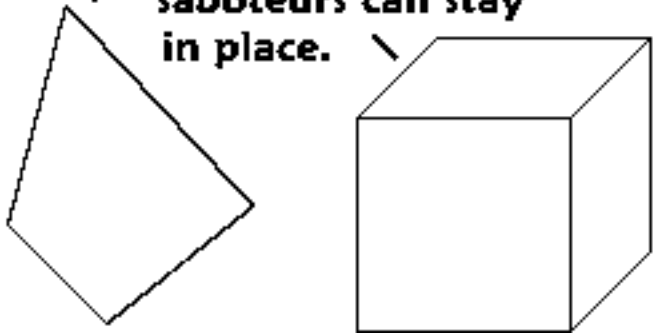

Triangle and Robert
Cube! You're back?
Who. Sabotaged. The thingies.
I I don't know what you're talking about?
He's talking about the submarine.
I know that
You're being too obvious.
There must be more than one traitor here.
What? What?
You're trying to take the fall so the other saboteurs can stay in place.

Triangle and Robert

There must be more than one traitor here.

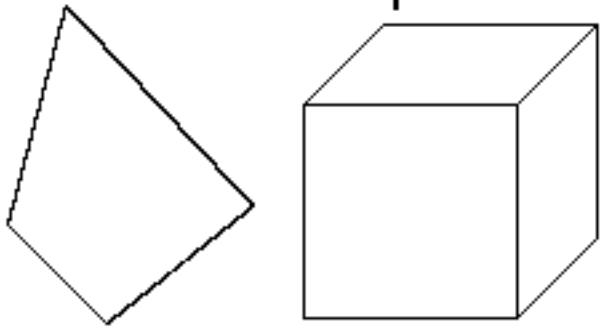
What? What?

You're trying to take the fall so the other saboteurs can stay in place.



No. He was trying to distract you while we surrounded you.

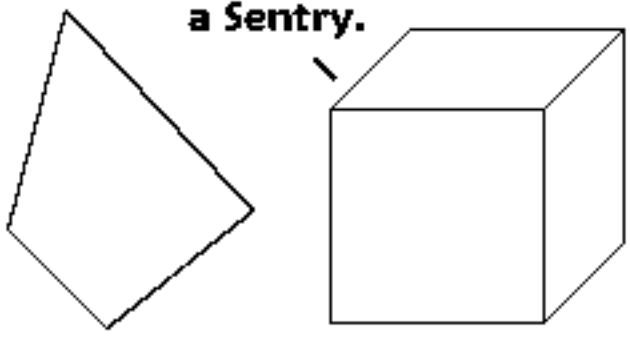
What are you going to do with those enchiladas, shoot me?



Enchiladas? What's wrong with you?

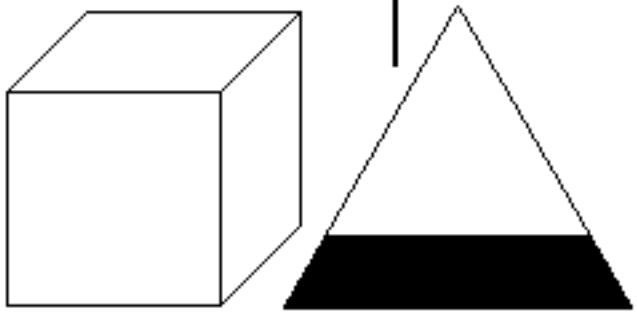
He's right. You're holding enchiladas. Where are your pistols?

You weren't expecting me to come back with a Sentry.



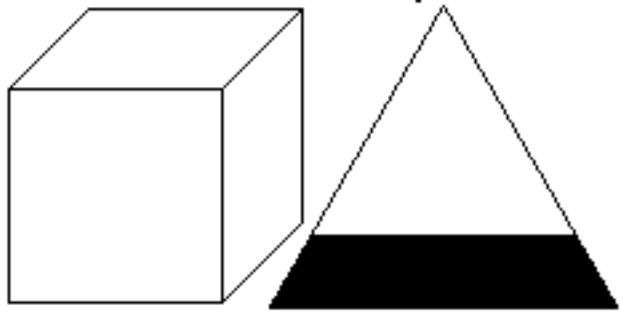
Triangle and Robert

What's going on here? One RDCLBA group sabotages another one?



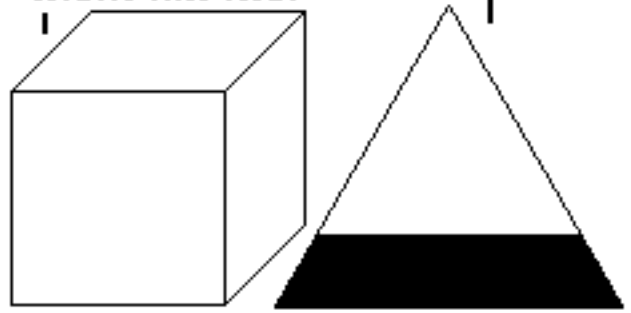
Am I supposed to take a side in this or is it an internal thing? Should I be leaving?

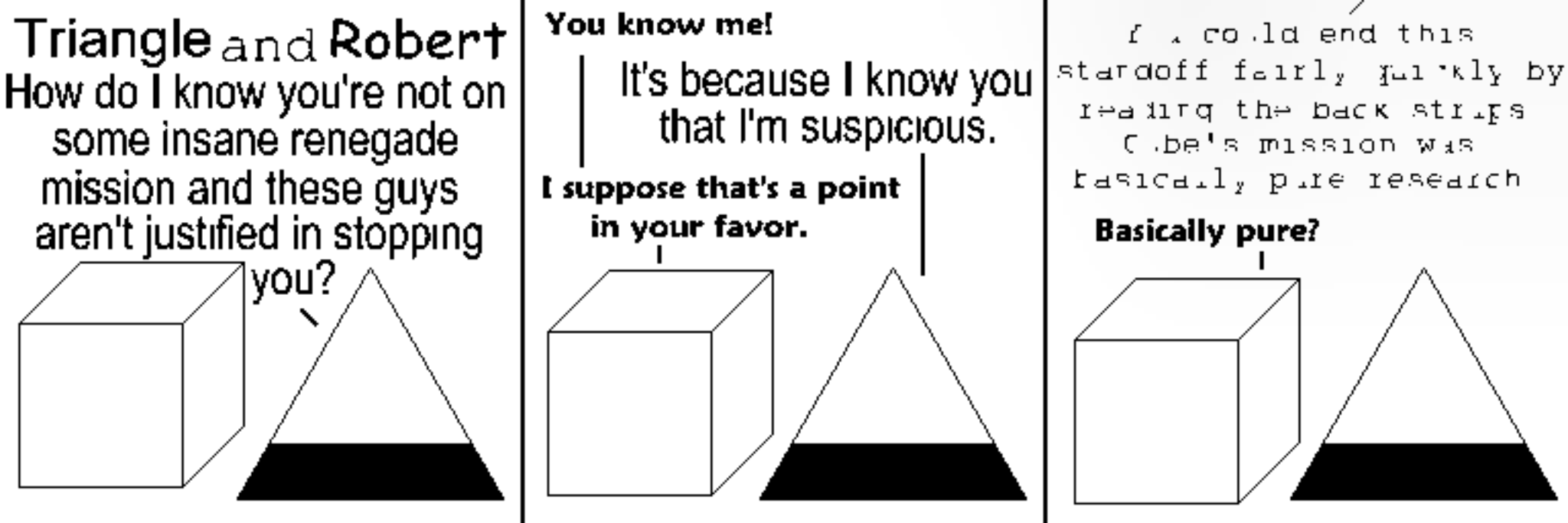
I need your help.



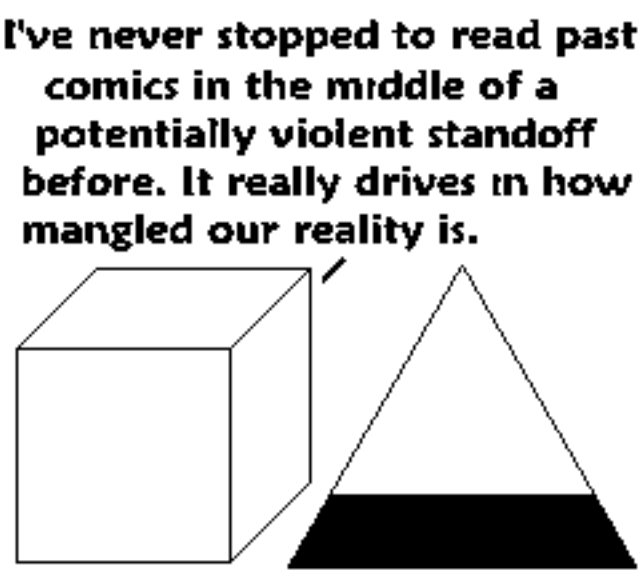
Why would I be on your side in whatever this conflict is about?

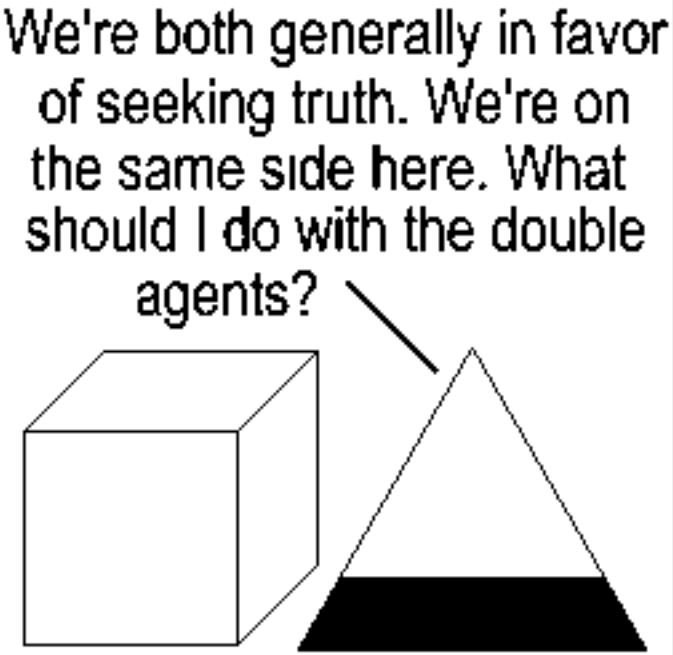
Are you actually asking me to justify not letting them kill me?

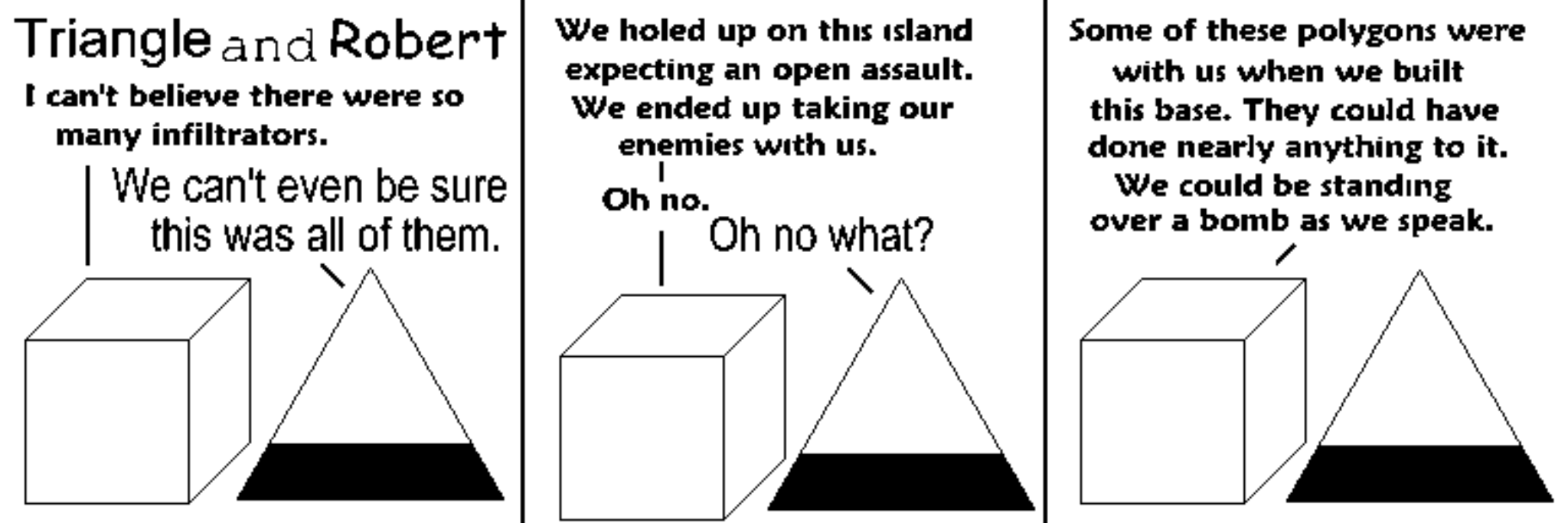



Triangle and Robert
How do I know you're not on some insane renegade mission and these guys aren't justified in stopping you?
You know me!
It's because I know you that I'm suspicious.
I suppose that's a point in your favor.
Basically pure?

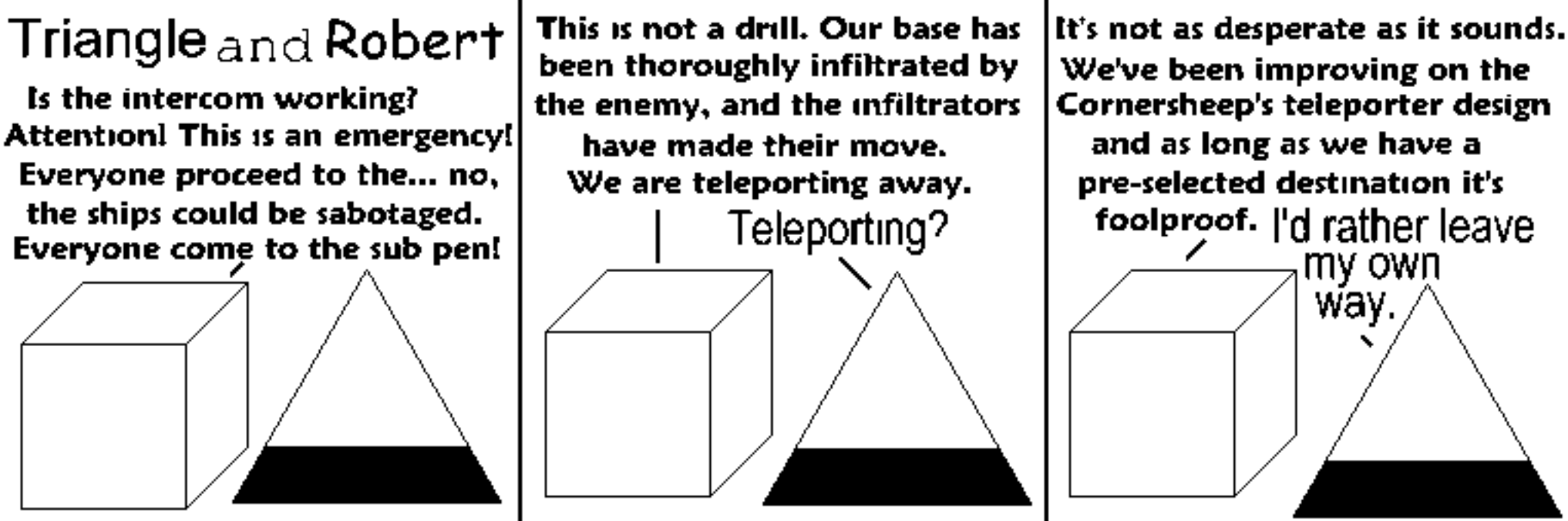
Triangle and Robert



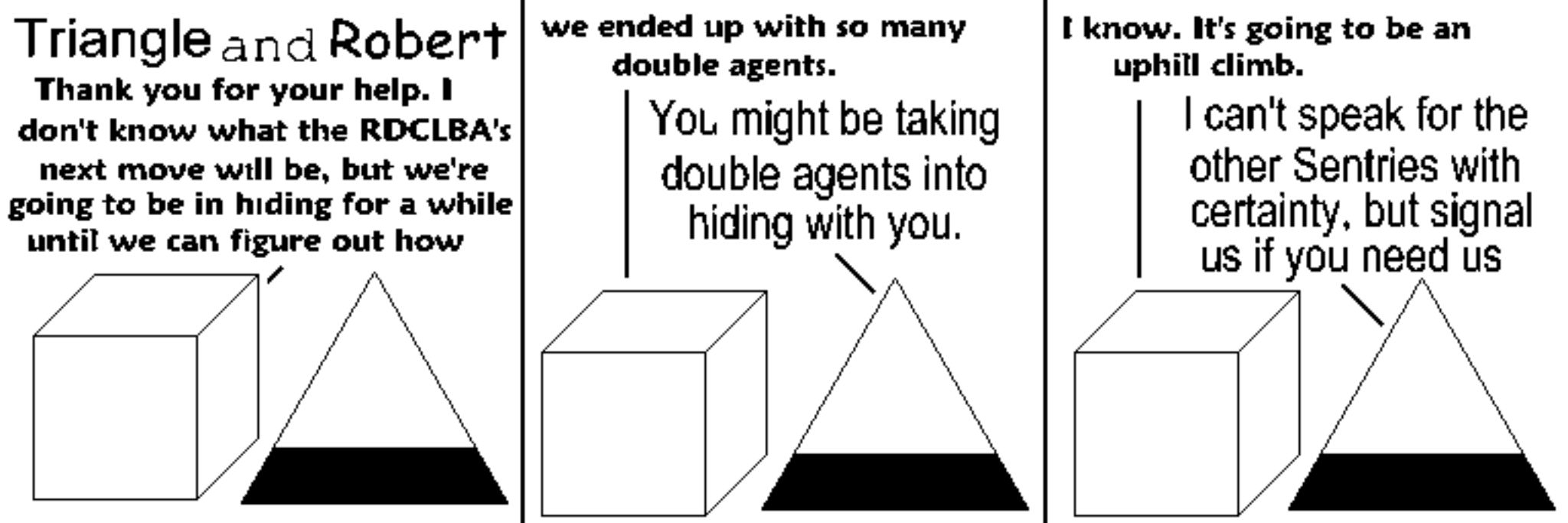



Triangle and Robert
I can't believe there were so many infiltrators.
We can't even be sure this was all of them.
We holed up on this island expecting an open assault. We ended up taking our enemies with us.
Oh no.
Oh no what?
Some of these polygons were with us when we built this base. They could have done nearly anything to it. We could be standing over a bomb as we speak.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

... then I made a glider crepe and flew here, and that brings you up to date.

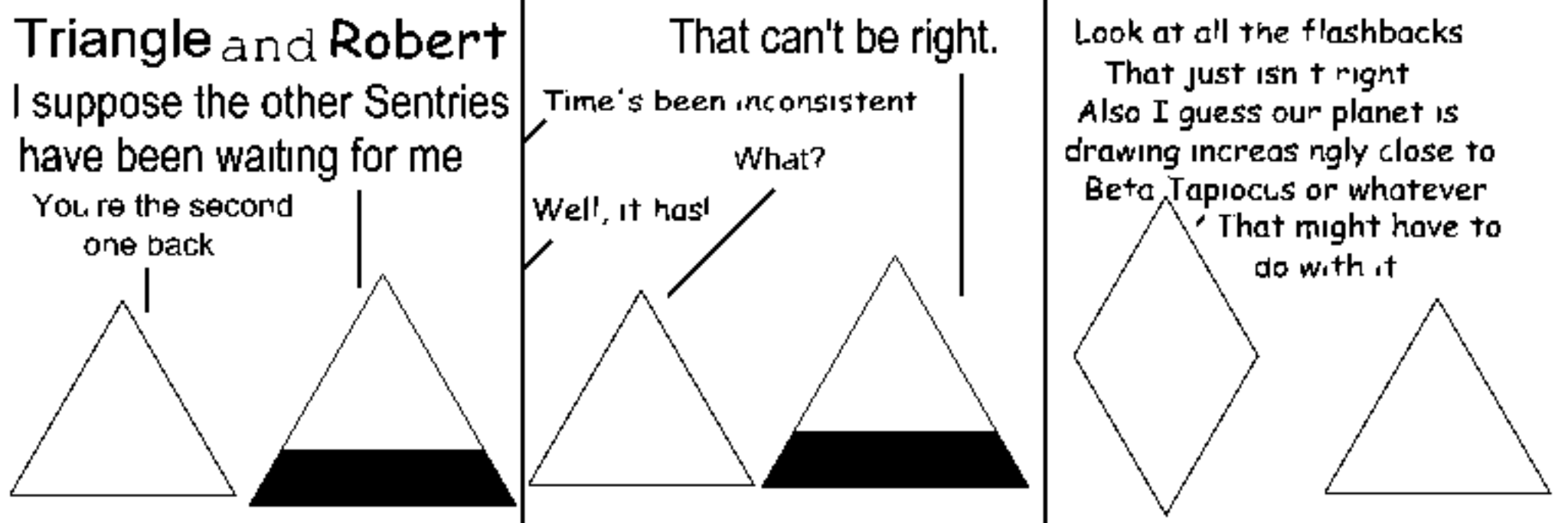
It does not!

I mean, I guess it brings me up to date on Cube, but what were you doing stranded on an island with no ingredients in the first place?

I don't want to talk about it yet.

You ended up botching your quest from the Fondue in some horrible fashion and learned a valuable lesson?

Don't jump to conclusions.

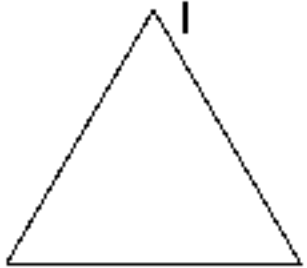

Triangle and Robert
I suppose the other Sentries have been waiting for me
You're the second one back
That can't be right.
Time's been inconsistent
What?
Well, it has!
Look at all the flashbacks
That just isn't right
Also I guess our planet is drawing increasingly close to Beta Tapiocus or whatever
That might have to do with it

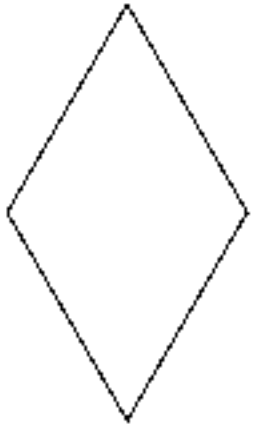
Triangle and Robert

Cartoonist!

Dacks

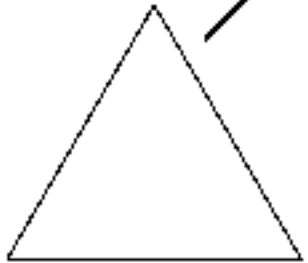
What?

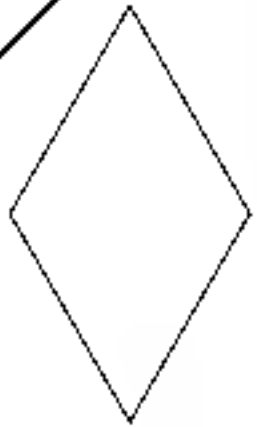




Are you trying to actively destabilize the timestream by having the planet's most powerful images participate in unnecessary flashbacks?

What timestream

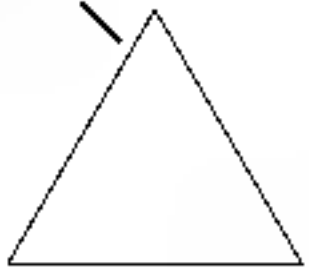




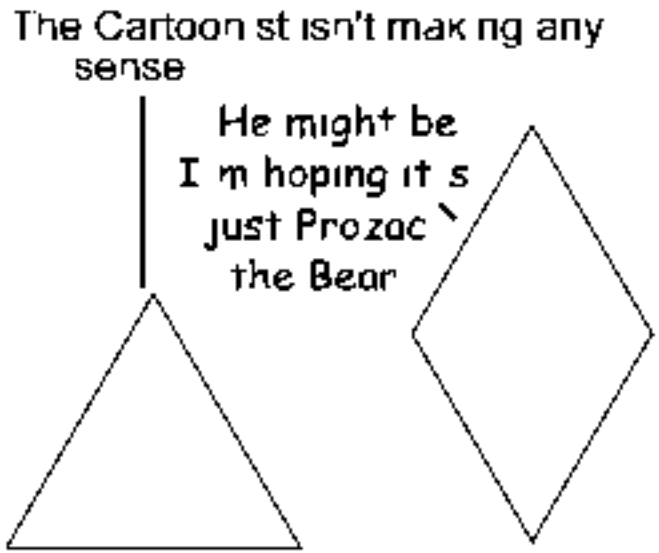
OUR timestream you fool!

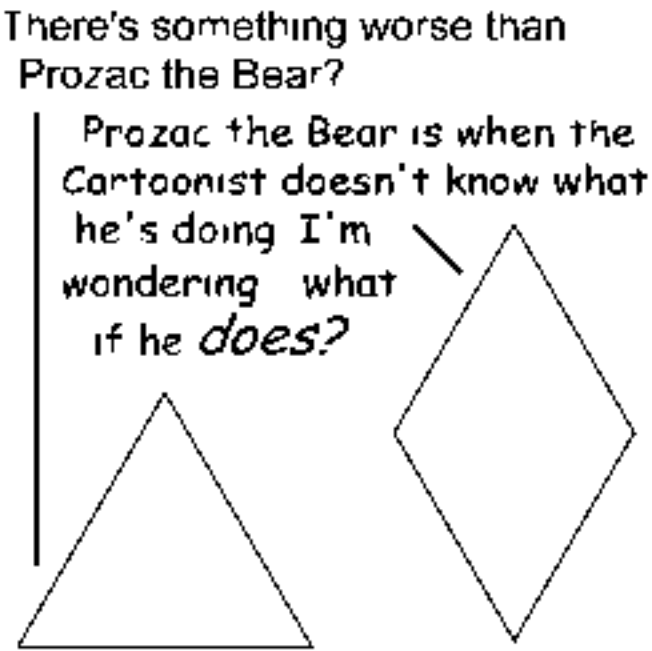
[illegible] have a timestream. Have you checked that recently.

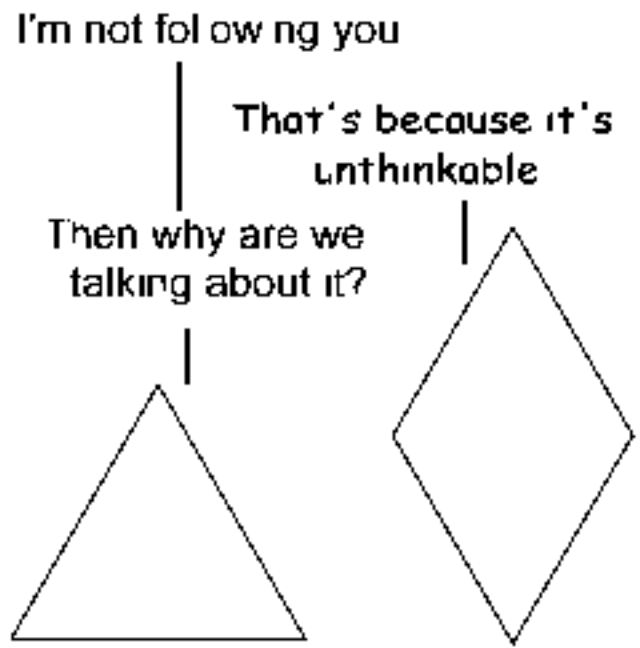
Have we CHECKED?



Triangle and Robert

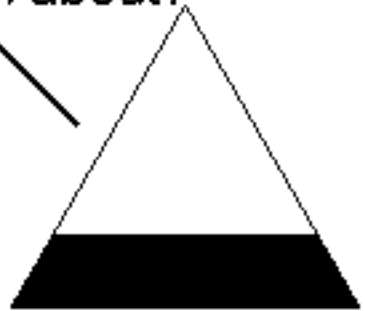




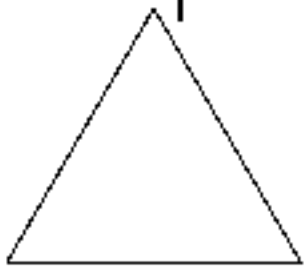


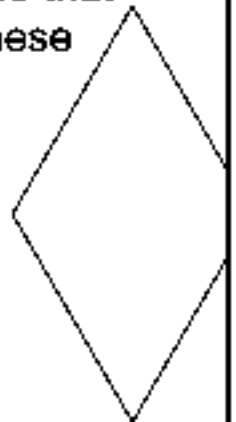
Triangle and Robert

Fill me in. I don't know much about the Cartoonist. What exactly was that conversation about?



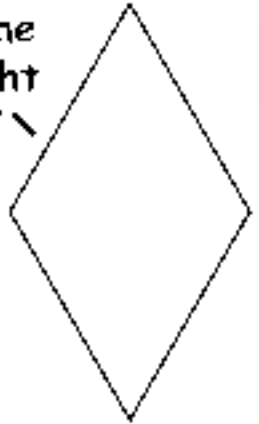
Once before the Cartoonist managed to damage time by giving Mr Disease a horrible flashback subplot I want to know if he's trying to do that on purpose with al these Sentry flashbacks



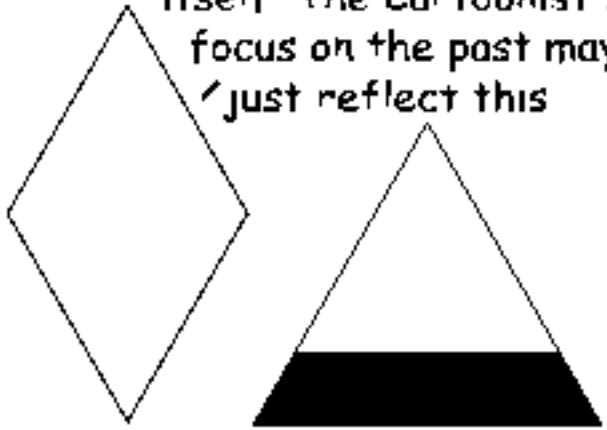


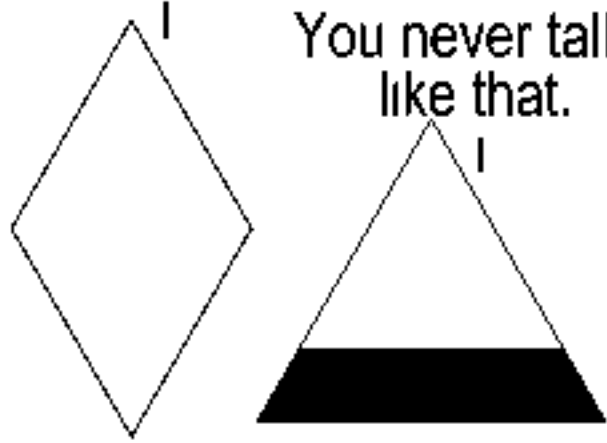
He s being cryptic instead of tel ing me Usual y this means he's making things up as they happen and hasn't decided what the reasons for things are yet

But th s time things might really BE cryptic



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

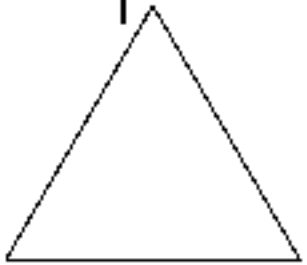
There's only one thing to do. We get all the Sentries together including Orpuddex, we go out to Beta Tapiocus, and we smash.

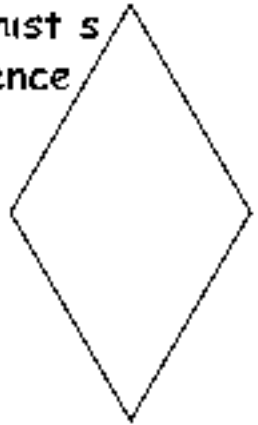
Us too

That might be a bad idea

Why?

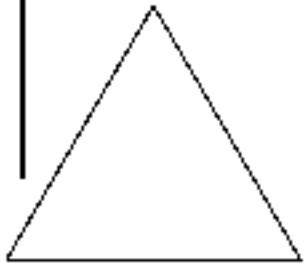
We'd be br nging the Cartoonist s d rect influence with us

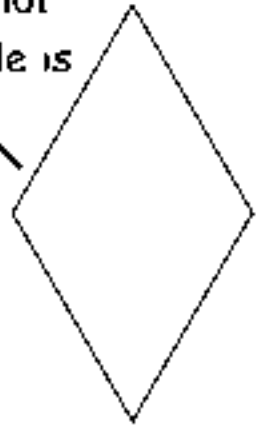




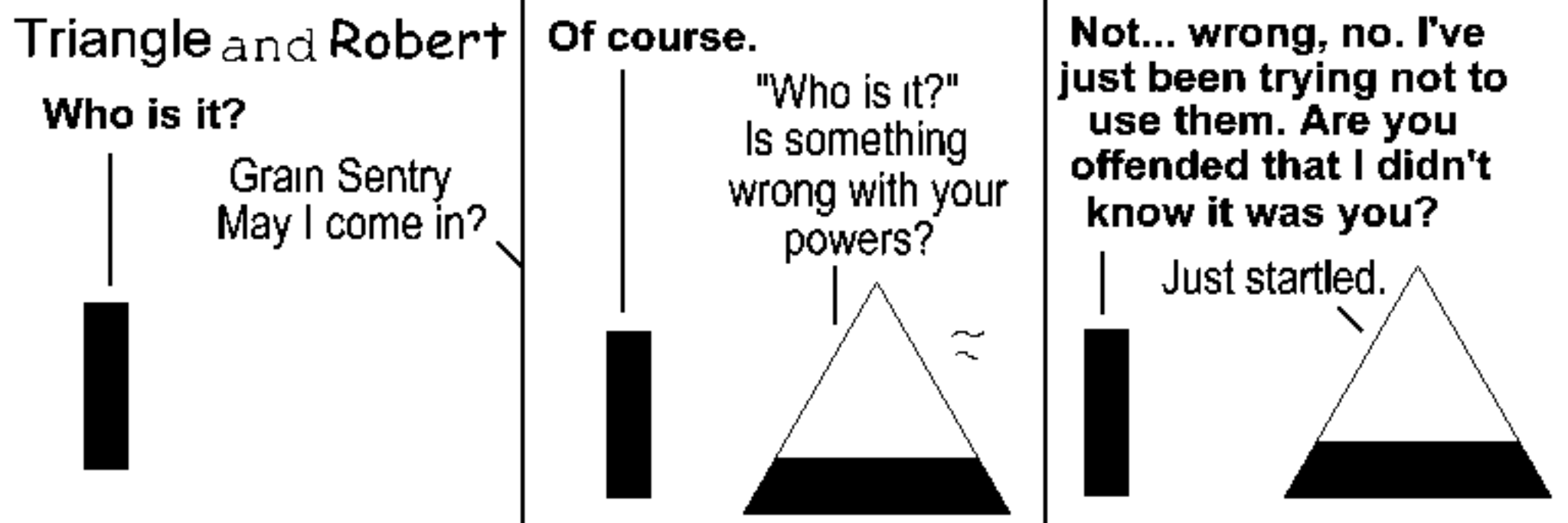
I don't th nk there s any way the most cosmologica ly sign f cant act n the entire history of polygons will happen off-panel whether we stay home or not

Don't forget He is very very lazy





Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

We got back fine. The others will too.

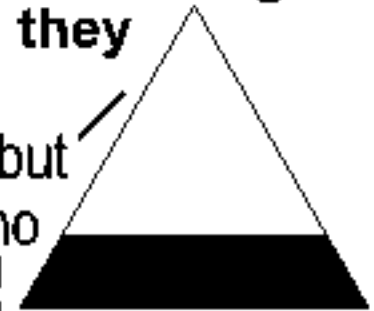
We might not have time to wait.

What would you have us do? Blanket the planet with a magical search?

You say that like we haven't done it looking for our keys.

Good point. My real objection is this: I think it's unfair to the others not to let them finish their solo quests, and I think we'll be a stronger team when they have.

I agree, but there's no **time!**



Triangle and Robert

There's no time?

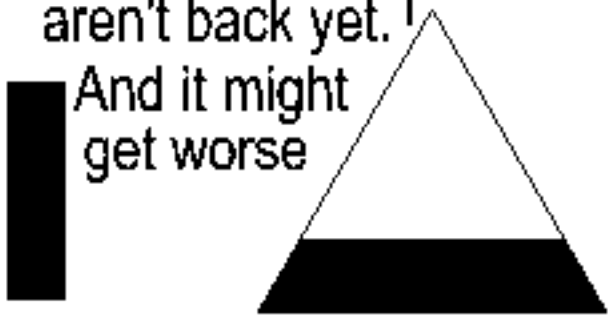
There's no **time!**

Ah. I was thinking you said it like that.

Why?

Robert's theory, not mine, but it's plausible. Beta Tapiocus may be altering the passage of time It would explain why the others aren't back yet.

And it might get worse



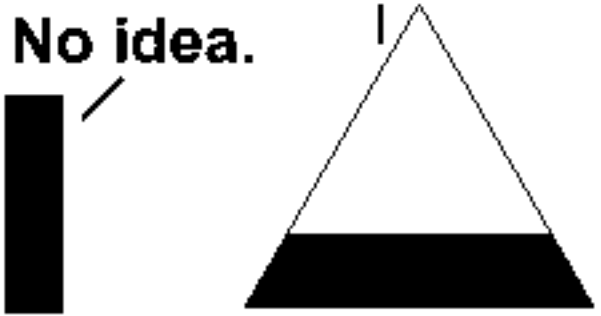
Ducks?

What?

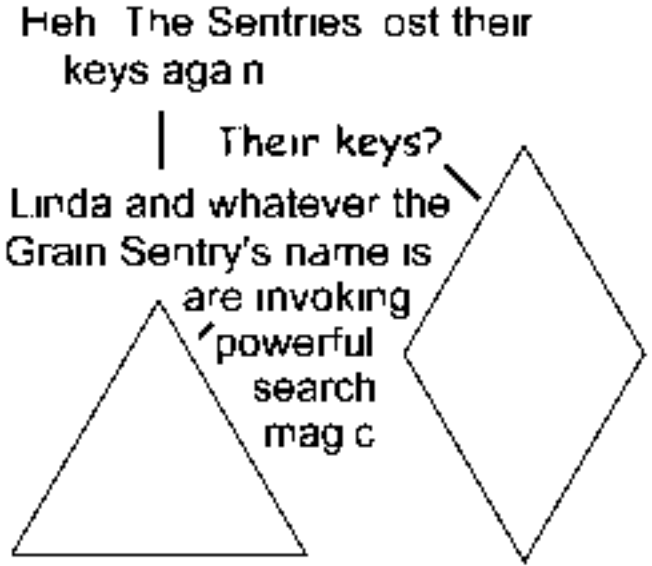
Just testing something.

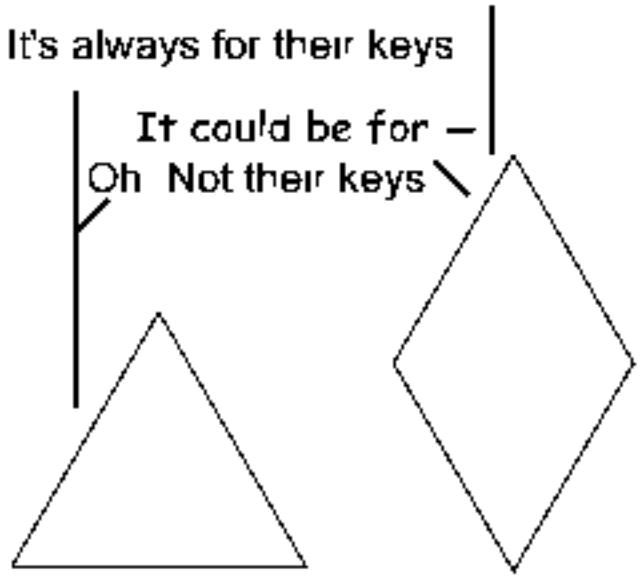
Did it work?

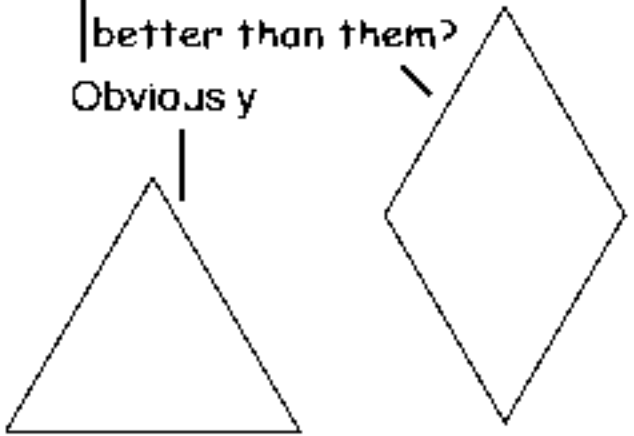
No idea.



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Found one!

Really? I'm not picking anything up, and you're not exactly sensitive.

I spent a great deal of something that passed for time studying maps.

I see. You would be able to distinguish a Sentry from local background magic.

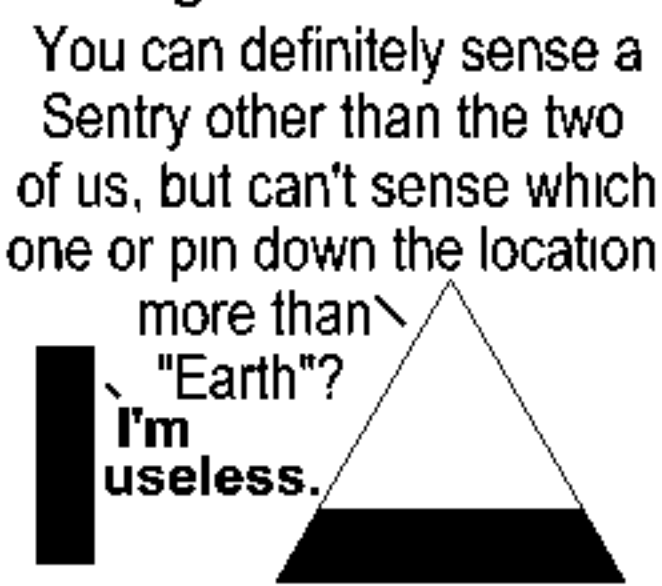
So which one is it and where is he?

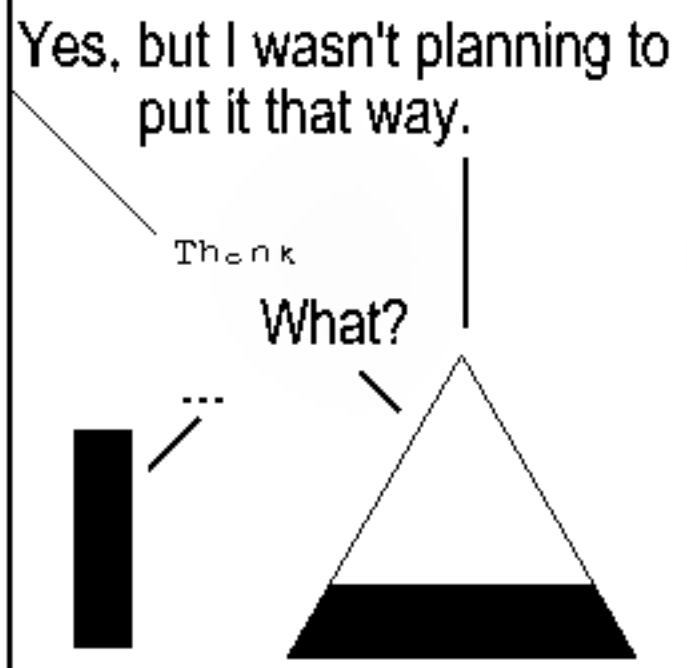
I can't tell which, but he's alive and on Earth.

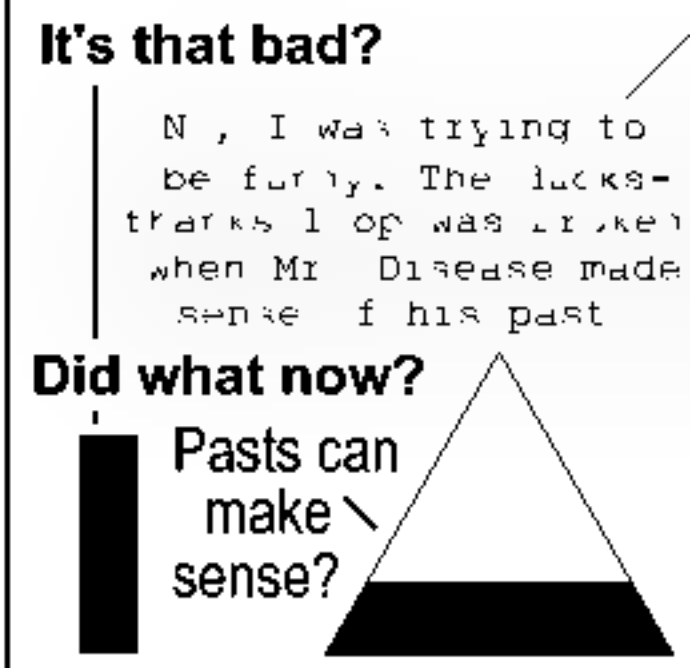
And?

What you said. I'm not very sensitive.

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

We could ask.

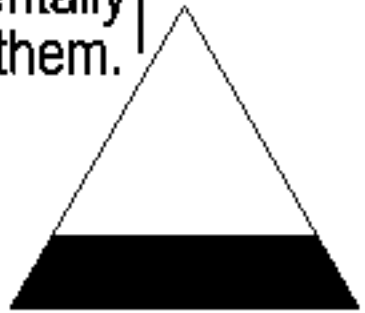
The situation might be too dire not to.

Then it's agreed.

Cartoonist! Where are the other Sentries?

Er . .

Please don't say you accidentally killed them.



No, they're presumably alive and well

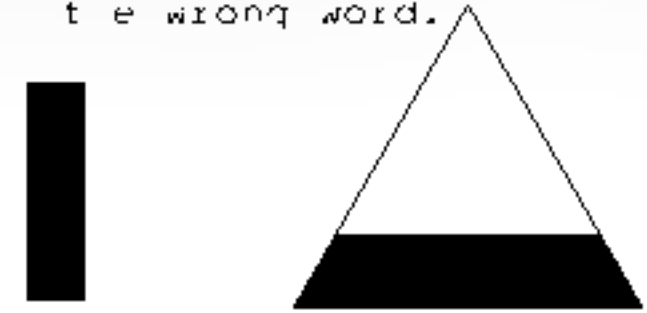
Presumably. You don't know where they are.

You haven't decided where they are.

Can't it be both

Triangle and Robert

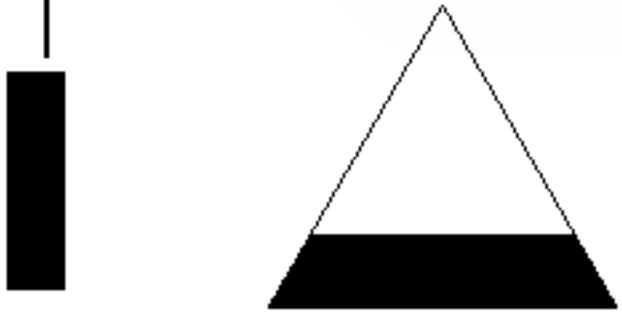
I planned to do the Sentry bits sequentially. The sorer the Grair Sentry finishes his, the sorner. "Sorner" is probably the wrong word.



Actually I don't think time as you usually know it can pass at all until some things clear up. Finishing the flashbacks may be a precondition of ick up- learance.

How much of what you're talking about are we supposed to understand?

As little as I d



Triangle and Robert

What do you think?

I think we're left with no choice. I'm a little curious about your past anyway.

The second part of my story started... the *third* part of my story started when I got a letter from the Grain Sentry. The second part is a little more private.

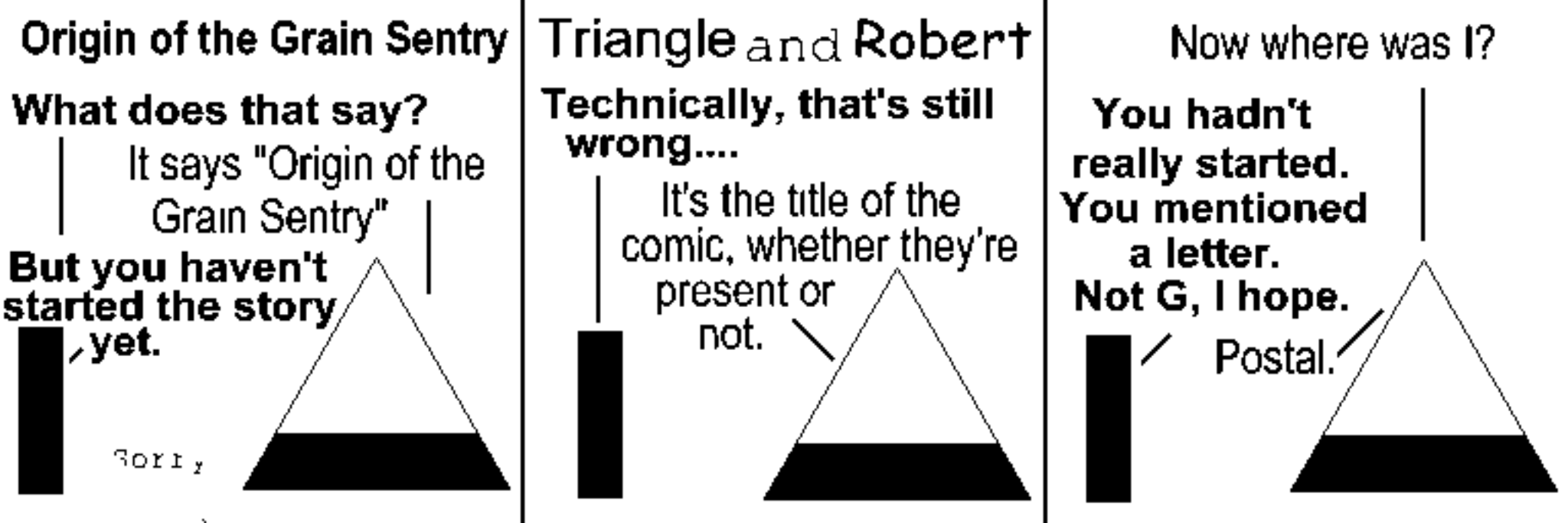
Oh. The... right. I agree. Keep them out of the comic.

You know about my aunt and uncle?

I pieced some things together.

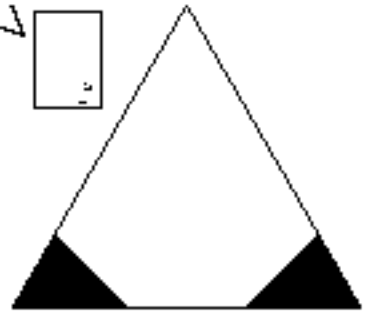
Then I've already said too much. They could be in danger.

Relax. I only know from being both a Meat Enforcer and a Sentry.

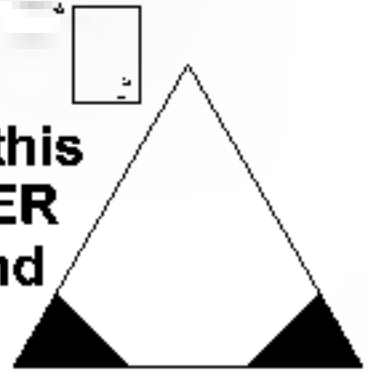

Origin of the Grain Sentry
What does that say?
It says "Origin of the Grain Sentry"
But you haven't started the story yet.
Sorry
Triangle and Robert
Technically, that's still wrong....
It's the title of the comic, whether they're present or not.
Now where was I?
You hadn't really started. You mentioned a letter. Not G, I hope.
Postal.

Origin of the Grain Sentry

The Meat Enforcers have taken contro of Project Six Eleven. cannot risk being seen taking s'des



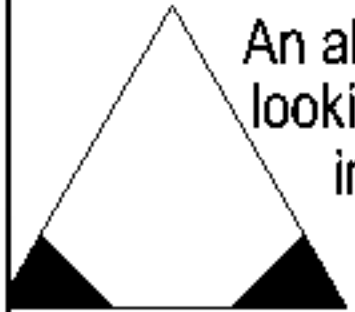
I have found your aunt and unc e Help me and I can tell you how to reach them.



You said this was AFTER you'd found them.

It was The Sentry didn't realize I'd found them. I decided to look into things anyway.

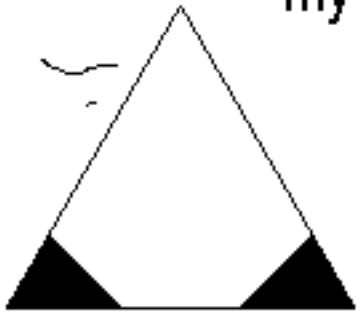
Why?



An abiding love of looking into things in general.

Origin of the Grain Sentry

My skills had grown since my first visit to the headquarters of the ICI, as had my caution.



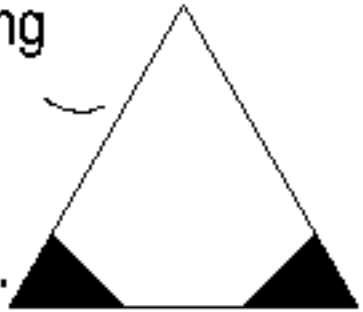
I slipped into the laboratory without significant incident

What's a non-significant incident?

Chloroforming

Was there a lot?

Relatively no.



I suppose you know what it was that I saw next.

Yes. When I was a Meat Enforcer, the loss of Project Six-Eleven was often brought up as a training example.

An example of what?

Stuff.

Triangle and Robert

You know this was all before Orpuddex ate our memories and I joined the Meat Enforcers.

Of course.

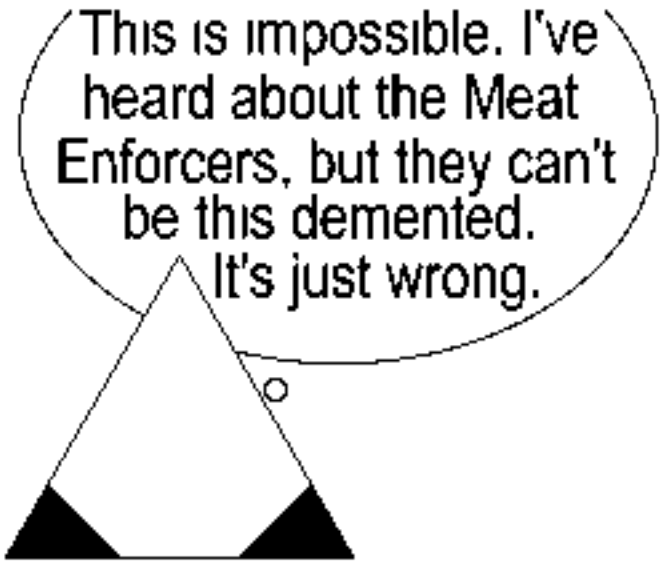
I had nothing to do with it. If I had been there, though... I probably would have gone along with it.

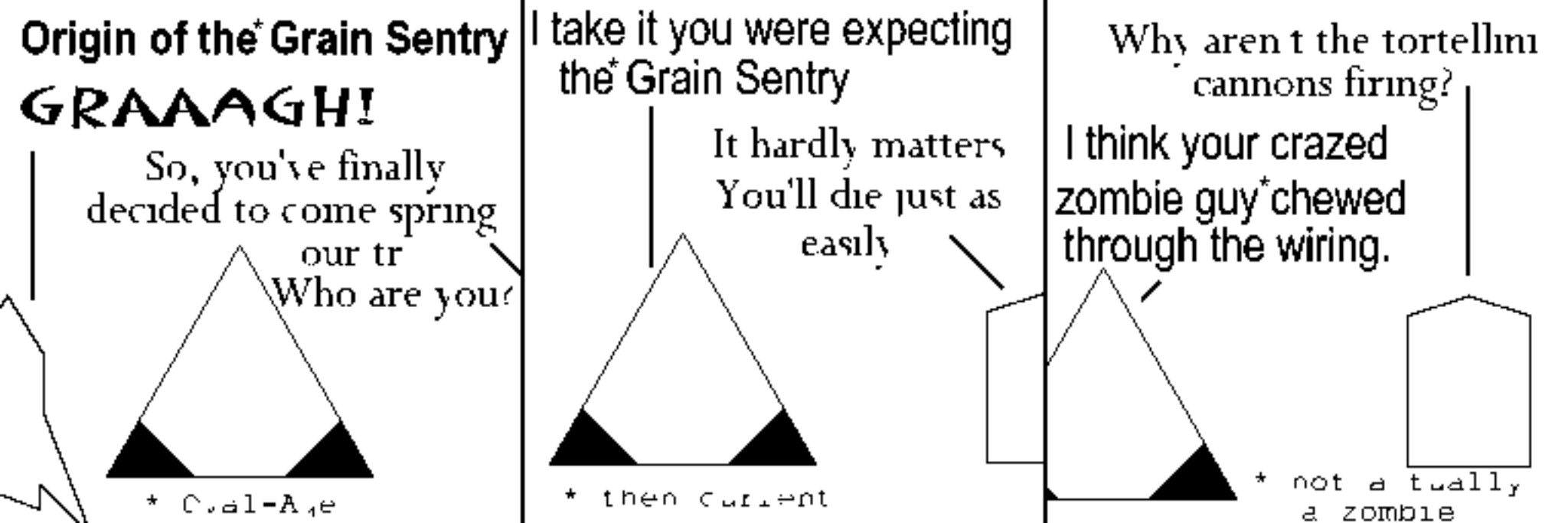
Don't feel guilt over hypo-theticals.

But they were injecting *ham* into *matzoh,* and I heard about it, and I stayed with the organization!

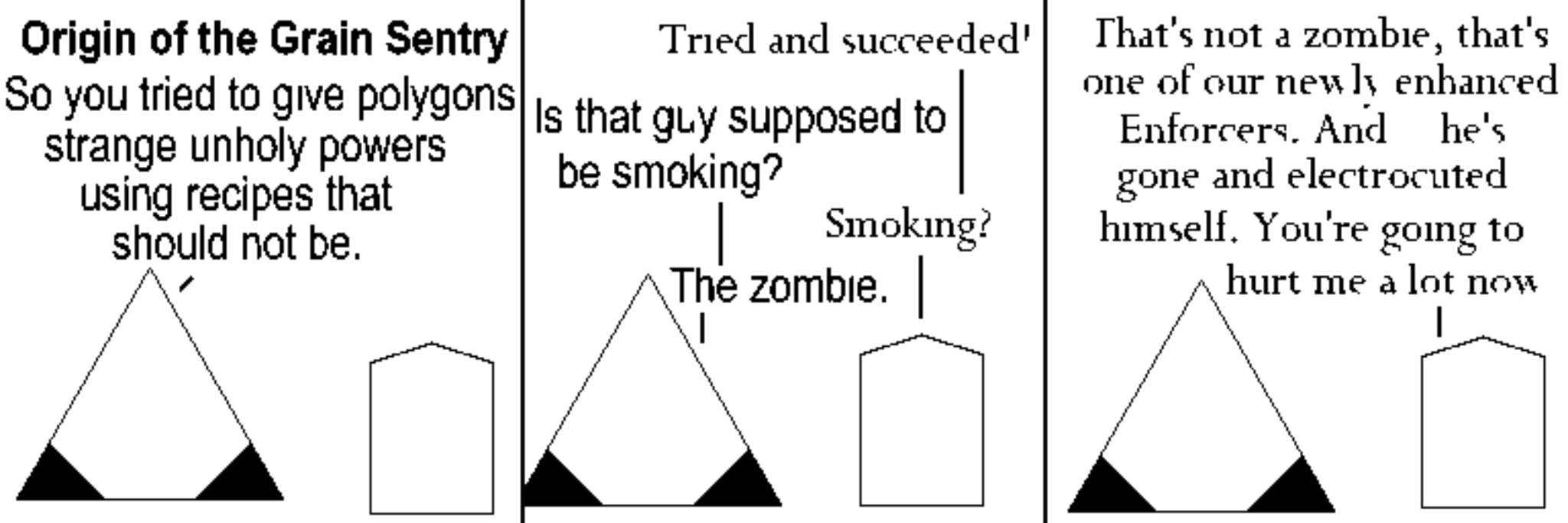
We all did things we otherwise wouldn't have then.

Origin of the Grain Sentry




Origin of the* Grain Sentry
GRAAAGH!
So, you've finally decided to come spring our tr
Who are you?
* Dual-Age
I take it you were expecting the* Grain Sentry
It hardly matters You'll die just as easily
* then current
Why aren't the tortellini cannons firing?
I think your crazed zombie guy* chewed through the wiring.
* not actually a zombie

Origin of the Grain Sentry



Origin of the Grain Sentry

Is that when you tied the ops commander up with deceptively hard soft pretzels, took all the evidence you could carry and set the building on fire?

I thought the ICI set the fire when they knew the project was going to be exposed, to cut their losses.

No, it was on fire the same night you hit it.

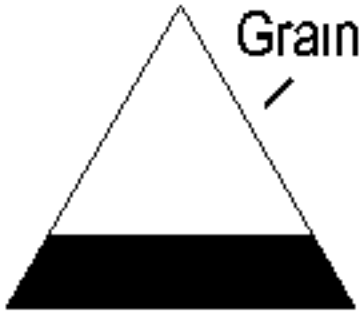
Was it an electrical fire? Your super-soldier's corpse was responsible for that.

Probably. Not only was it an evil project, it was a dumb one.

The pretzel thing and evidence, I did.

Triangle and Robert

It was about a year after shutting down the Meat Enforcers' version of Project Six-Eleven that I became Grain Sentry



I thought so. You know, it wasn't actually the Meat Enforcers who had your predecessor killed.

Maybe not as a group. There were a few Enforcers involved in setting the trap.

Oh, I wasn't trying to defend them. I just wanted to make sure you knew.

I think I understand.

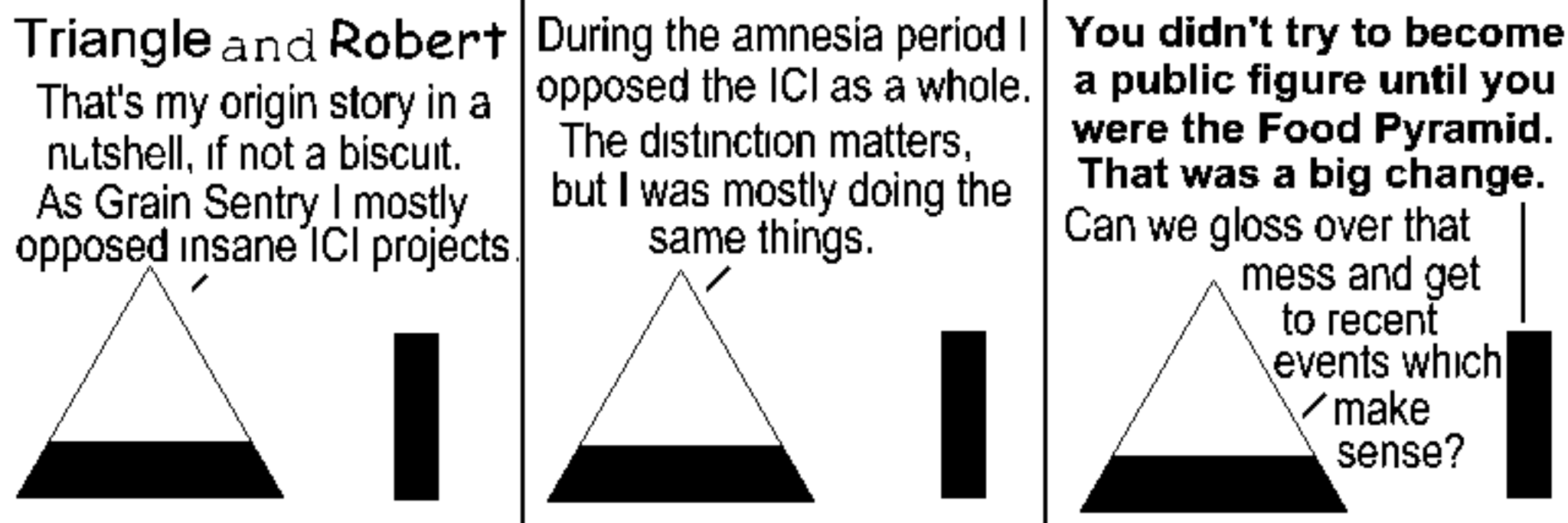
Triangle and Robert

Did his ghost appear to you or anything?

No. I just woke up to find I was a Sentry

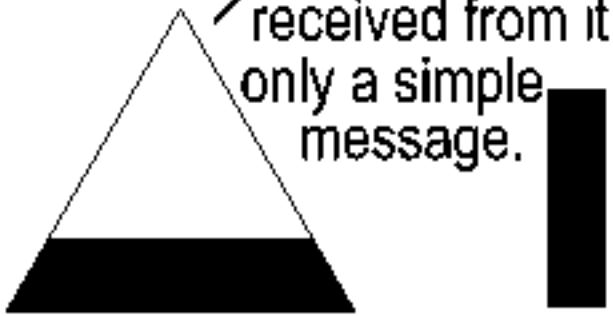
He thought he could keep the ICI from doing evil if he could just stay on their good side. He might have been right, but he couldn't pull it off in the end.

It wasn't orders from the top. The top liked him. A pet superhero made for good PR. It was a bunch of individual loose cannons he'd ticked off one at a time. He was basically too trusting.


Triangle and Robert
That's my origin story in a nutshell, if not a biscuit. As Grain Sentry I mostly opposed insane ICI projects.
During the amnesia period I opposed the ICI as a whole. The distinction matters, but I was mostly doing the same things.
You didn't try to become a public figure until you were the Food Pyramid. That was a big change.
Can we gloss over that mess and get to recent events which make sense?

Triangle and Robert
are not currently
appearing in this comic

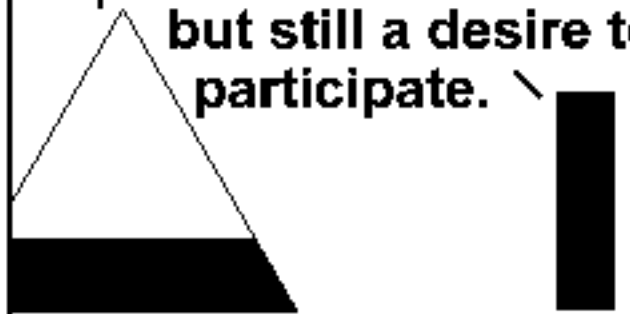
The Fondue interacted with each of us differently. I received from it only a simple message.



Can I guess?

I suppose. Why?

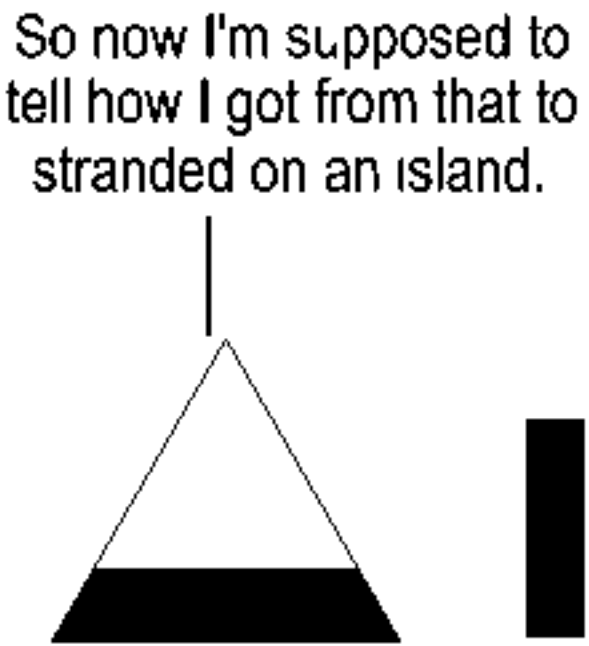
Novelty. Boredom. Lack of traditional conversational skills but still a desire to participate.

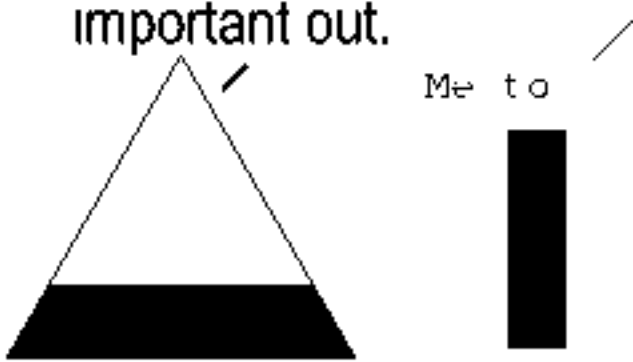


Those are all horrible answers.

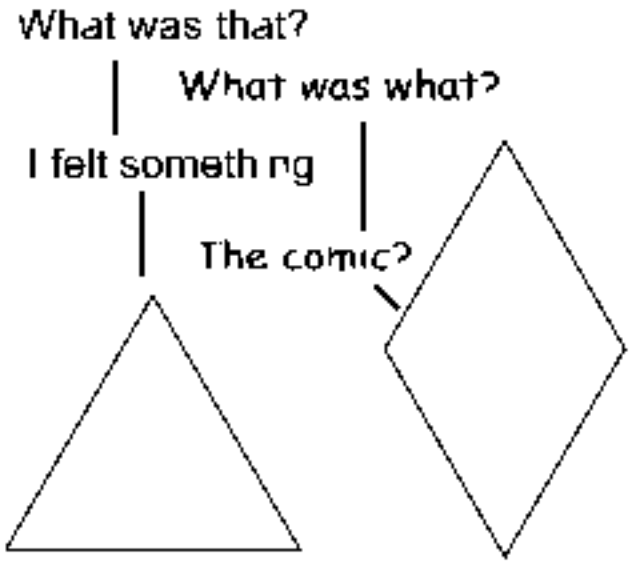
I don't normally have conversations this long where nobody gets hurt.

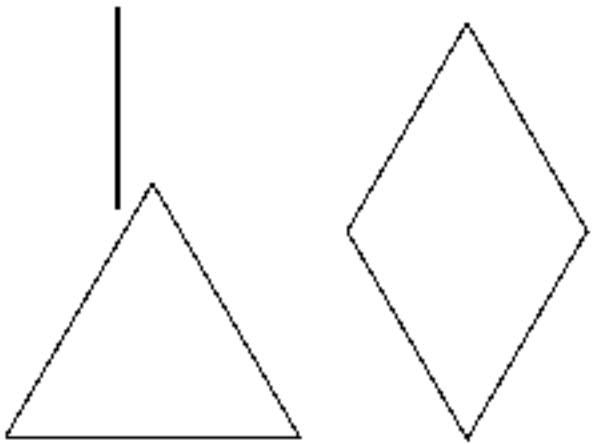
Triangle and Robert

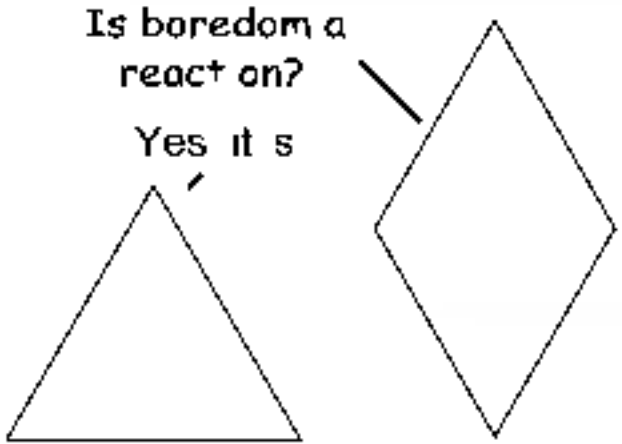




Triangle and Robert







It Was Made From People
What the...
Is that the title for your Fondue quest story?
Yes. I suppose it is.
Way to blatantly spoil, Cartoonist!
No. I see what he's doing. Cute.
Cute?
Not particularly clever, but cute.

It Was Made From People

So, once again, I made a big scene in the ICI's records department.

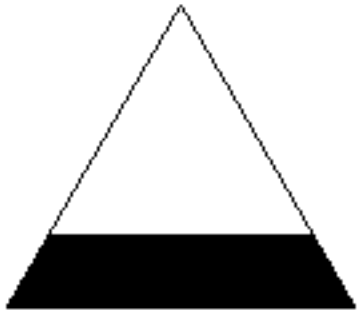
And, once again, they refused to tell me anything about Project Six-Eleven

I ended up looking through the records myself

A project so secret that even the secret self-destructing files have absolutely no record of it. Heavy.

It Was Made From People

Since the records didn't help, I decided to talk to someone in charge.

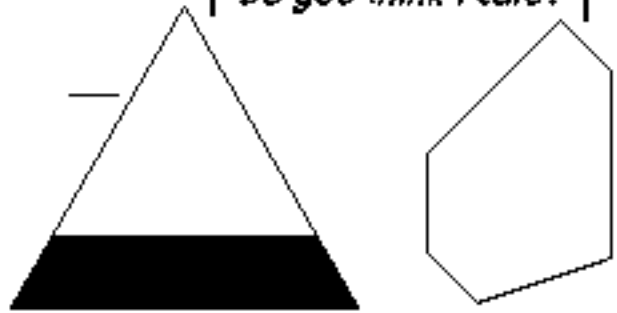


Is the VP of carbohydrate research allocations in?

Do you have an appointment?

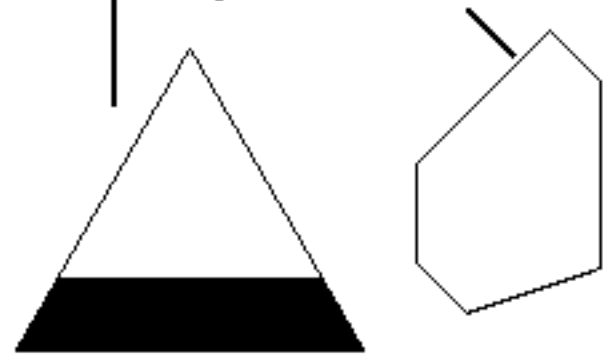
Do you know who I am?

Do you think I care?



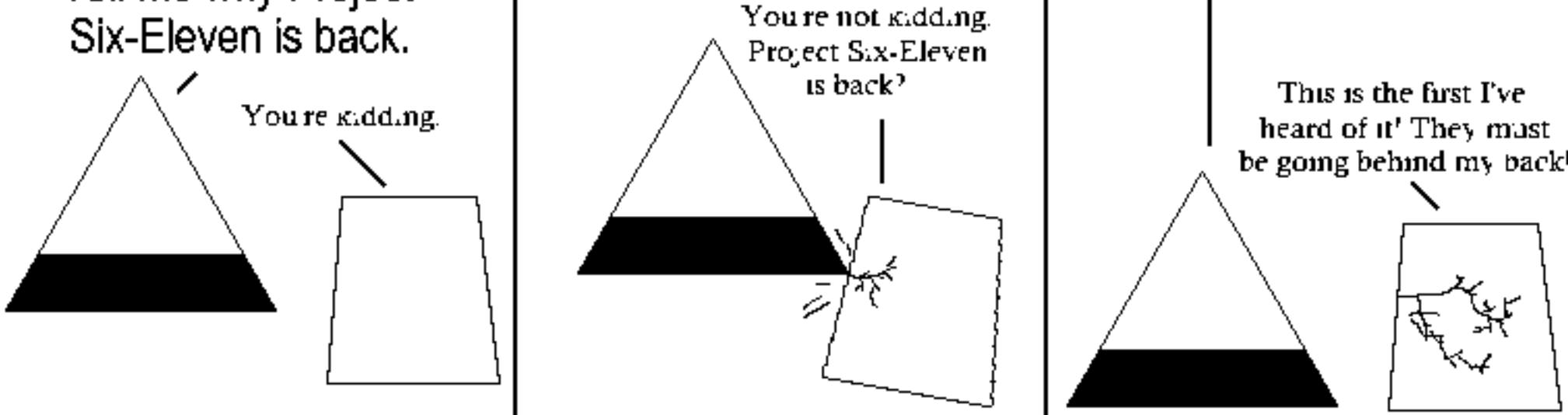
Do you have health insurance?

Do you mean that as a threat?



So I bit him.

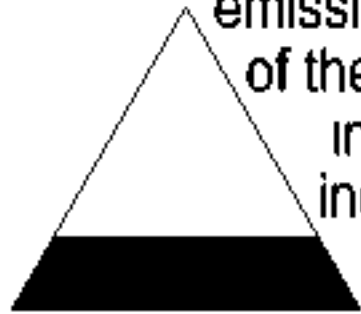
It Was Made From People



It Was Made From People

Starting at the top wasn't working. Whatever the new Project Six-Eleven was, it was being done without the knowledge of ICI leadership.

I decided to try magic. I hung a Chippewa crumbcatcher* to pick up the unique grain-magical emission signature of the ovens used in previous incarnations of the Project.



*not s wn

The traces were faint, but it gave me a direction to go in.

Everyone freeze!

This is a bathroom. I'm on the wrong floor Carry on

It Was Made From People

Hold it right there!

Employee break room.

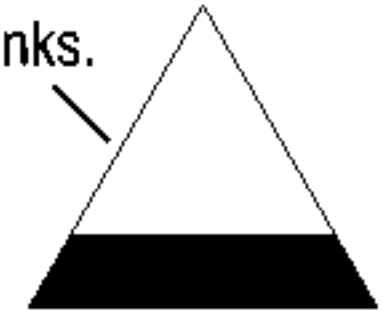
Sorry. Do any of you know where I can find Project Six-Eleven?

Project what?

Sounds familiar but no

Three floors down maybe? They're doing something projecty there anyway.

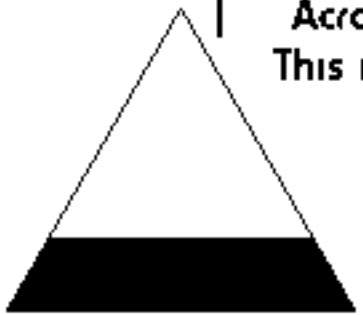
Thanks.



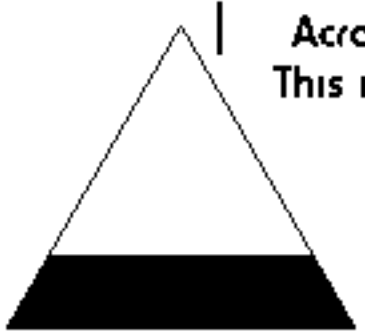
Three floors later

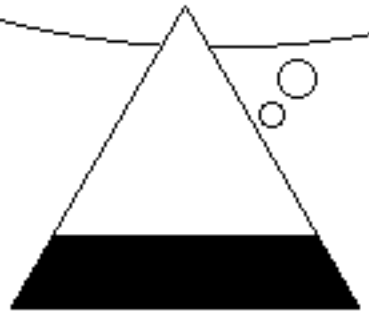
Excuse me, is this where I might find Project Six-Eleven?

Across the hall. This is day care.



It Was Made From People





It Was Made From People

My predecessor had pushed the ICI to install extra-large air ducts for fast ventilation in case of emergency

Obviously, his true purpose was to make it easy to sneak around and observe.

Since the duct was less likely to be a deathtrap than the door, I climbed in and listened to the lab from there.

That's what I was telling her, it was already going downhill in season two before they added the neighbors

I hear you! I think she just argues these things to be difficult. Roger too, for that matter. Say, did you get your muffler fixed yet?

It Was Made From People

Hey, you have your key? My thing locked up again.

It really shouldn't require the key to reboot. There's got to be something in the config.

The what?

I crept along the duct, listening in to bits of conversation.

Hey, don't use that, it needs to be cleaned before the next run.

The dough's ready now. Is there another one open?

We're done with the Six-Eleven one for now.

No thanks. Too spooky for me.

It's just an oven.

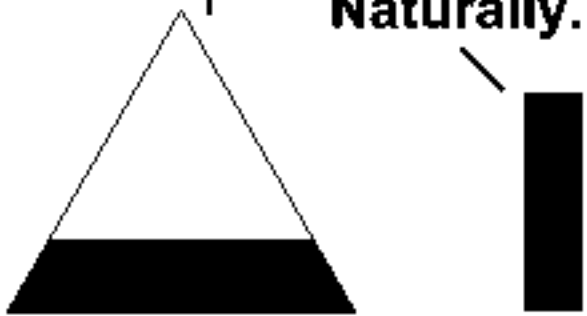
I know that, but no thanks.

Suit yourself.

It Was Made From People

I found a convenient crack in the duct and observed the kitchen laboratory below.

Naturally.

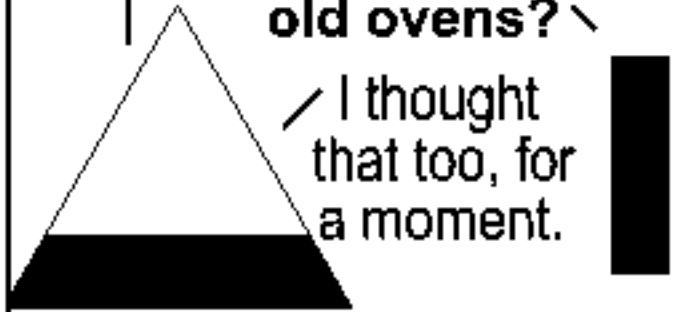


There were rows of ovens. Most of them were of recent design. The ones that weren't... still bore the modifications the Meat Enforcers had installed.

They should have been destroyed, not put back into service!

So that was a dead end? It was just the old ovens?

I thought that too, for a moment.



It Was Made From People

I watched closely as they opened one of the old ovens and removed from it... something.

Something unspeakably horrible?

Something in a shallow casserole dish covered in foil.

Oh.

I considered breaking through the duct and taking the dish by force, but I didn't want to touch it at all until I knew what I was dealing with.

That sounds best. So you kept watching?

Yeah.... How long have I been telling this story?

Time's supposed to be meaningless now, or something.

I'm still getting thirsty.

I know just the thing.

Please not a meat smoothie.

I can do other things!

Triangle and Robert

What's that?

INSERT CLOUD

What it looks like.

What is it a cloud of?

Water vapor.

Really? And you summoned it?

INSERT CLOUD

Are you sure there's no meat in there?

Quite sure.

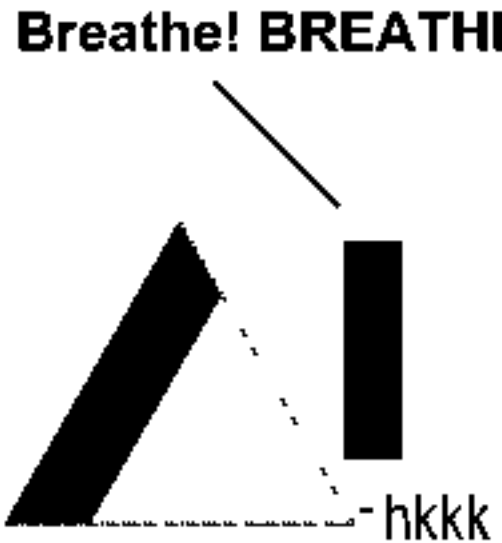
How?

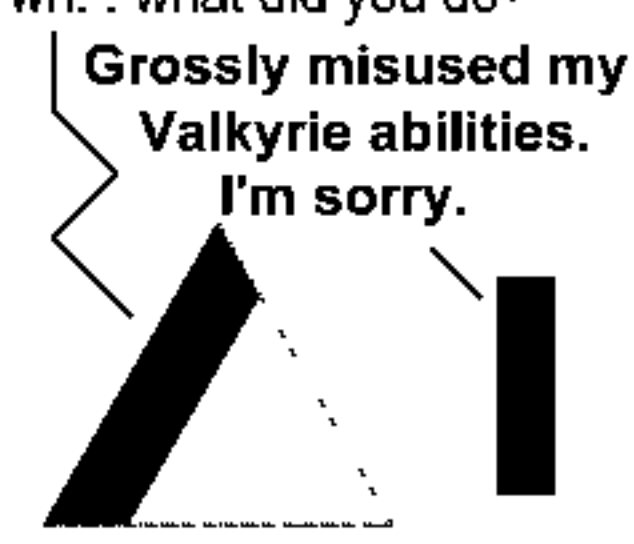
I'm a Valkyrie. I have weather powers completely unconnected to my meat powers. Now do you want your thirst quenched or not?

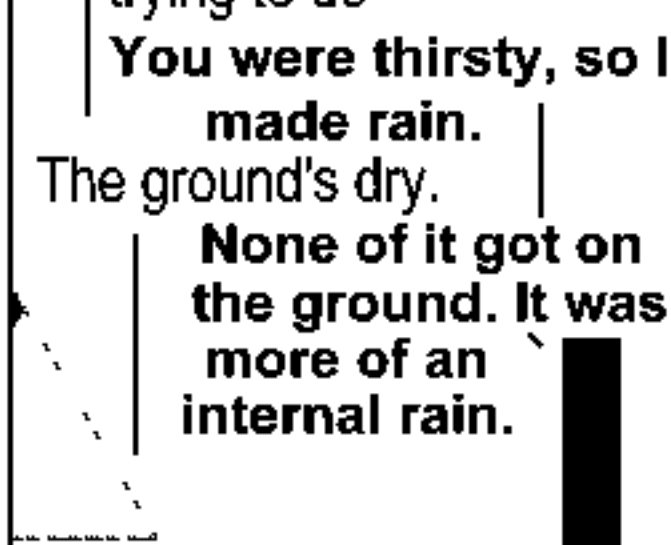
INSERT CLOUD

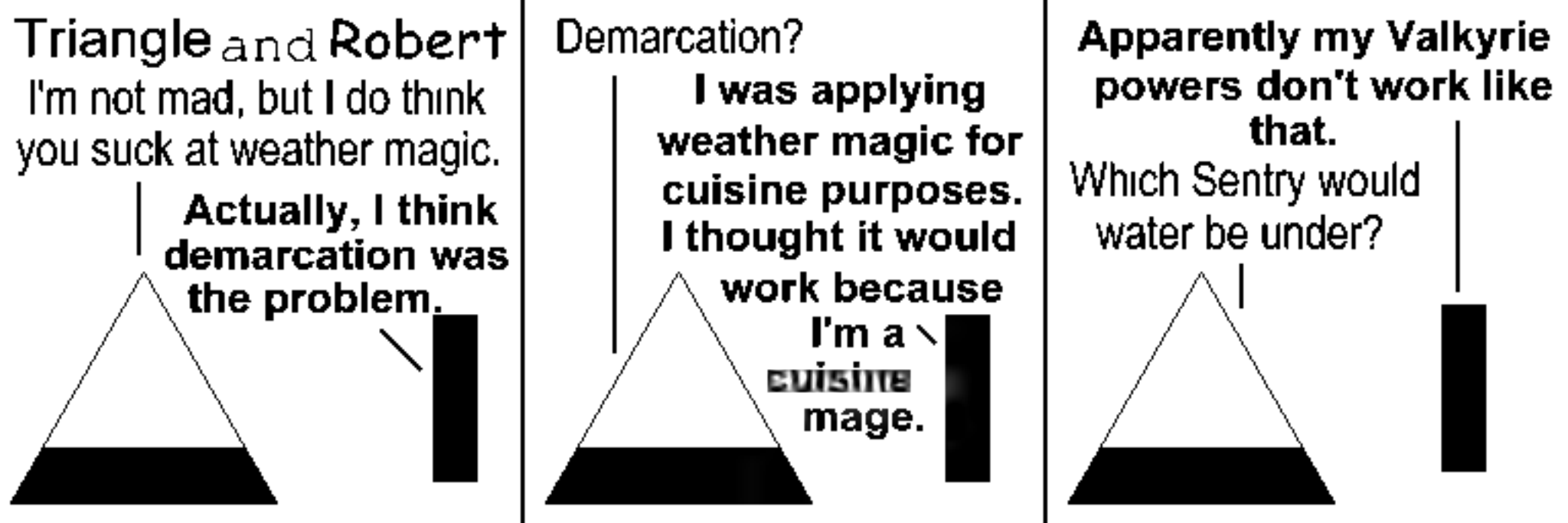
I just know this is going to taste like sausage.

Triangle and Robert

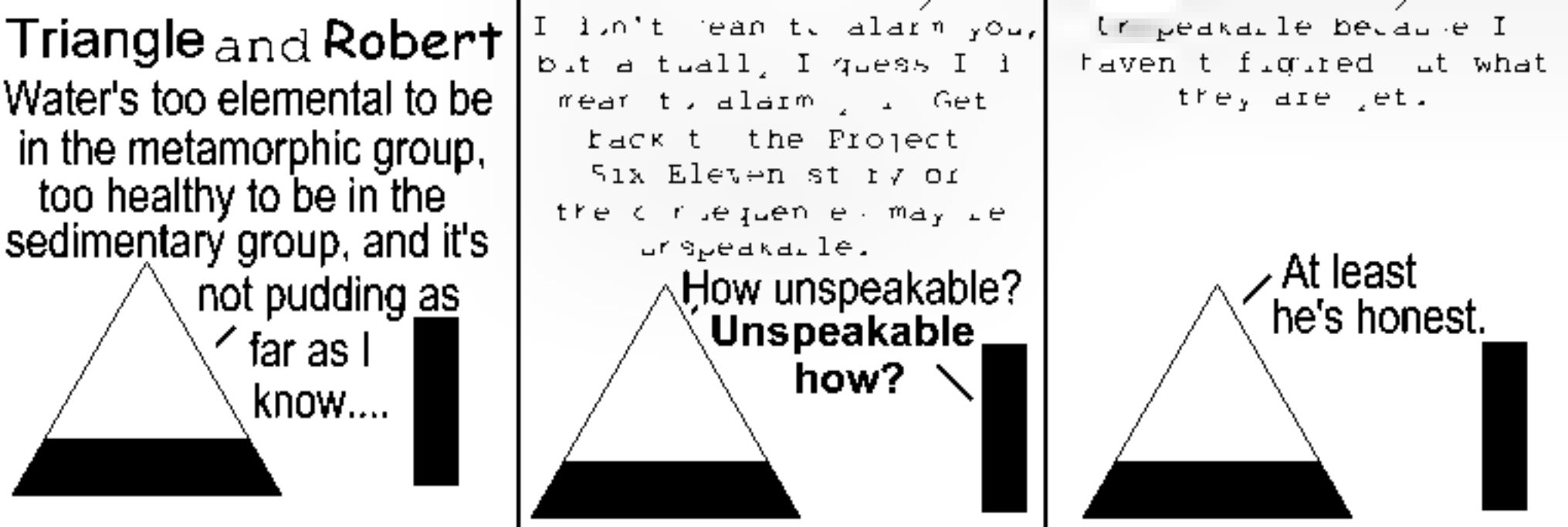




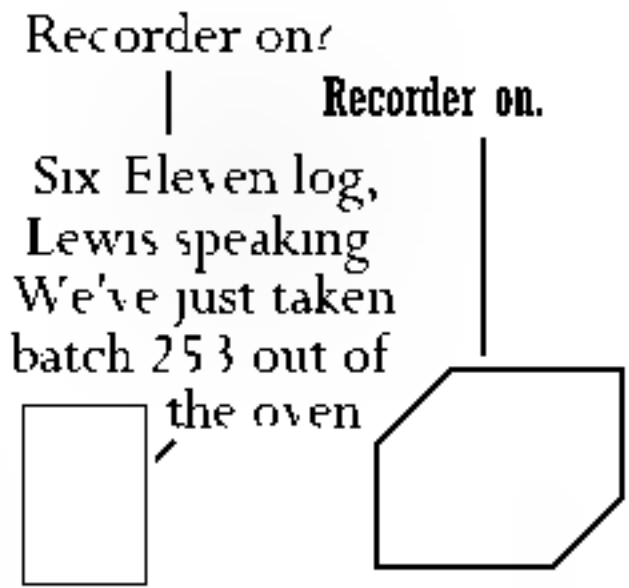


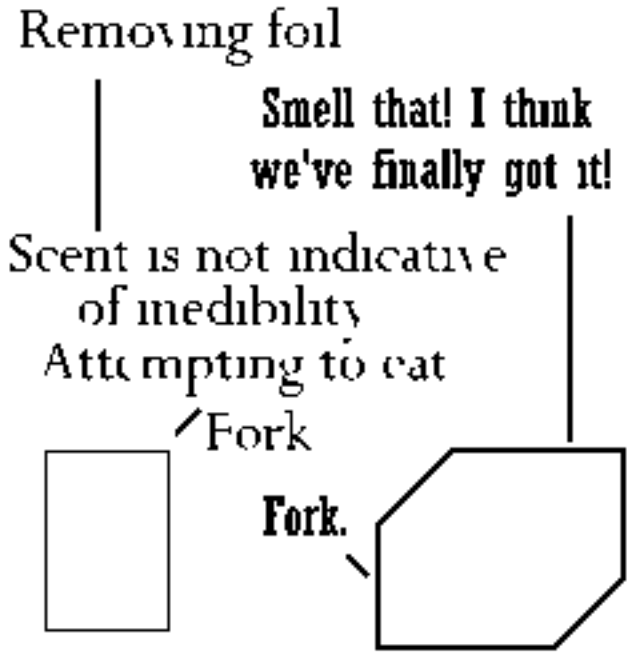

Triangle and Robert
I'm not mad, but I do think you suck at weather magic.
Actually, I think demarcation was the problem.
Demarcation?
I was applying weather magic for cuisine purposes. I thought it would work because I'm a cuisine mage.
Apparently my Valkyrie powers don't work like that.
Which Sentry would water be under?

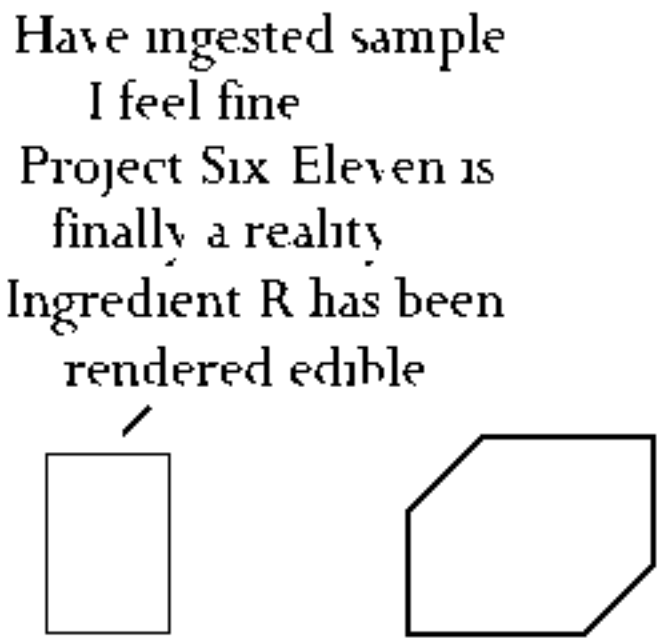
Triangle and Robert



It Was Made From People







It Was Made From People

It seemed to be a standard quiche, other than whatever this mysterious "Ingredient R" was. That made my next step clear.

Action?

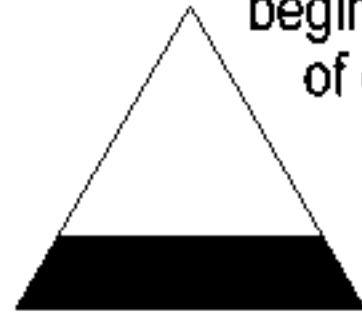
And plenty of it

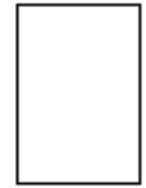
After the mysterious "Lewis" finished eating "batch 253", I followed him to an employee washroom, where I grabbed him and pulled him into the duct for interrogation

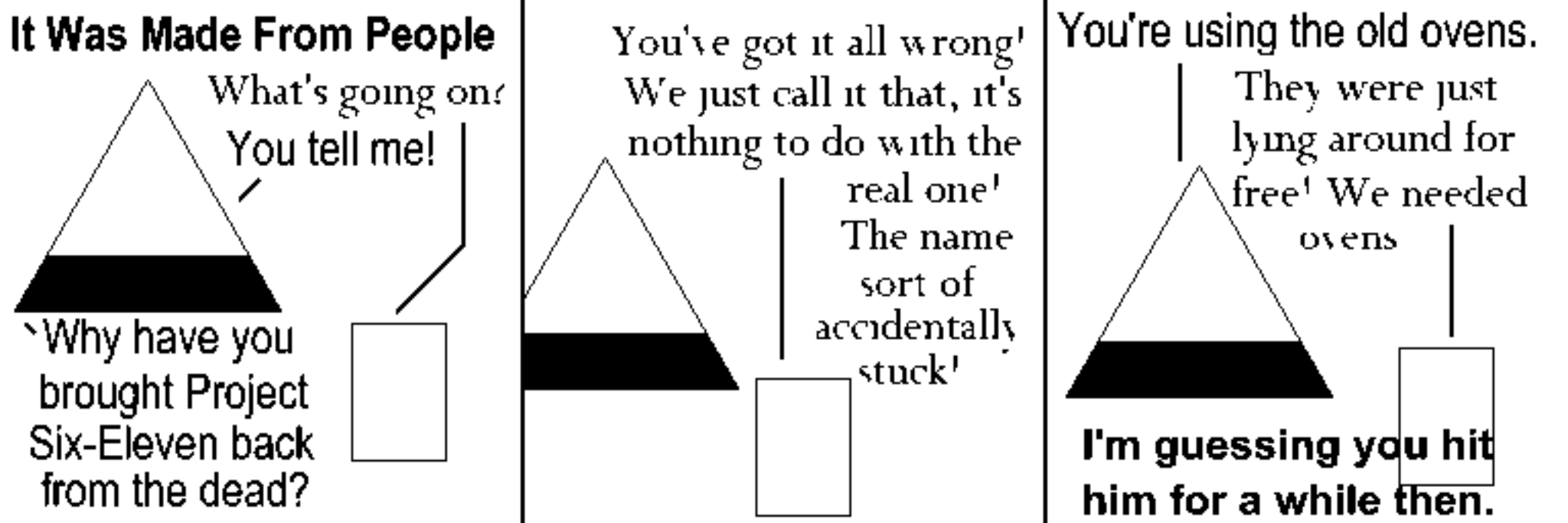
(I'm r t drawing this

Fair enough.

It took me a few moments to decide how to begin. I had a lot of questions.






It Was Made From People
What's going on?
You tell me!
`Why have you brought Project Six-Eleven back from the dead?
You've got it all wrong! We just call it that, it's nothing to do with the real one! The name sort of accidentally stuck!
You're using the old ovens.
They were just lying around for free! We needed ovens
I'm guessing you hit him for a while then.

It Was Made From People

After the hitting stopped, I tried asking again.

I'm telling you! We only started calling it "Project Six Eleven" because that name was on some of the equipment already!

It's not some unauthorized black op. If it has "no official existence" as you say, it's because the paperwork for official existence hasn't gone through yet. We're just making breakfast bars!

Oh yeah? And what's ingredient R?

Ingredient R is uh... tofu chips

You are the worst liar ever.

It Was Made From People

I realized I'd overdone the second beating, so I chucked Lewis out of the duct near a nurses' station.

Do you think he lived?

Apparently he did.

I needed answers. I thought I needed answers. Eavesdropping and beating both failed. That left me with eavesdropping some more.

I'd have gone with more beating.

I thought you gave up your anger.

I mean I would have at the time, assuming it was before my Valkyrie incident.

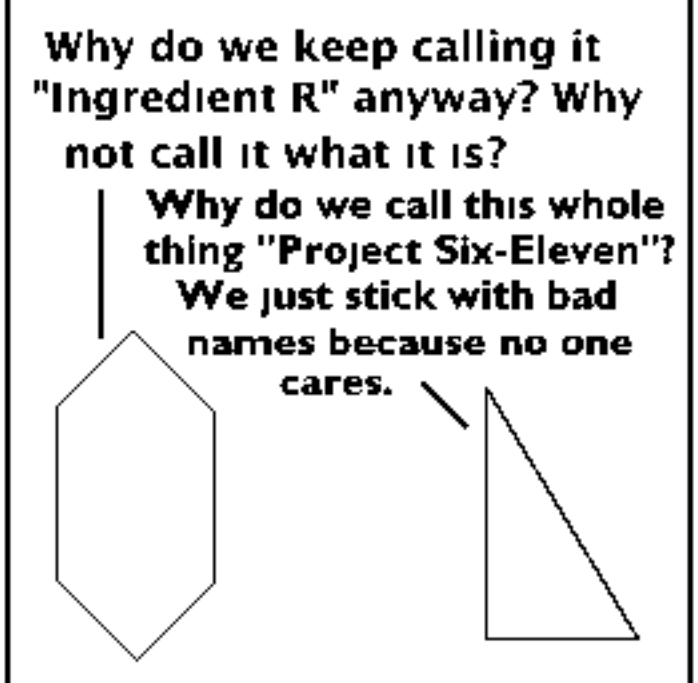
Keeping more beating in reserve, I attempted eavesdropping some more. It was not long before I had stowed away on a private cargo plane....

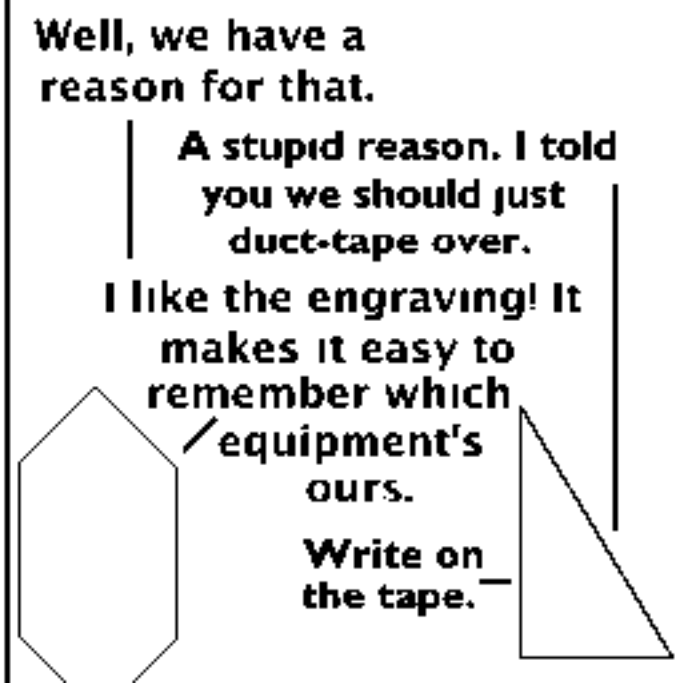
It Was Made From People

The plane was going to pick up more Ingredient R. The pilot and the sole passenger were both in on the new Project. I secreted* myself in the cargo hold.

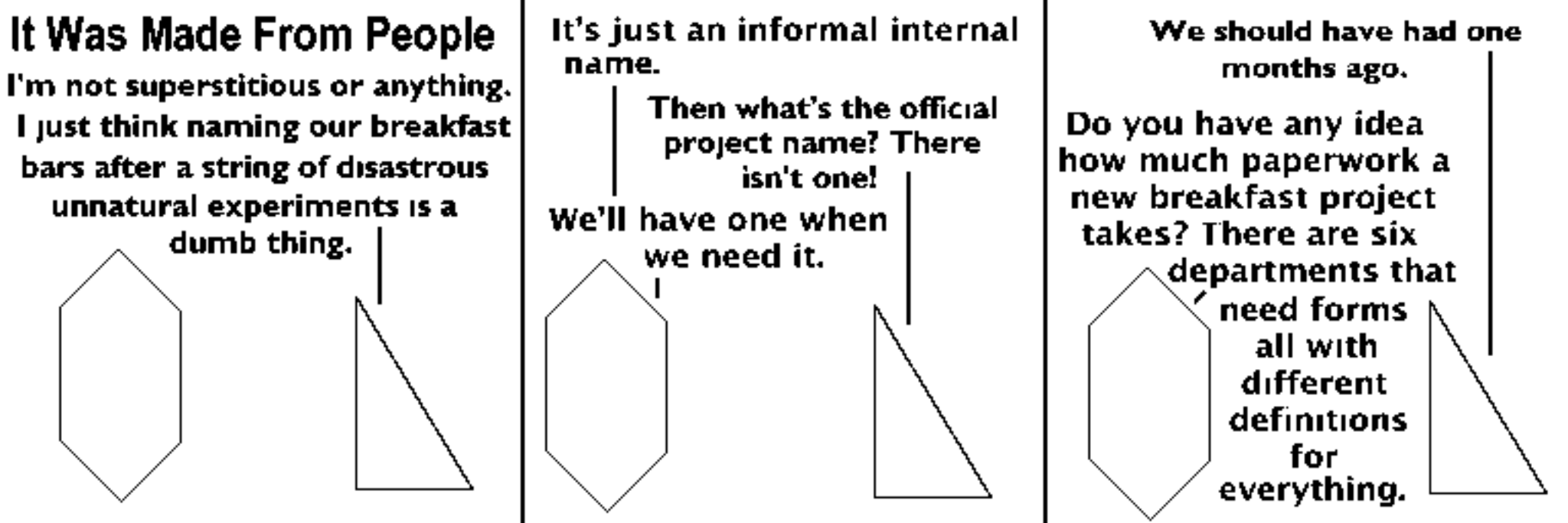
* stress on first syllable*

* needless caption



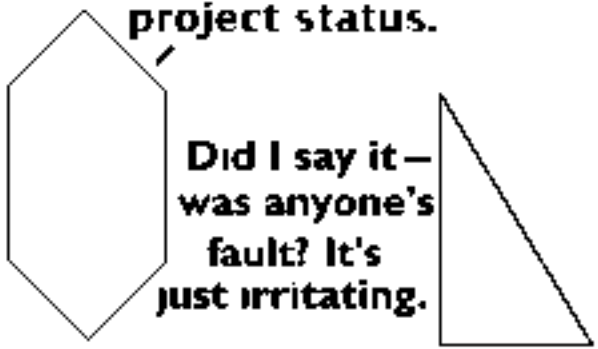


It Was Made From People



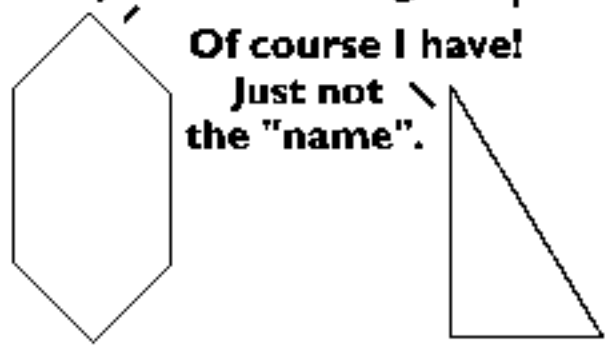
It Was Made From People

We keep flinging paperwork back and forth. None of it makes any sense. It's not our fault we have no official project status.



I can't go home and say I spent all day working on Project Six-Eleven. My wife would have me killed.

You haven't told her what you're working on?

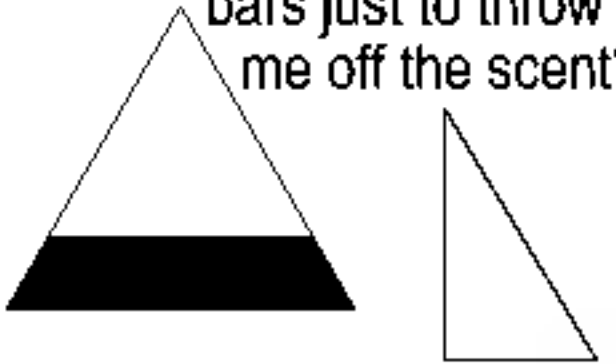


That was when I started to wonder if this Project Six-Eleven was anything to worry about. Dabblers in the dark arts rarely tell their family at dinner

What if the whole conversation was staged to throw you off?

It Was Made From People

Excuse me, are you serious or is this conversation about paperwork and breakfast bars just to throw me off the scent?



You're not serious.

Of course I'm not serious. I stayed hidden and kept listening.

Making things up during a flashback sequence is bad for space time

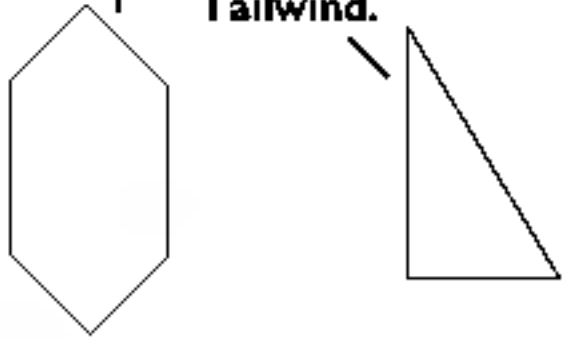
No, you just stink at flashbacks.

Well, yes, that's the root cause of the instability

We're almost there.

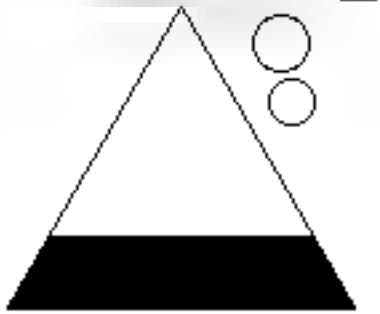
That was fast.

Tailwind.

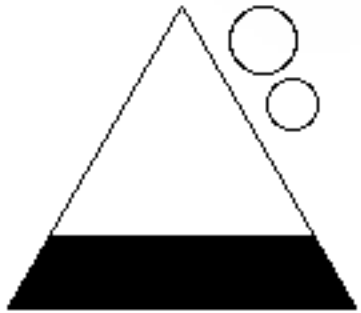


It Was Made From People

They're bringing in the Ingredient R now.



An organic farm would be a great cover for a polygon slaughterhouse.

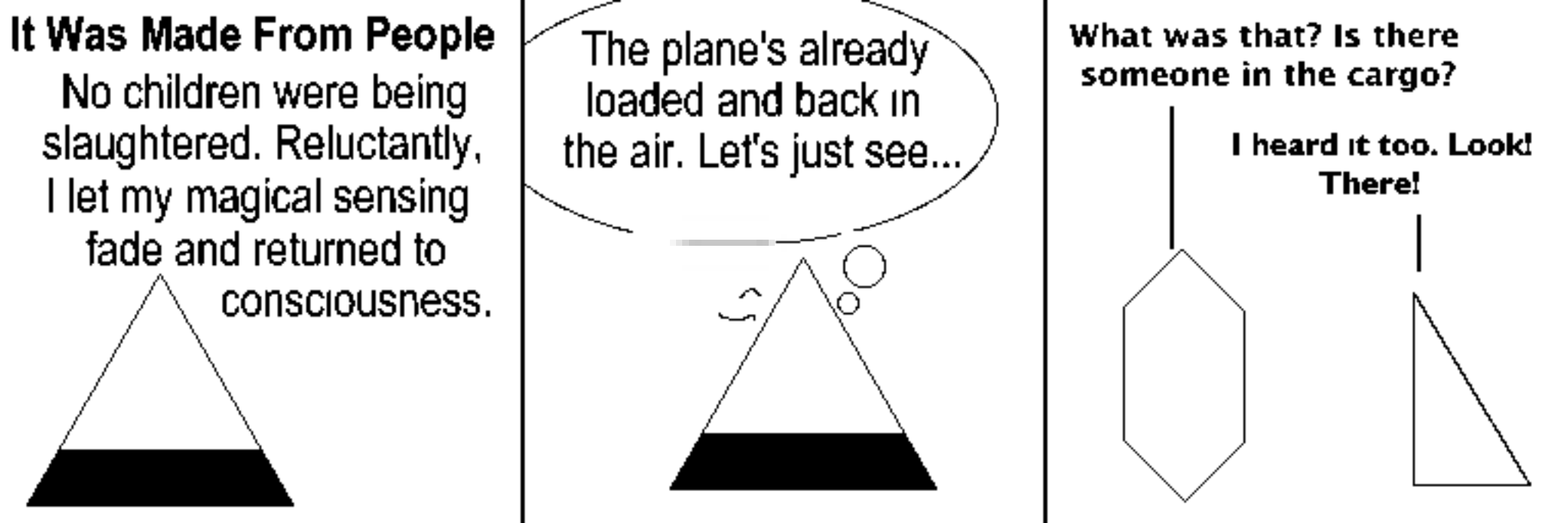


It would also make a great source for high-quality tofu

I stretched my magical senses to their limit and found nothing else

Could energy from the tofu have been masking the slaughter?

No. Nothing else detects as tofu. Ever.


It Was Made From People
No children were being slaughtered. Reluctantly, I let my magical sensing fade and returned to consciousness.
The plane's already loaded and back in the air. Let's just see...
What was that? Is there someone in the cargo?
I heard it too. Look! There!

It Was Made From People

They saw me. This has to be fast.

Who's that?

Tofu chunks Not something you'd expect in a breakfast bar, but not actually sinister.

Ever been so embarrassed that you jumped out of a plane?

Uh... I wasn't here!

It Was Made From People

It was around this point that I realized the only thing I'd eaten in too long was fondue and my last-ditch sensing attempt had almost entirely drained my grain-based powers.

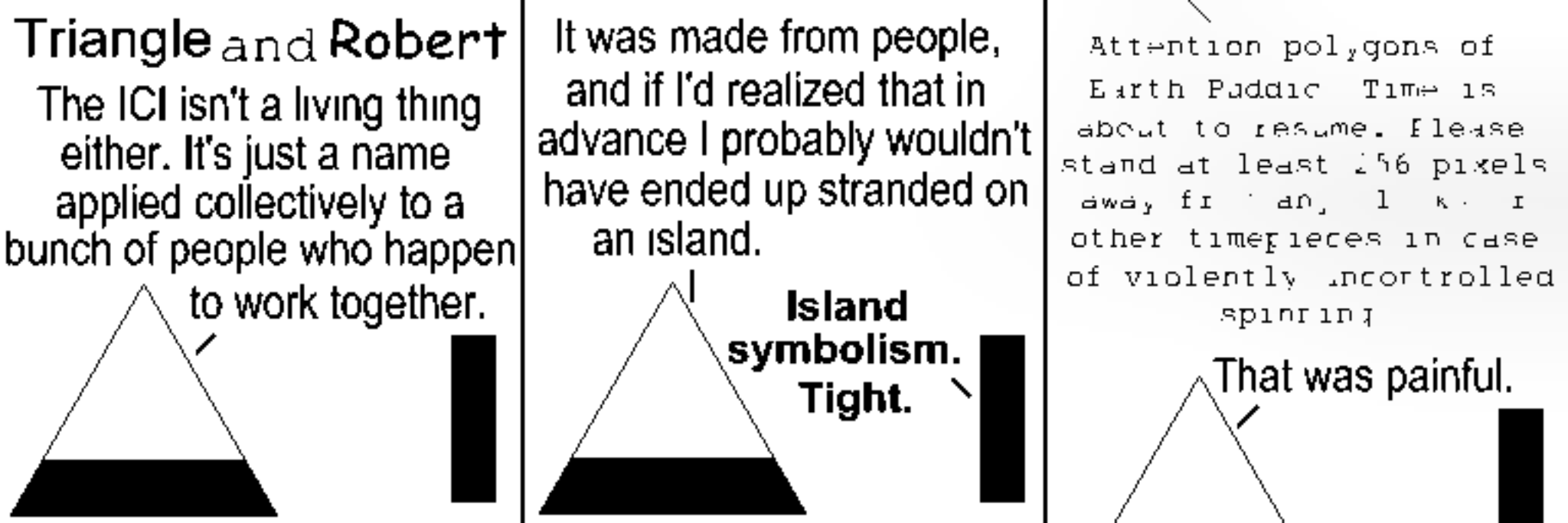
Around the jumping-out-of-plane point?

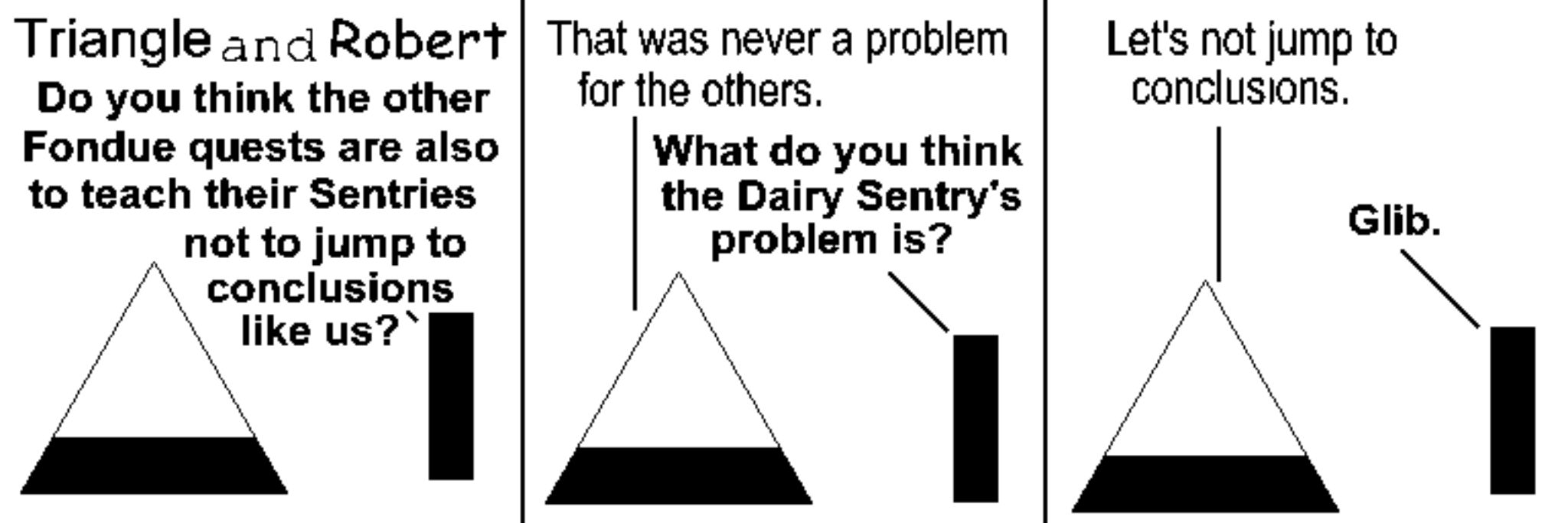
A few seconds after. I barely managed to pull together a gliding cruller and find land to land on.

And that's where Cube's crew found you.

So what's with the title?

On the way down I understood my mistake. I had been thinking of Project Six-Eleven as a living thing, an entity with its own reason for existing A research project isn't its name, or its ovens, or its cuisine-magical signature.


Triangle and Robert
The ICI isn't a living thing either. It's just a name applied collectively to a bunch of people who happen to work together.
It was made from people, and if I'd realized that in advance I probably wouldn't have ended up stranded on an island.
Island symbolism. Tight.
Attention polygons of Earth Public Time is about to resume. Please stand at least 256 pixels away from any clocks or other timepieces in case of violently uncontrolled spinning
That was painful.


Triangle and Robert
Do you think the other Fondue quests are also to teach their Sentries not to jump to conclusions like us?`
That was never a problem for the others.
What do you think the Dairy Sentry's problem is?
Let's not jump to conclusions.
Glib.

The Beforings

The Cartoonist's interference
has become unpredictable
It would be no great loss
at this point to abandon the
Universe of Pudding

We are in agreement
yet there is also principle
to consider

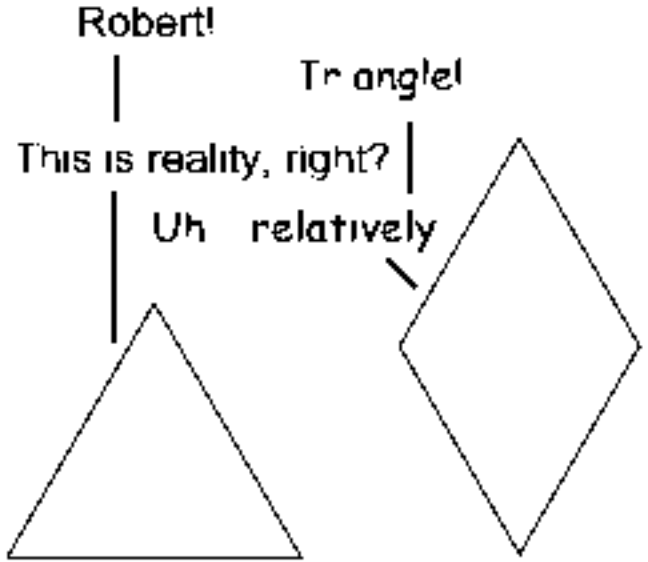
Understood We are not to
willingly let our work be
subverted even in a trifling
universe

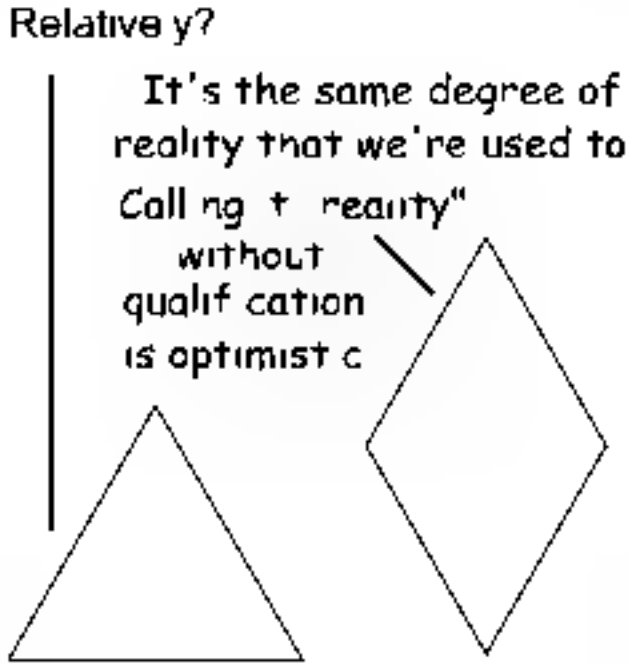
There still remain
royal instruments
The defense of our
plan is not impossible

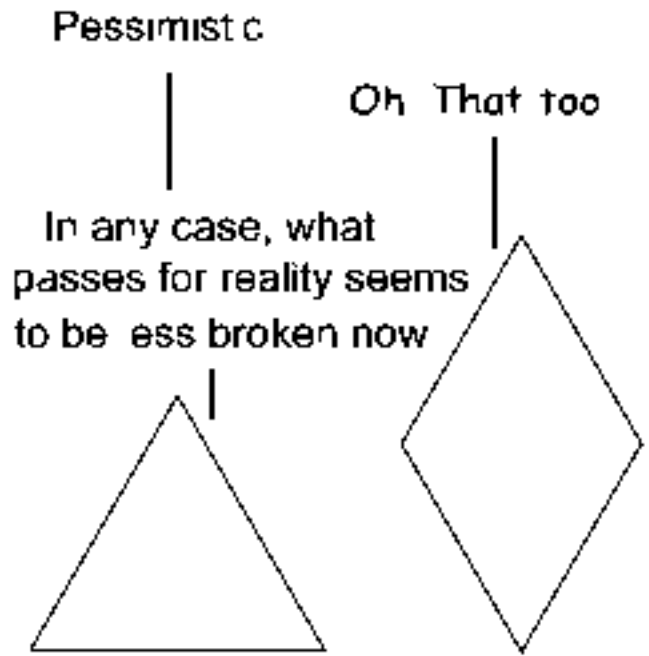
That our plan requires
defense itself is a
significant matter
Unseen puddings gather

The universe itself
is of no consequence
Requirements are relative

Triangle and Robert



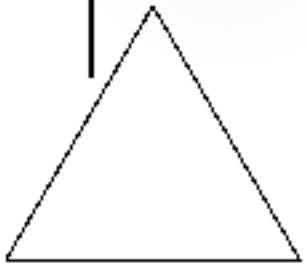


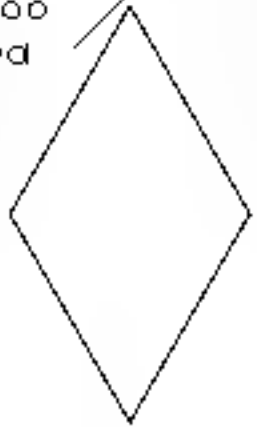


Triangle and Robert

So can we get an explanation?

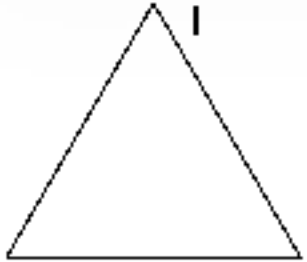
It's not too complicated

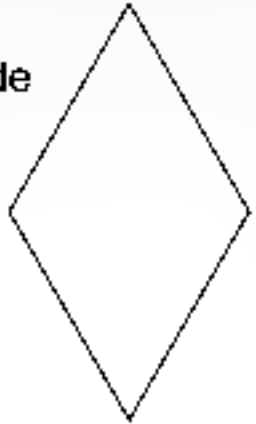




Time was glitching because your world is nearing Beta Tapioca, so I introduced flashbacks to put me in charge of time instead of it

And that just made everything worse



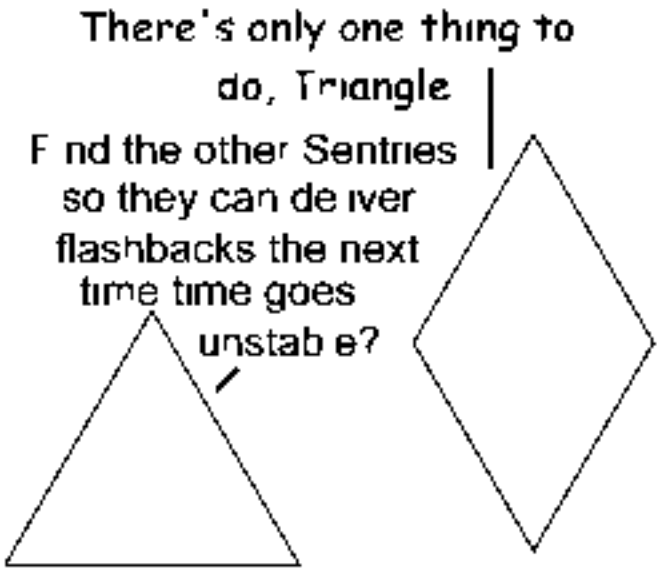


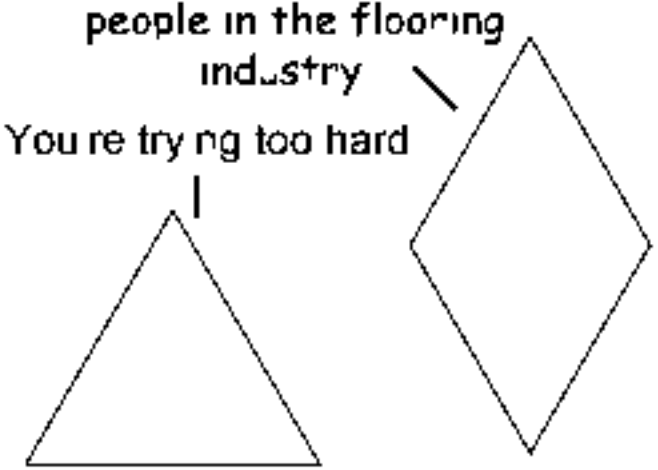
Horribly so, in the short term, but the flashbacks let your world rule out the worst of what would have happened otherwise

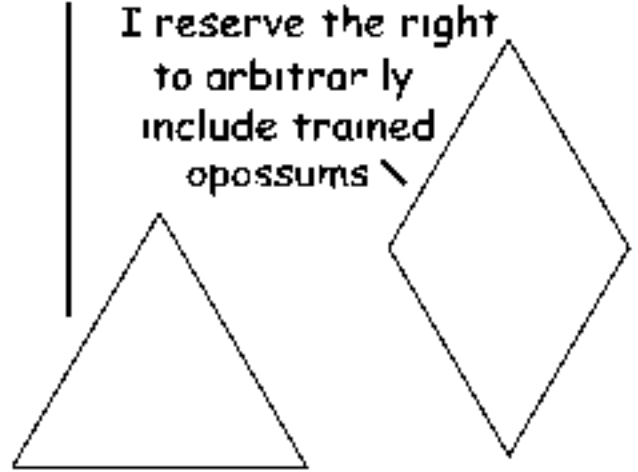
You're saying that all this mess was planned out to protect us?

No, I just write the plan now, retroactively. The fact that I can do that means it worked

Triangle and Robert

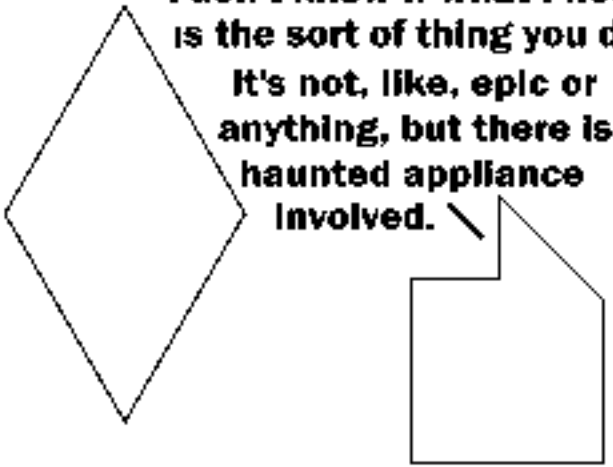


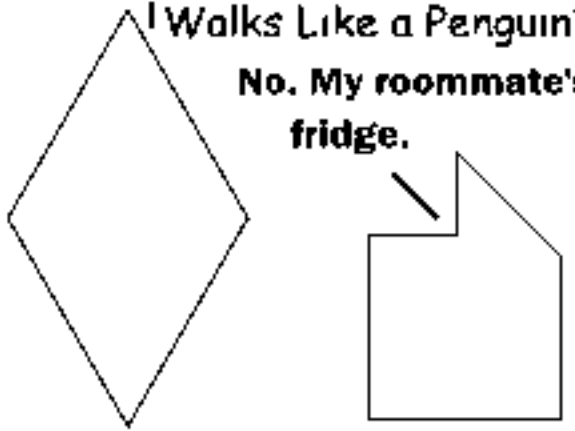


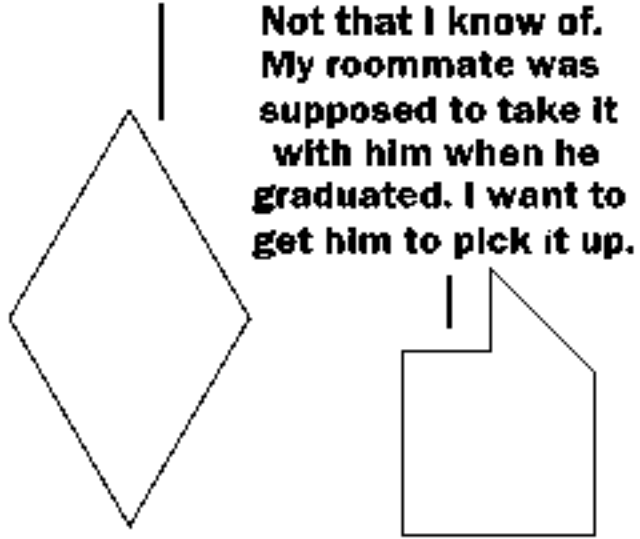


Triangle and Robert

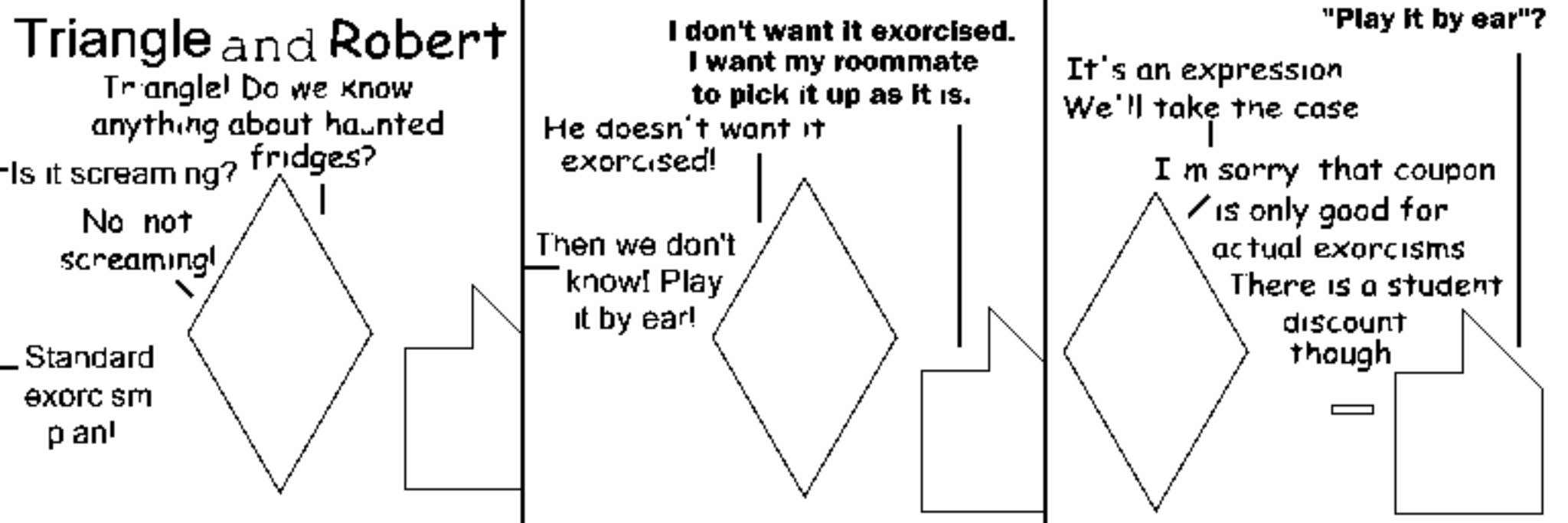
T&RWSC!



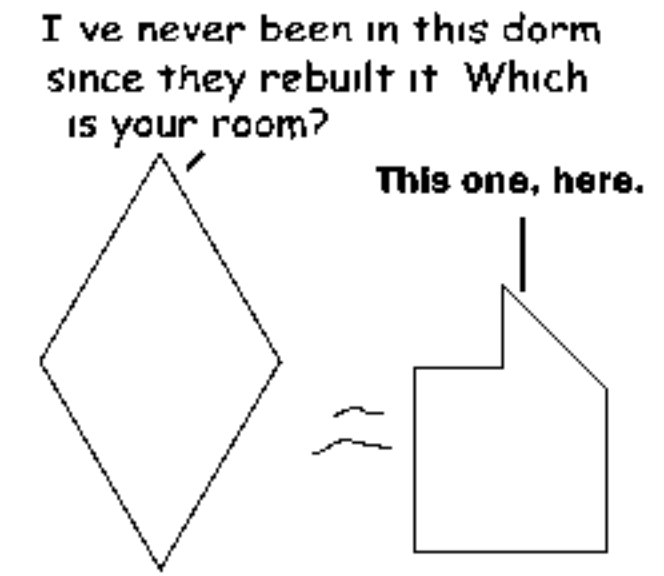


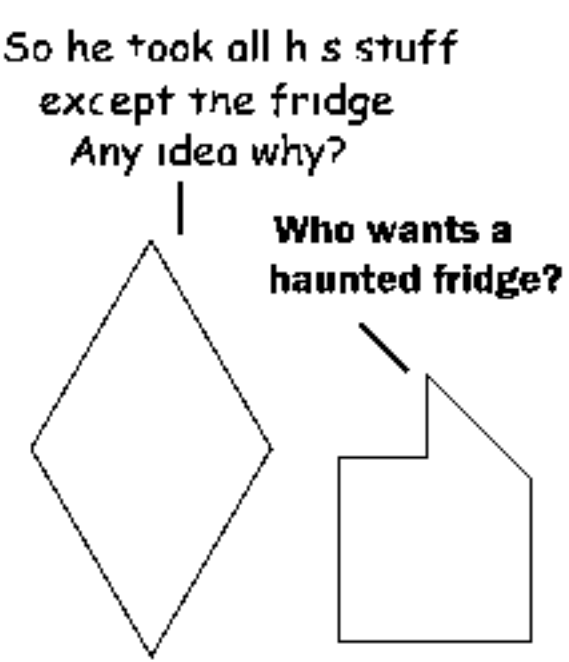


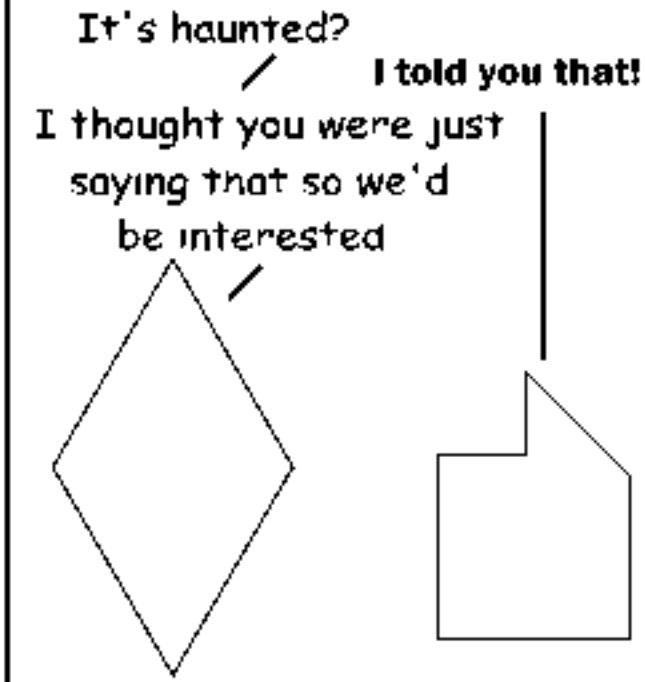
Triangle and Robert



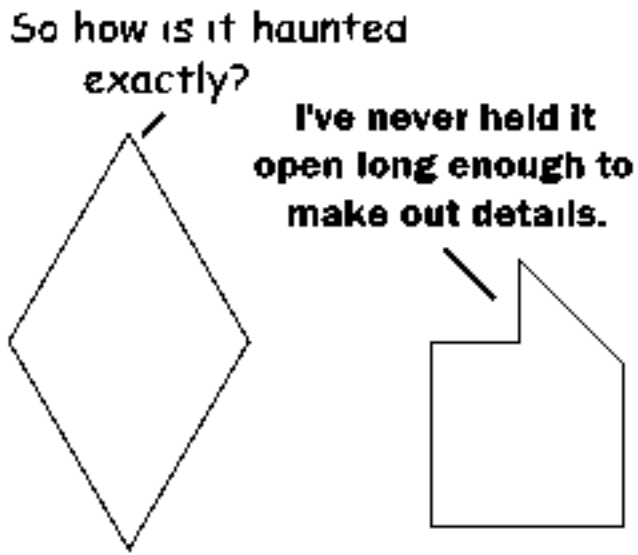
Triangle and Robert

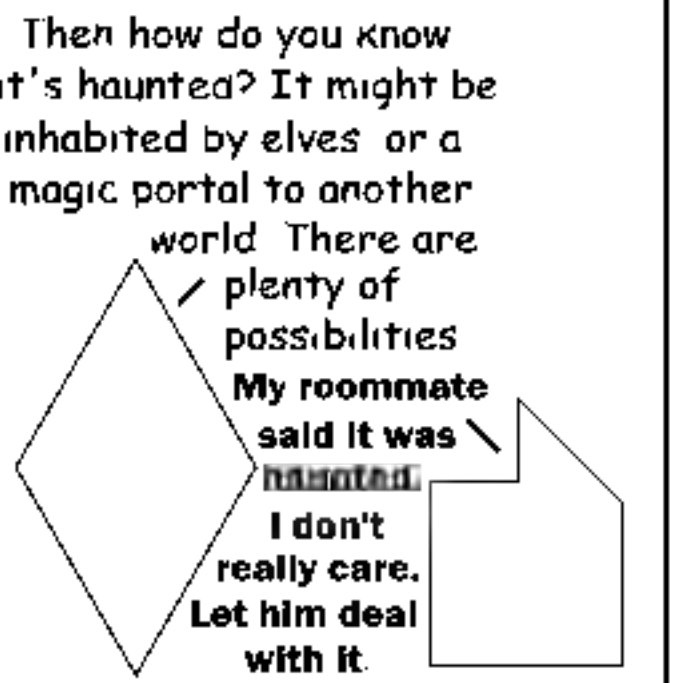


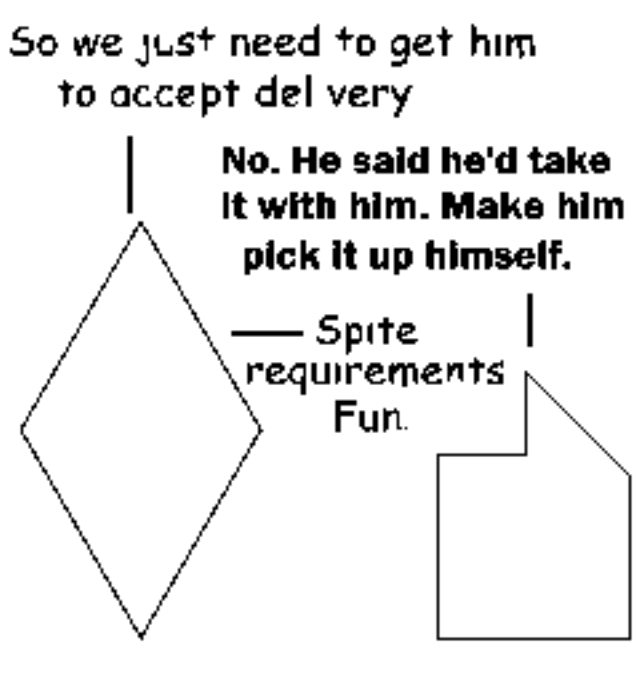




Triangle and Robert

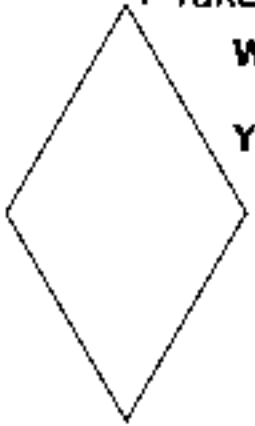




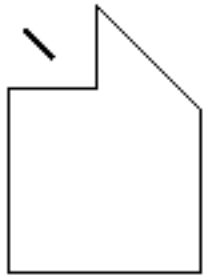


Triangle and Robert

How unsafe would it be for me to open the fridge door and I take a quick peek?

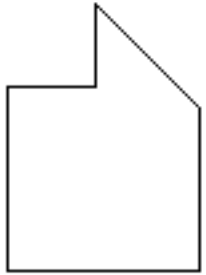


Whatever's in there wants it shut. You'll know when.



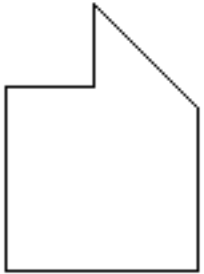
2. I

Yes That is haunted

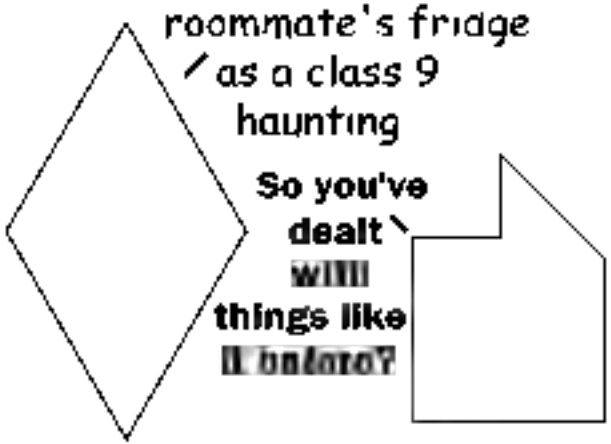


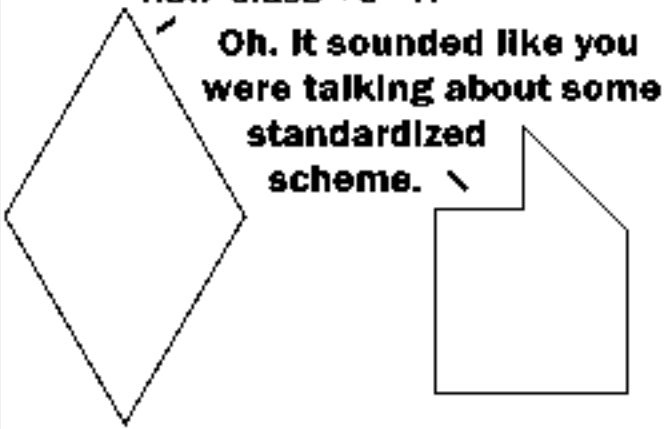
Wait there, I'l br ng a towel and tweezers Do you need floss too?

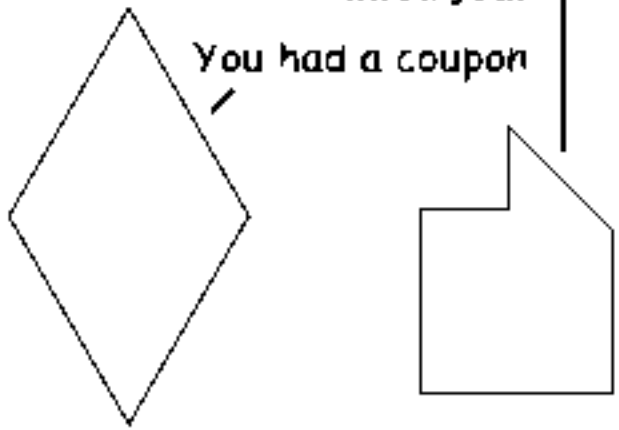
How did you guess? I could use some calamine lotion while you re at it



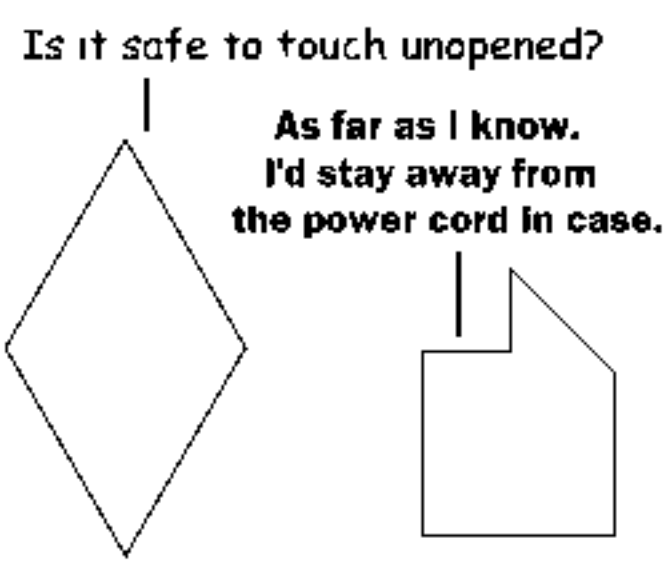
Triangle and Robert

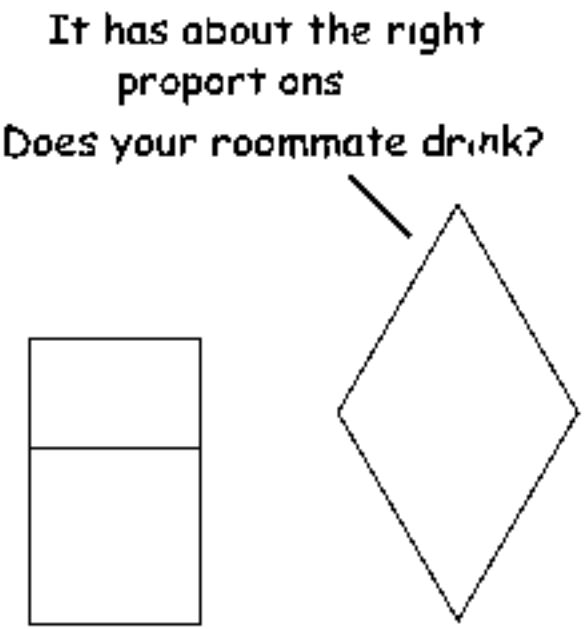


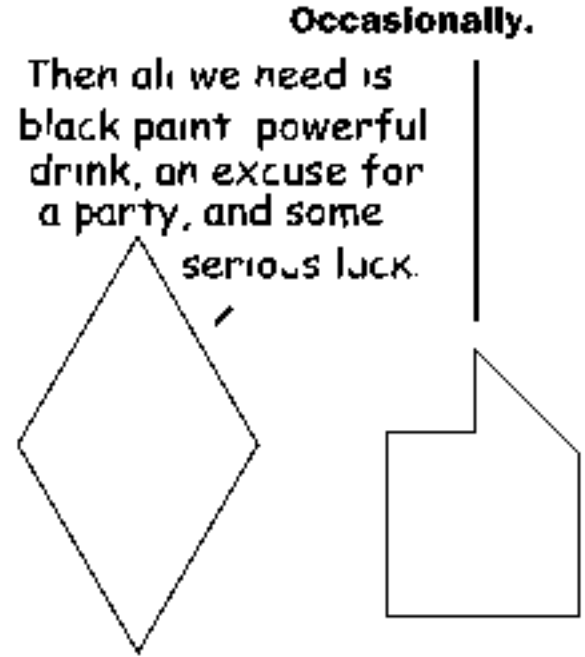




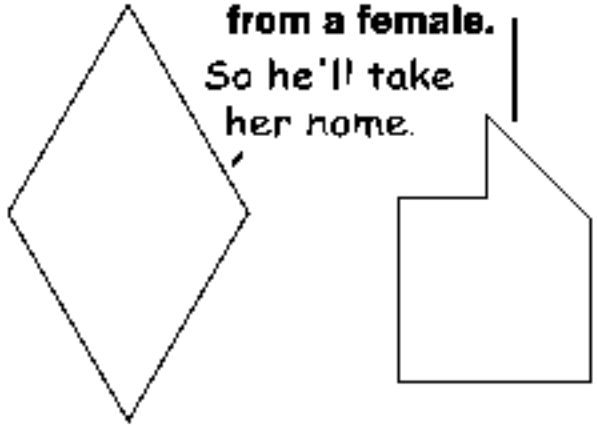
Triangle and Robert

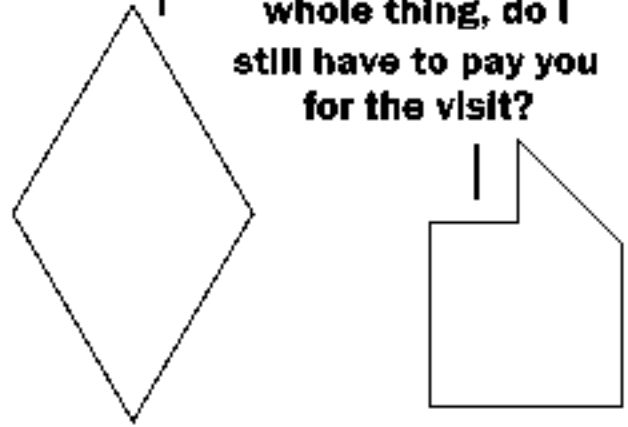




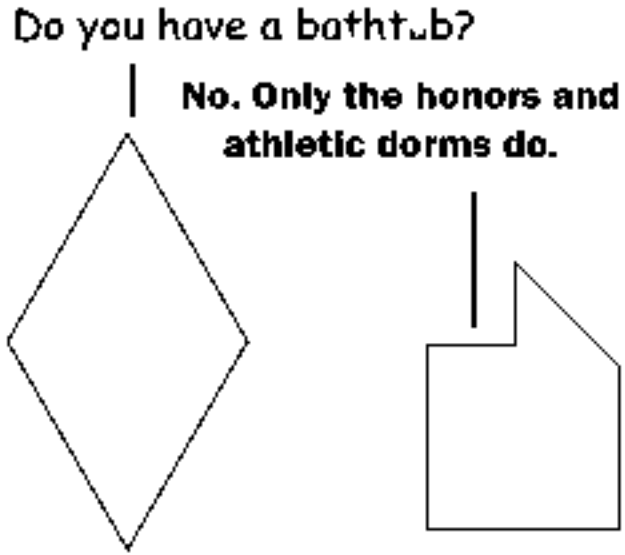


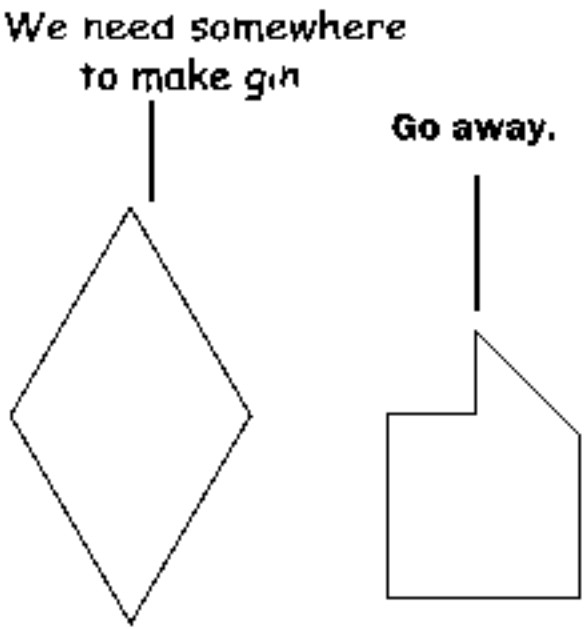
Triangle and Robert

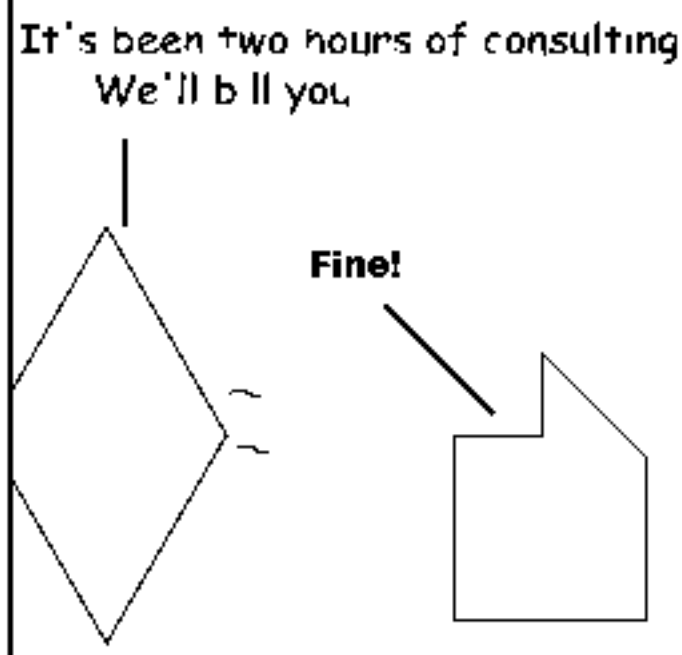




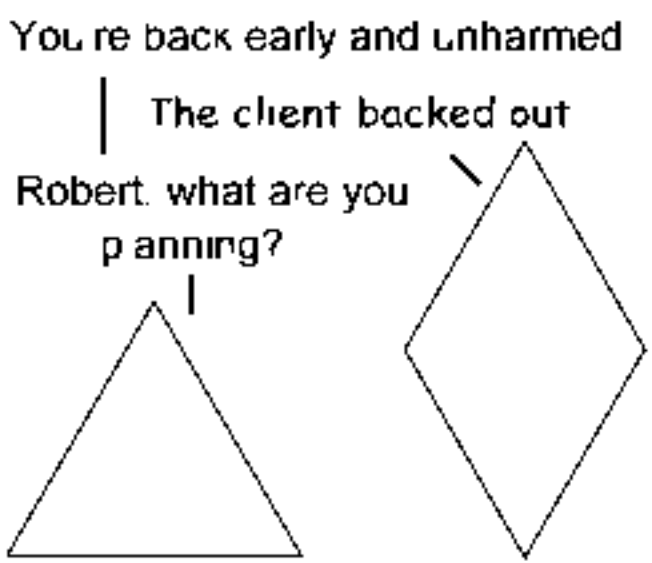
Triangle and Robert

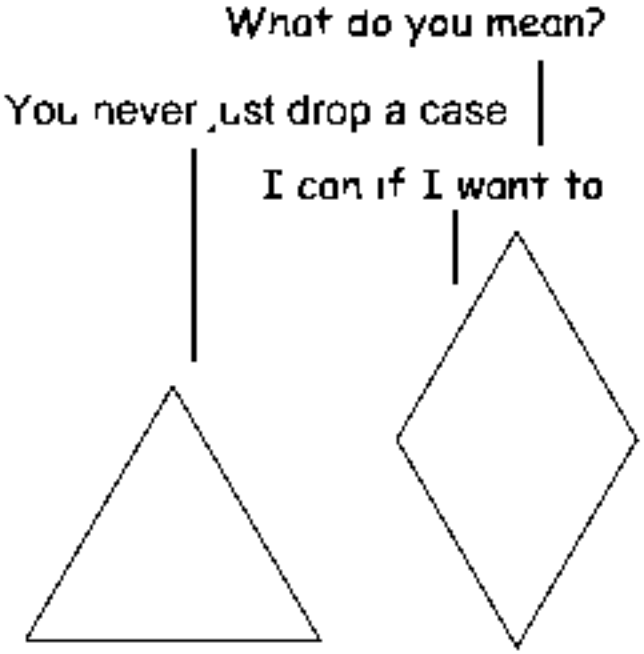


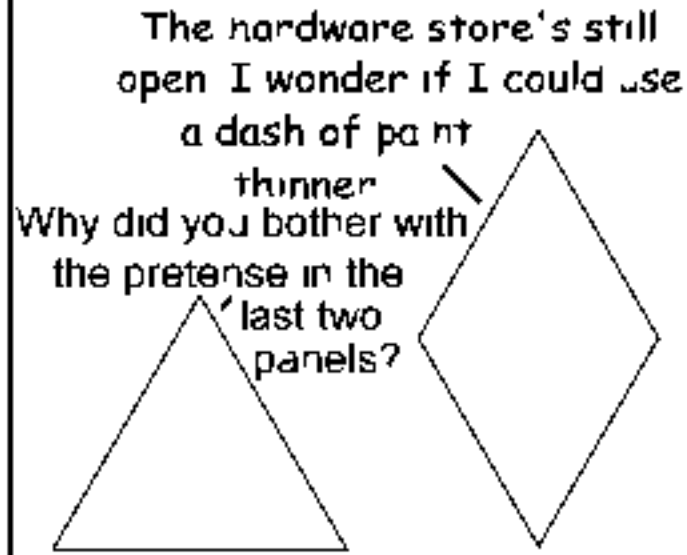




Triangle and Robert





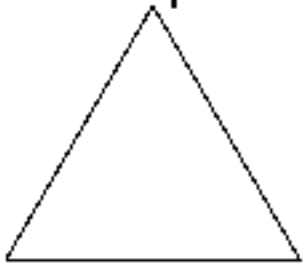


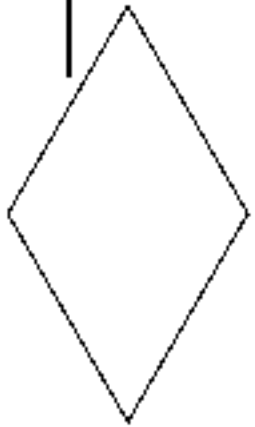
Triangle and Robert

What s the hardware for?

I m going to throw a party

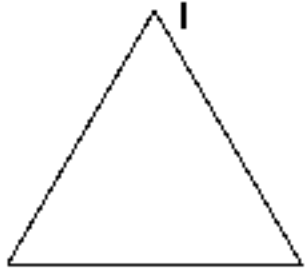
A d sastrous party?

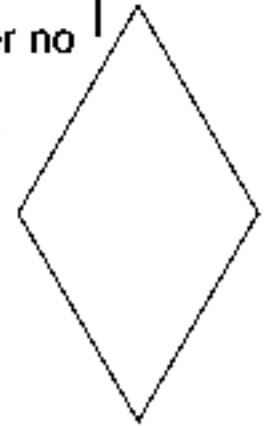




With any luck one of the guests will wake up next to a haunted refrigerator

If the c ient refuses service they re under no obligat on to pay us if we de iver anyway





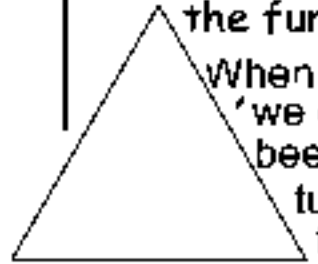
When have we ever been about turning a profit?

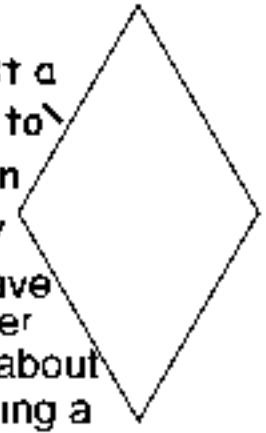
Almost a ways

Wrong!

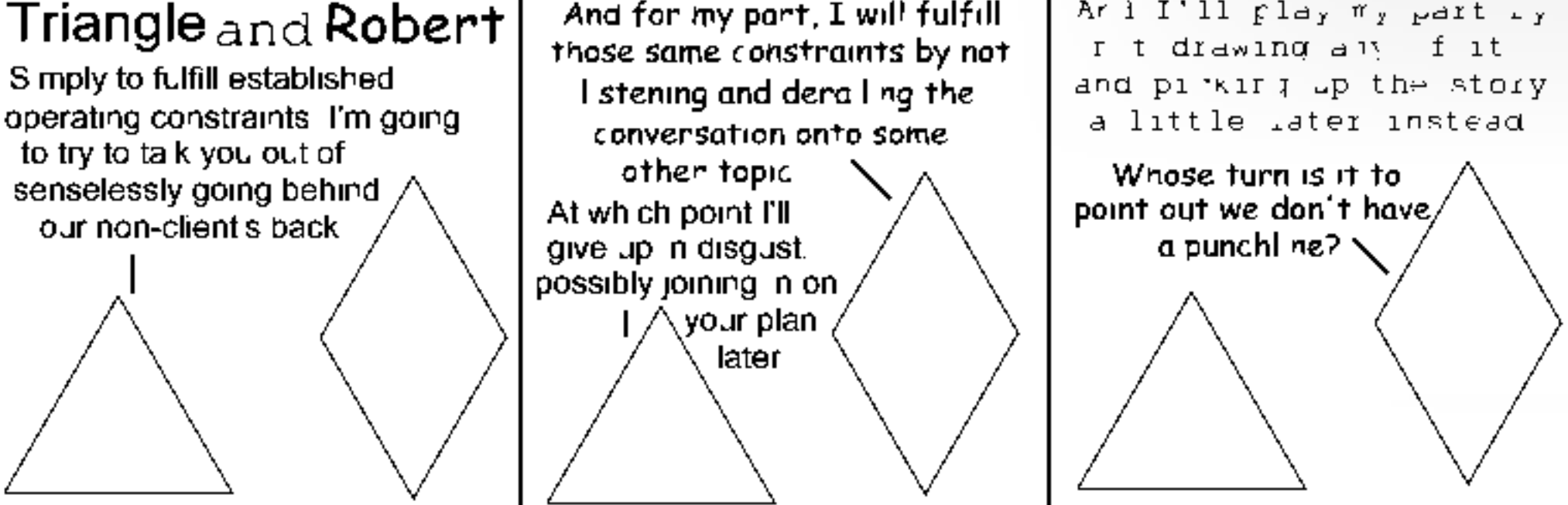
Prof t is just a plot device to help bring on the funny

When have we ever been about turning a funny?





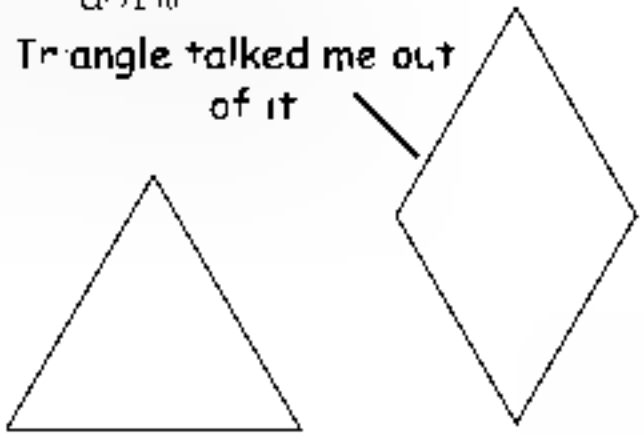
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Later, at the d[illegible] h[illegible]
Why aren't you at the dorm

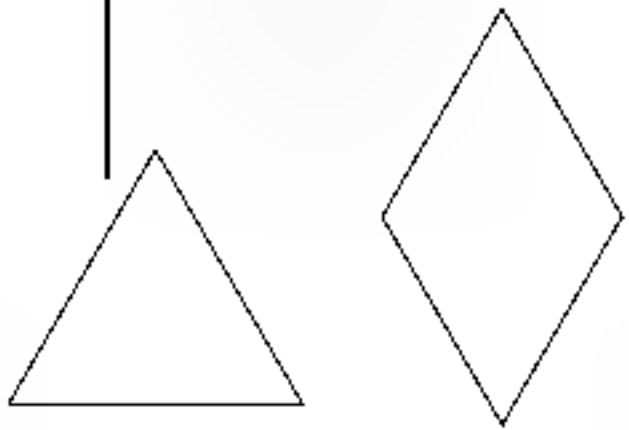
Triangle talked me out of it



Really

Really

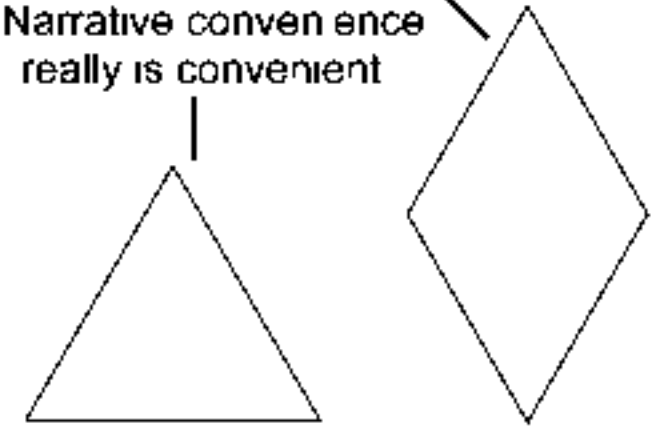
First time for everything



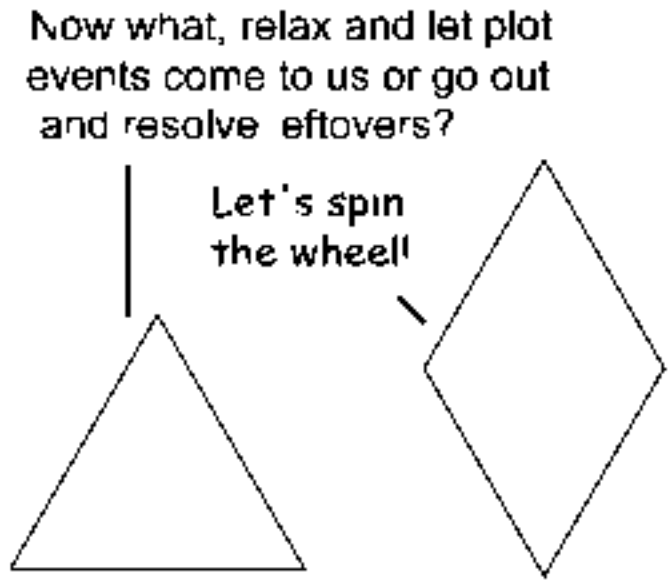
S[illegible] is that it for the haunted fridge

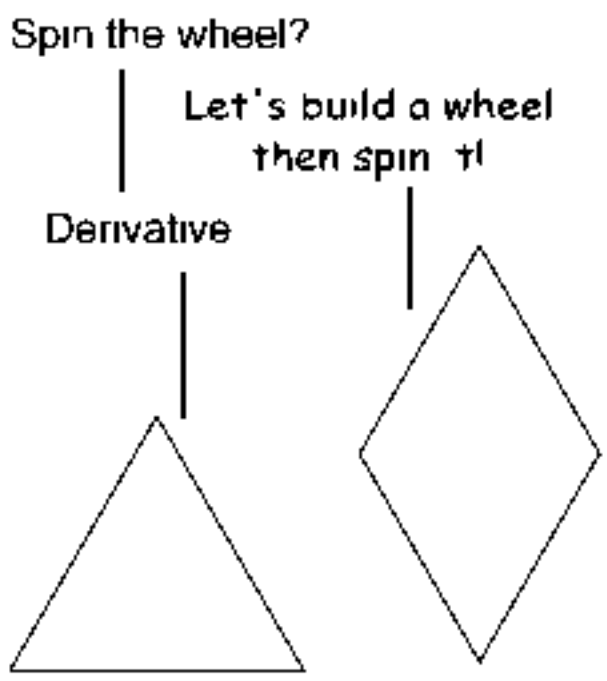
It'll recur if it's important

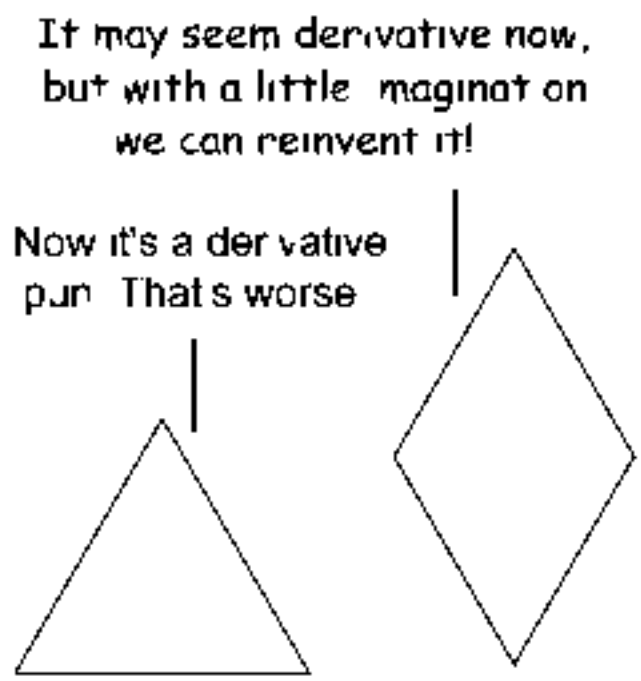
Narrative convenience really is convenient



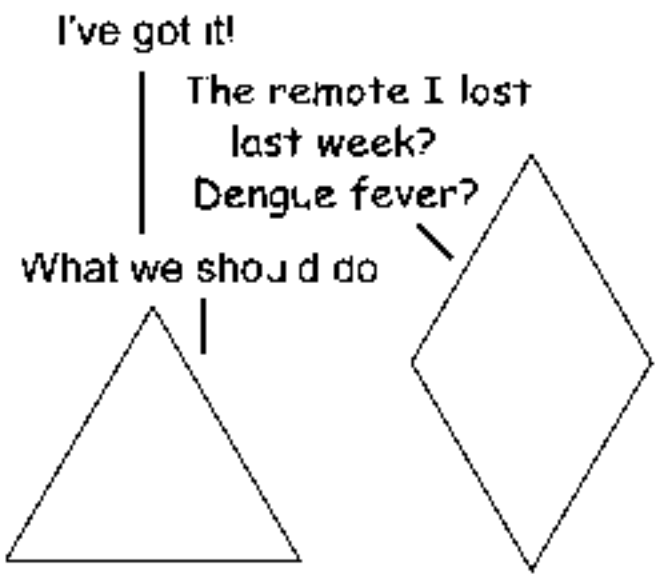
Triangle and Robert

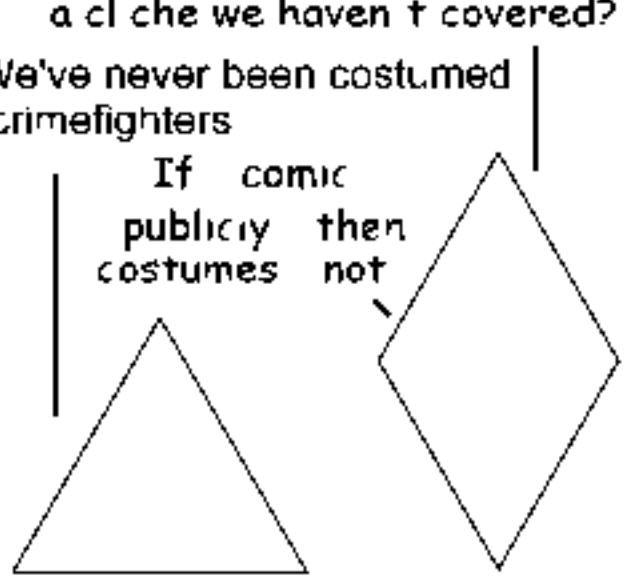


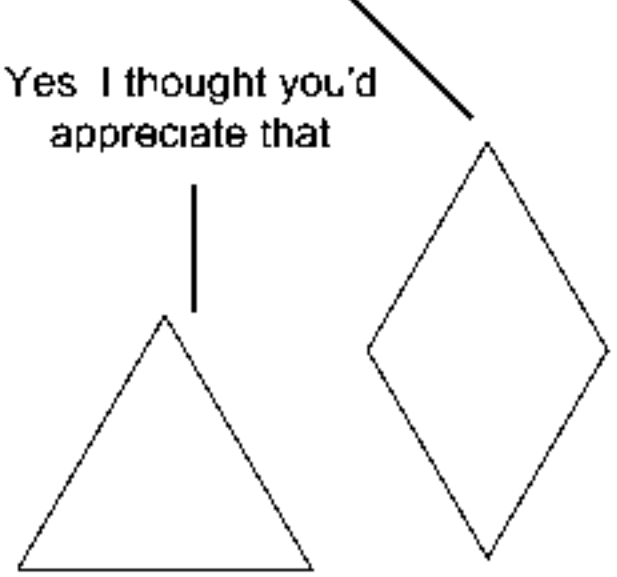




Triangle and Robert







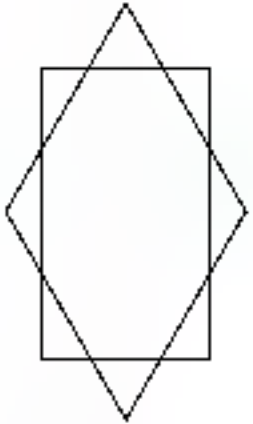
Triangle and Robert

Into the old streets of the city stride its newest defenders...

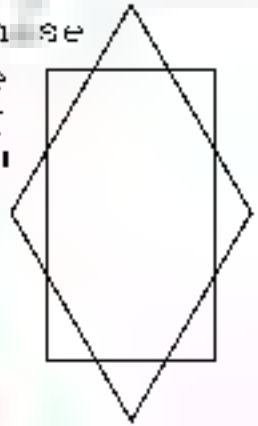
Unum

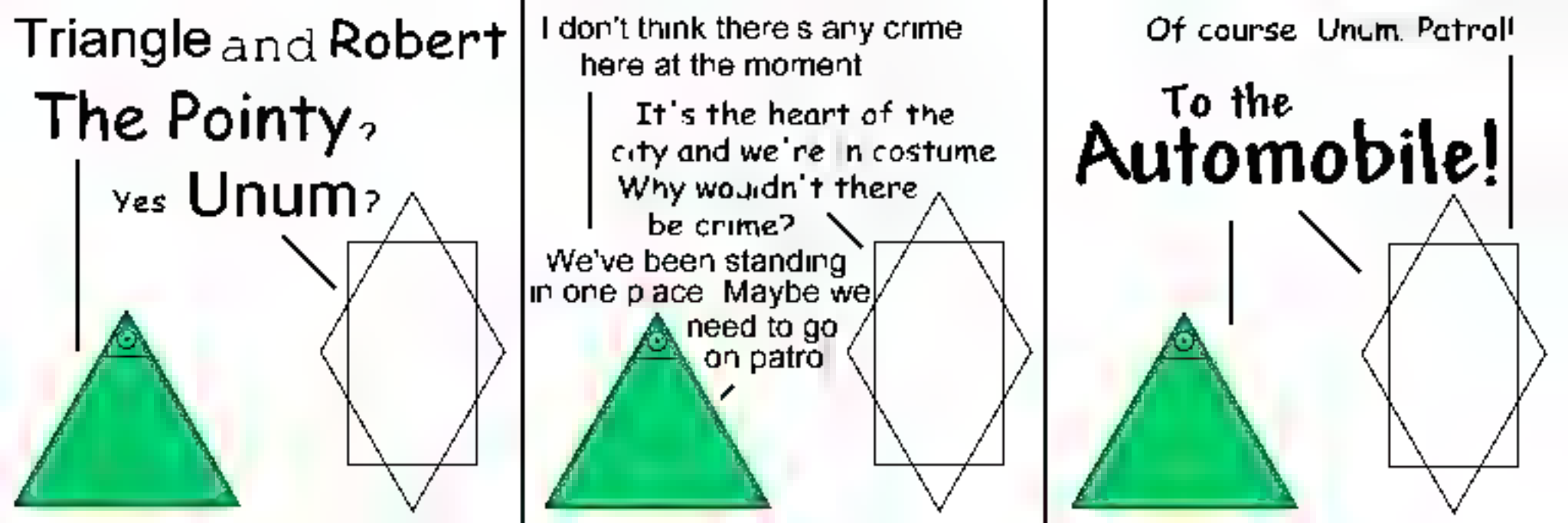
and

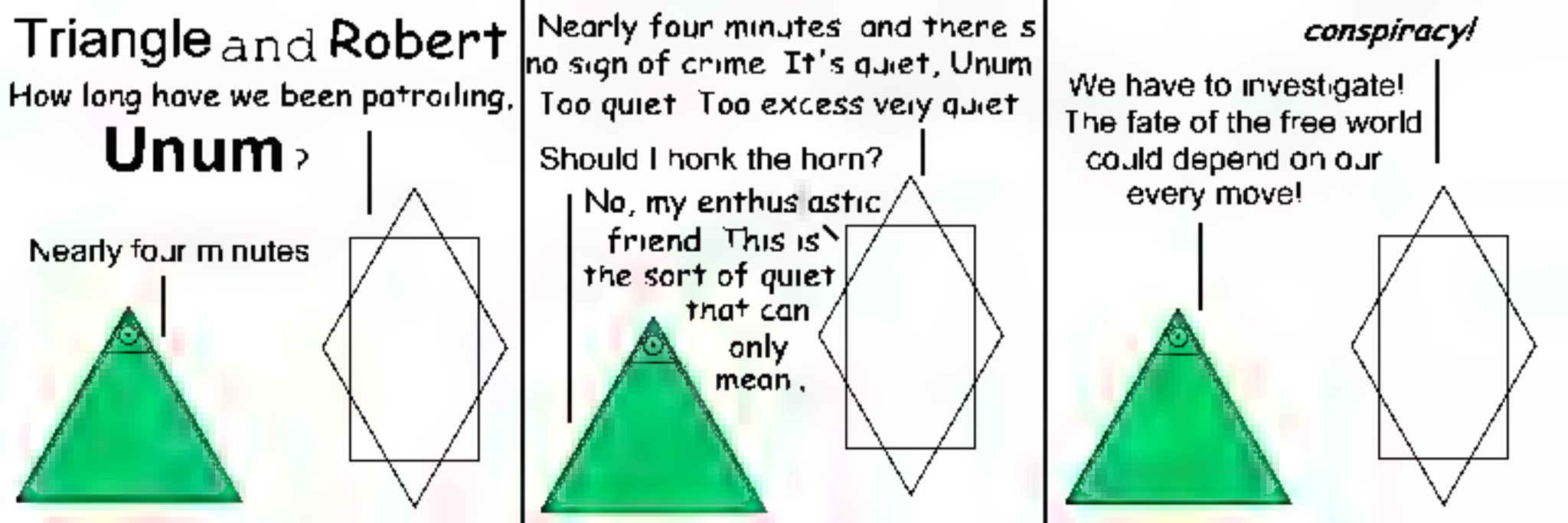
The Pointy



These mysterious costumed vigilantes possess strange powers far beyond those of normal polygons, and have taken a solemn vow only to use these powers in the defense of justice!



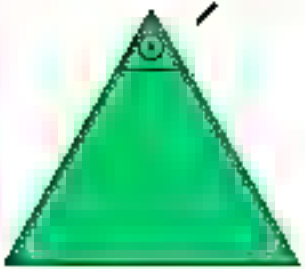

Triangle and Robert The Pointy?
Yes Unum?
I don't think there's any crime here at the moment
It's the heart of the city and we're in costume. Why wouldn't there be crime?
We've been standing in one place. Maybe we need to go on patrol
Of course Unum. Patrol!
To the Automobile!

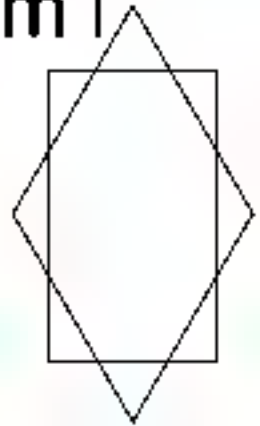

Triangle and Robert
How long have we been patrolling, Unum?
Nearly four minutes
Nearly four minutes and there's no sign of crime. It's quiet, Unum. Too quiet. Too excessively quiet.
Should I honk the horn?
No, my enthusiastic friend. This is the sort of quiet that can only mean...
conspiracy!
We have to investigate! The fate of the free world could depend on our every move!

Triangle and Robert

Where should our investigation begin?

I'm not so sure this is a job for Unum and Pointy

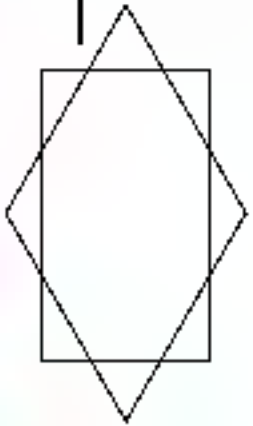




The Pointy

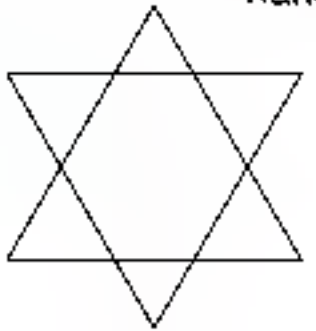
We've been over that

Sorry about that chum In any case, we should consider de egating this one to ..

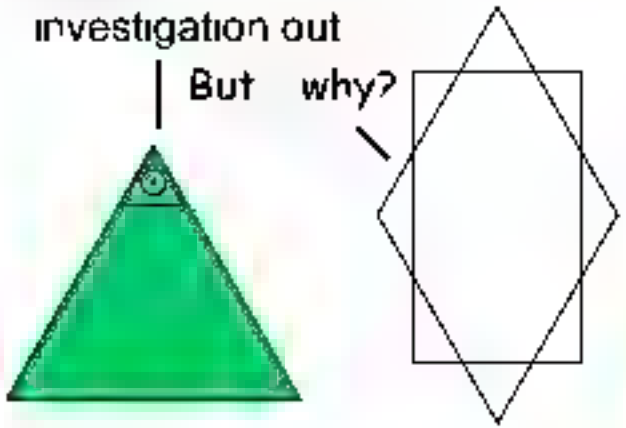


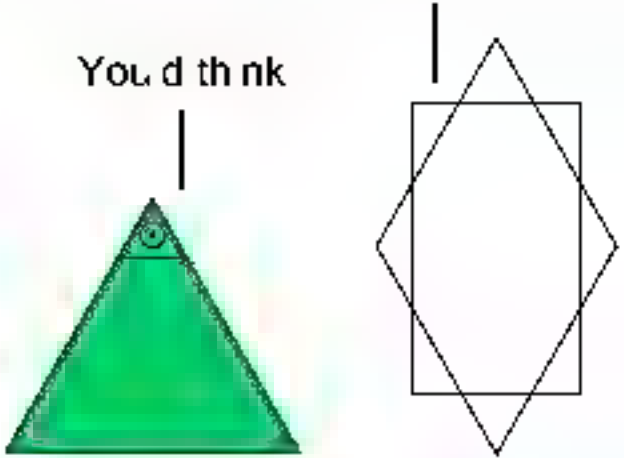
Qabala and Ant-Rhombus

No I th nk we can handle it ourselves



Triangle and Robert The Pointy

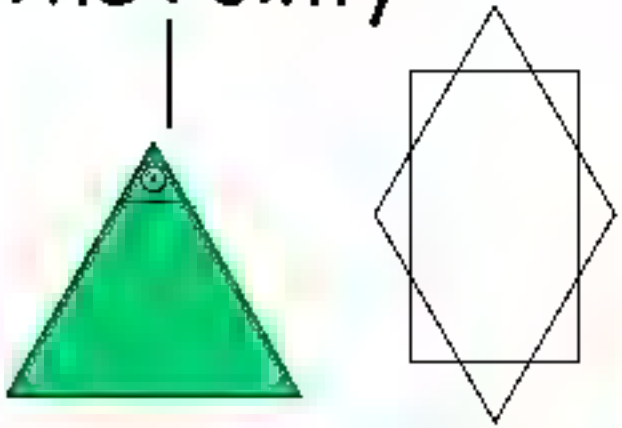




Triangle and Robert

It can't be *Qabala* and

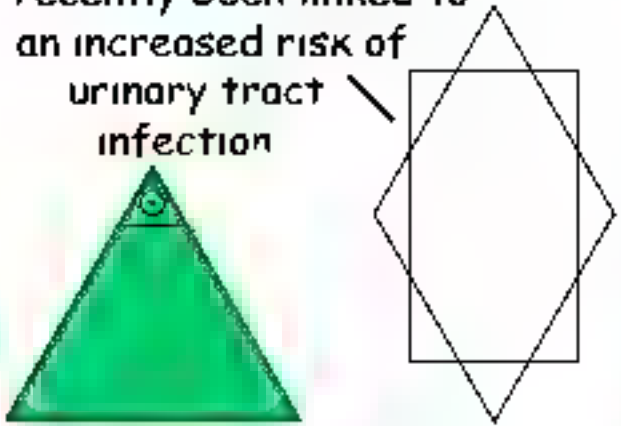
The Pointy!



I'm sorry, Unum but

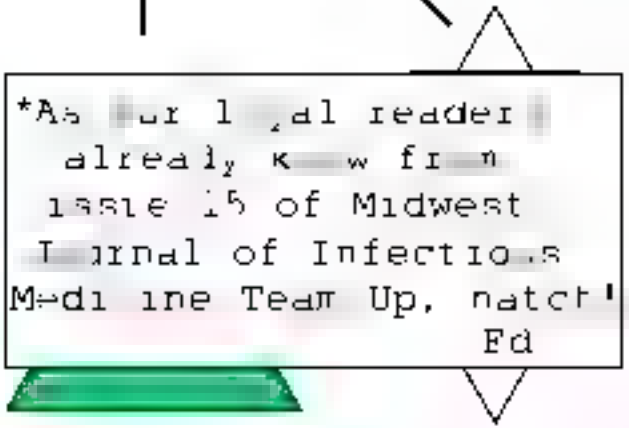
Ant-Rhombus's

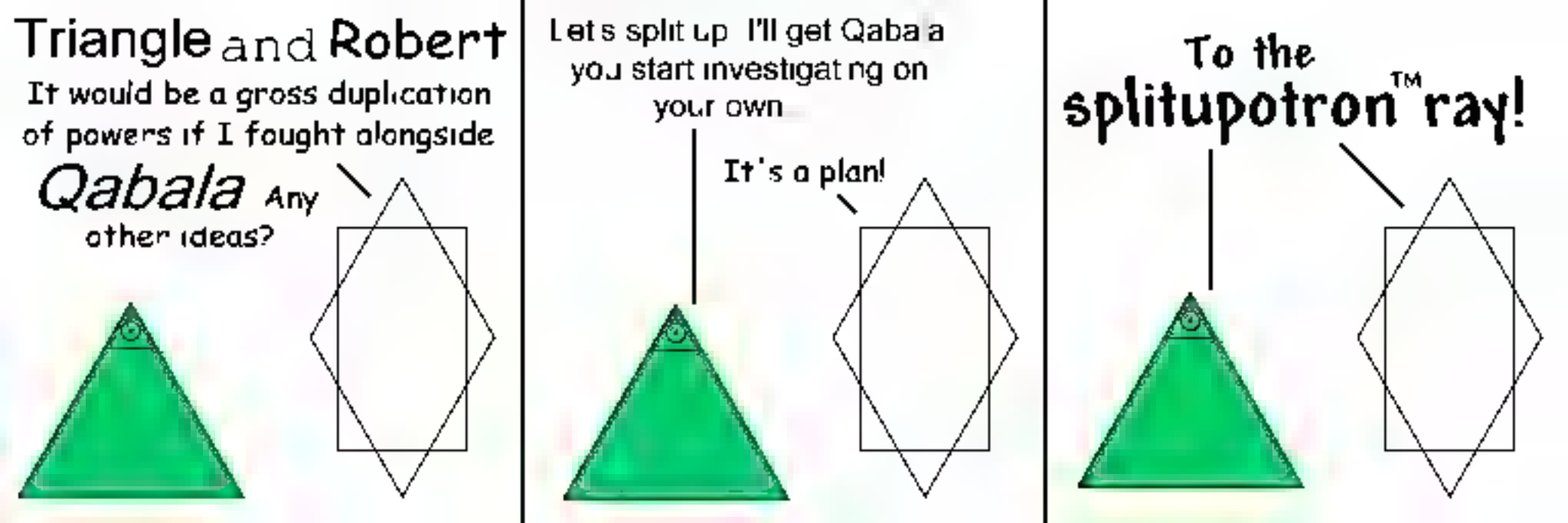
secret shrinking formula has recently been linked to an increased risk of urinary tract infection



If that's true, then it's one risk no one can afford to take

It's true*




Triangle and Robert
It would be a gross duplication of powers if I fought alongside Qabala Any other ideas?
Let's split up I'll get Qabala you start investigating on your own
It's a plan!
To the splitupotron™ ray!

Triangle and Robert

The key to a successful superhero investigation is to say whatever you're doing out loud as you do it That way criminals will be encouraged to do the same and you can overhear them

Fact one several minutes of patrolling turned up no crime whatsoever Fact two There is always crime Conclusion The cr me is somehow making itself undetectable

Unum's magic eye would have detected any merely inv sible cr me Therefore, the crime must be concealed by some more complex means Perhaps some m nd-alter ng device is prevent ng me from perceiving a crime which is happen ng before me at this very instant!

Triangle and Robert

There could be a mysteriously undetectable crime going on in front of me at this very moment!

I know now what I must do!

Halt unseen doer of evil and face the fury of

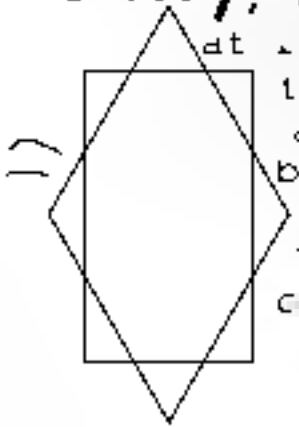
The Pointy!

Unbeknownst to The Pointy, lurking behind where he believes a crime to be in progress was one of his greatest weaknesses!

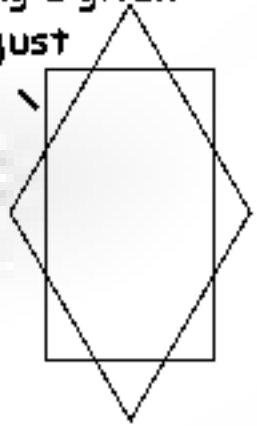
Oh, no! I'm running too fast to avoid hitting that **wall!**

Triangle and Robert

When last we left The Pointy, he was running at breakneck speed towards a wall and would not be able to stop himself in time to avoid colliding with it!

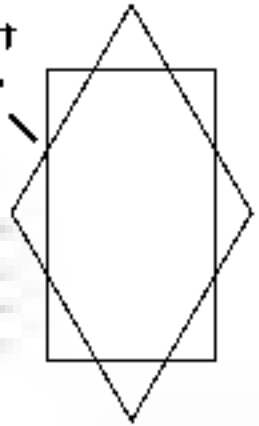


You've already established the joke. Superheroes tend to fit in more dialogue than should be possible during a given action. You can just let me hit the wall now.



And yet, The Pointy's pleas to the Cartoonist falls upon deaf ears as the wall looms ever closer!

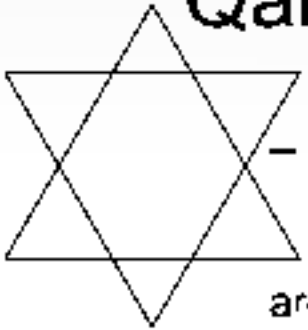
Would a crash at eight inches per panel velocity even hurt?



Triangle and Robert

Amid the chaos of a city
wracked by crime, one
policy searches for
hidden order. He is

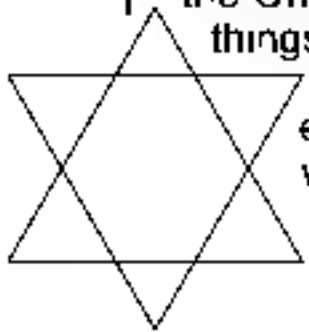
Qabala



Speak to me
– city Sing to me
overflowing
gutters that
aren't being drawn

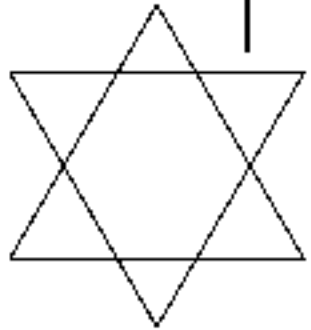
Reveal to me your secrets.
crumbling sidewalks which
may not actually exist Open your
shadows to me not that
anything is actually casting any

All is a reflection of
the One Through all
things is one truth
manifested
even when some
wish it hidden or
are too lazy to
draw it



To everything a counterbalance
To growth decay to crime justice
To narration, action

Right

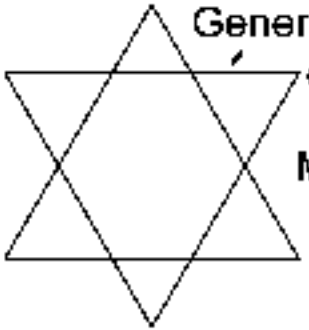


Triangle and Robert

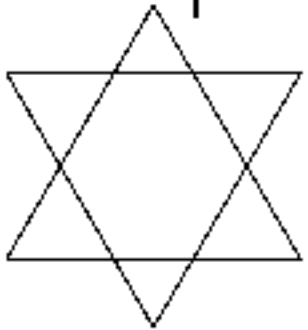
Cr me unseen Cr me unheard
Crime undrawn

Cr minals undrawn Who's undrawn? Protesters undrawn

General y law-abiding except when n unruly mobs
Mobs undrawn

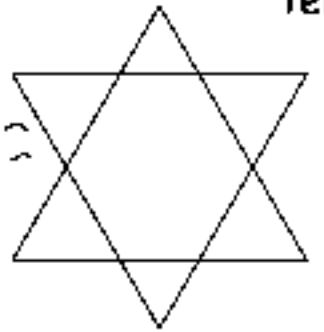


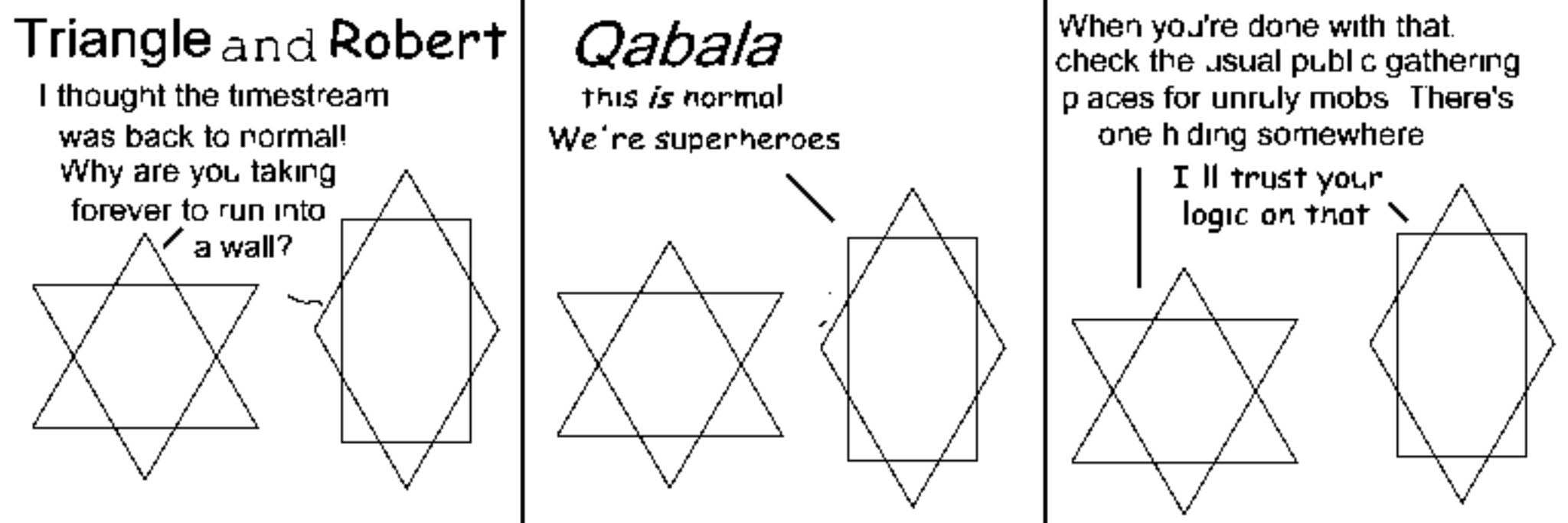
Unruly mobs of protesters silently lying in wait Where? Unimag native Probably same as ever T me to make contact with **The Pointy**



Watch out! You're about to run into that wall!

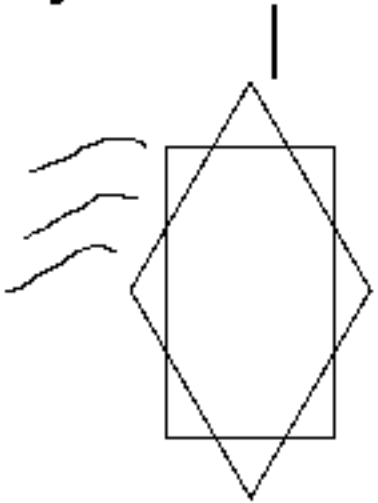
I know I've been about to run into that wall for the past ten panels!



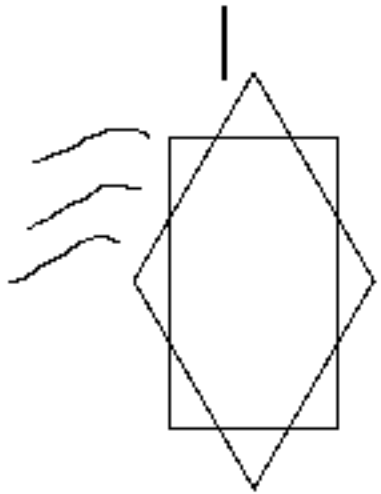

Triangle and Robert
I thought the timestream was back to normal! Why are you taking forever to run into a wall?
Qabala
this is normal
We're superheroes
When you're done with that, check the usual public gathering places for unruly mobs. There's one hiding somewhere
I'll trust your logic on that

Triangle and Robert

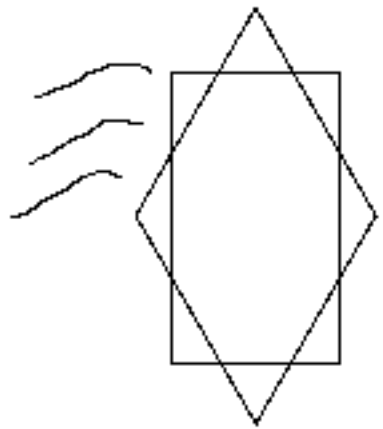
I've got it! I can't stop in time



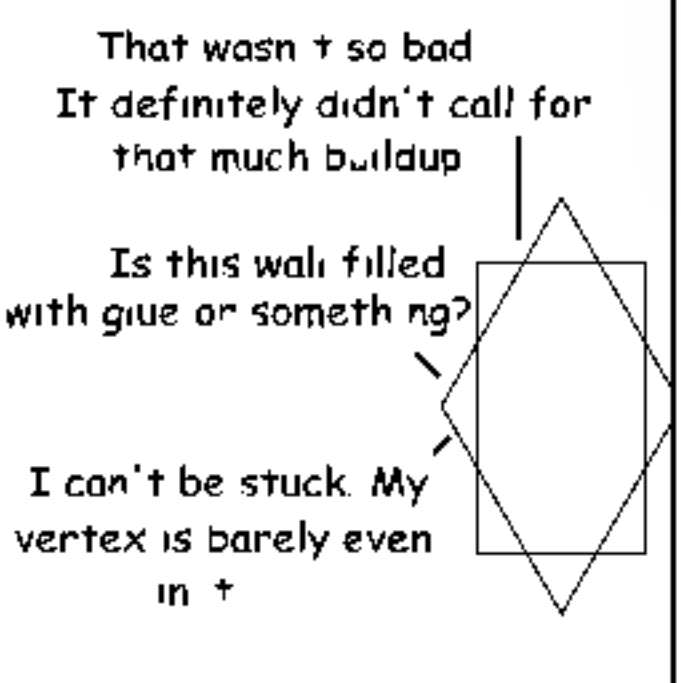
but if I can twist my body into just the right position

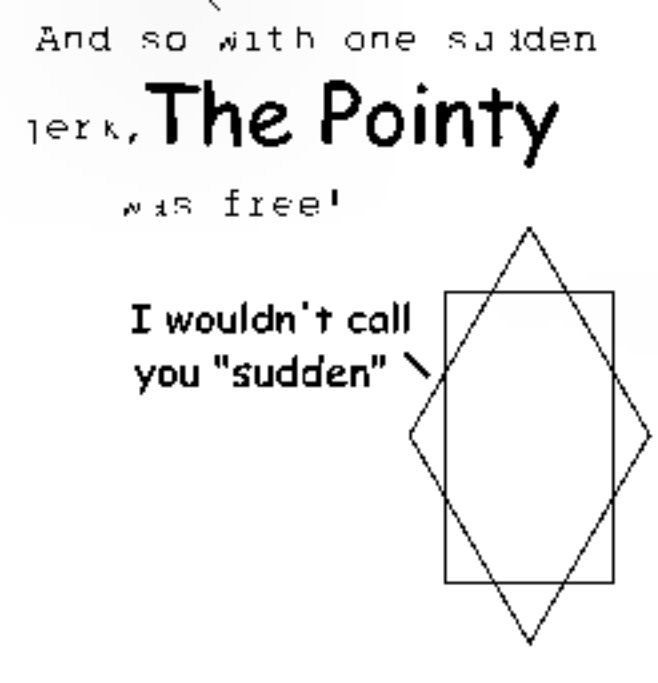


which I can't



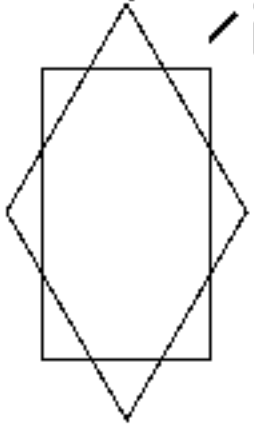
Triangle and Robert





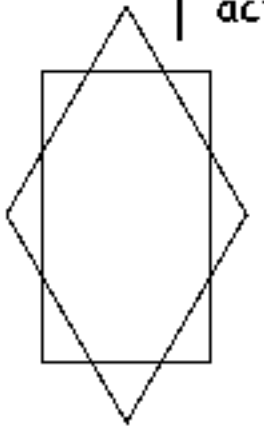
Triangle and Robert

Ant Cartoonist demonstrators are usually just a nuisance, but this time they've crossed the



I ne apparently somehow

It occurs to me to wonder whether I might be rushing into a misunderstanding I won t, though Rushing is more



actiontastic than wondering

Evil beware!

The Pointy

is rushing at you with insufficiently bl nding speed!

Assuming you re in this general direction!

Booyah!

Triangle and Robert

What was that?

It's me

Contact! Activate the final weapon! At last we can free our world!

Your "final weapon" is a stockpile of nearly indrinkable soda which I am under no obligation to draw or interact with

He's bluffing! Turn the pumps to maximum!

Maybe this conversation is a mistake. I have no reason to believe a thing I say. There's one thing you don't quite get, though: you're not like ants to me. Ants are real

You don't get it. We are real.

To yourselves. Not to me

Triangle and Robert

So is this an ultimatum? We do what you say or you send in your lackeys?

There is nothing I want from you, and making you martyrs would be pointless

So you're just here to taunt?

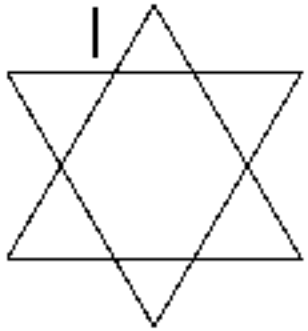
You could see it that way. This little dialogue establishes for narrative purposes that you are not outside the scope of the comic, even when you do not appear within it

Triangle and Robert aren't my lackeys. They occasionally do what I intend them to do just to throw me off guard. They might attack you soon for spurious reasons. I'm not sure what you should do about that

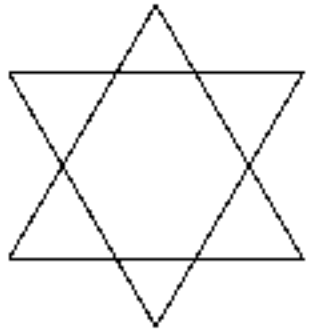
That can't be anything but a taunt.

Triangle and Robert

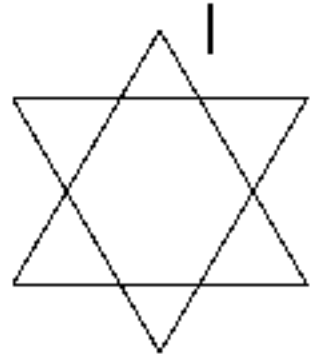
Univers ty commons
A popular place to march
around w th signs
Are they here?



They haven't pounced If
they re waiting in undrawn
silence, I haven't yet
triggered the trap

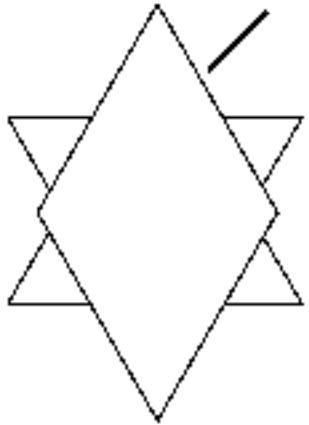


What was I thinking? They're
not waiting for *Qabala*,
they re waiting for Triangle
or Robert I'll need to
disguise myself

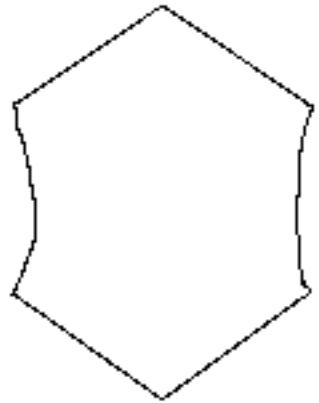


Triangle and Robert

This disguise isn't going to fit I'll have to super-stretch it out a little



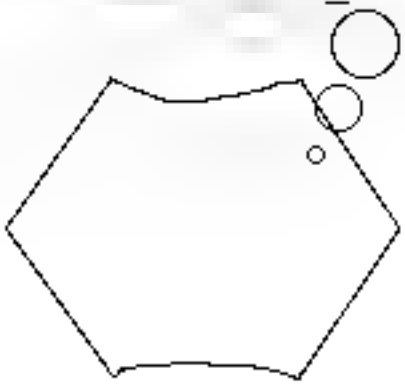
Aperfectlyundetectabledisguise,ifabitsnug.
Nowtoseeiftheyllitakethebait



Icanmaneuververywellinhere

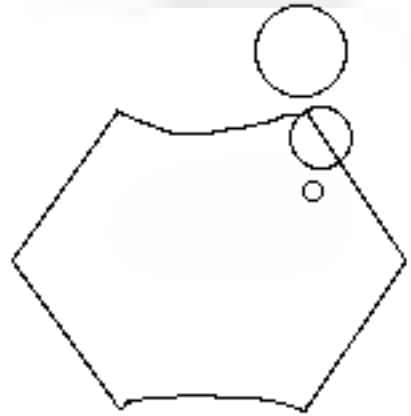
Triangle and Robert

Thetrapisset.Nowtolleinwall



LATER

Donelyinginwait.Nowtosetthetrapsomewhereelse



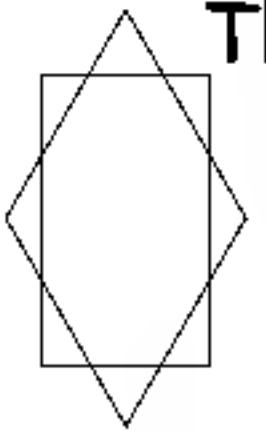
Thisdisguisehasproblems

Triangle and Robert

As *Qabala* triggles with his disguise,

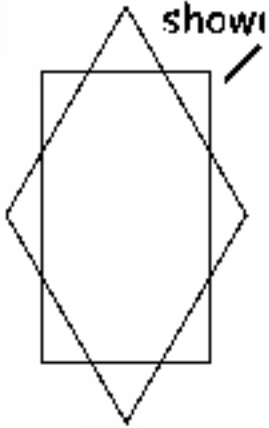
The Pointy

ponders a asterfuge f his own



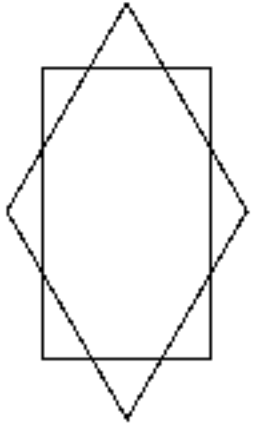
I ve checked most of the popular angry mob spots and found nothing Either Qabala was wrong or they're not showing themselves

I need to draw them out



No

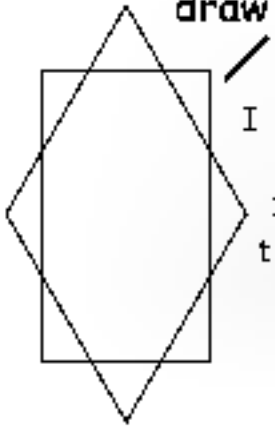
I need to draw them period



What

Triangle and Robert

You heard me. If I want something drawn, I have to draw it myself.

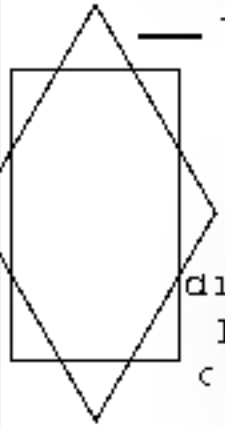


I really, really hope that's impossible or the consequences will be staggering.

Triangle's done it.

Not into the same reality you inhabit.

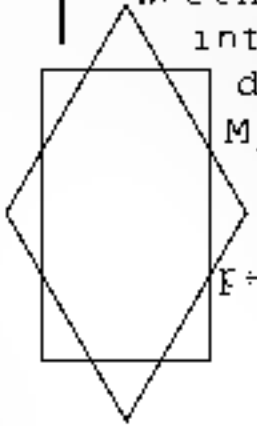
— The Fourth Race did it.



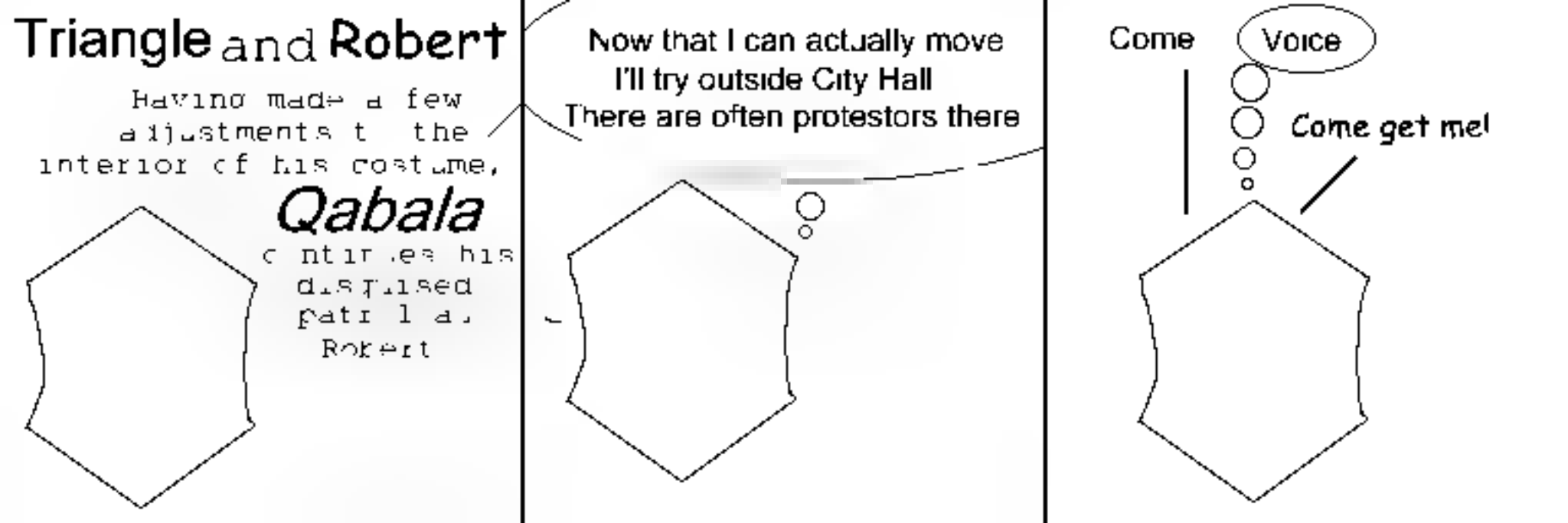
No, sentient geometry and cartooning are distinct phenomena. I should have been clearer about that in past stories.

Then I'll be the first.

Logically, I should know for certain whether what you're intending can be done or can't. My lack of this knowledge reflects personal failure.



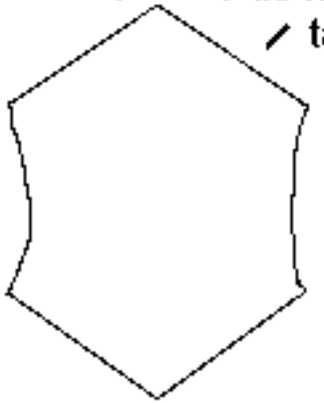
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

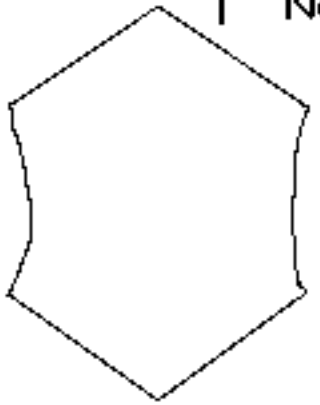
I, Robert am calling you out!
You want me? Bring it on!

This isn't how Robert talks at al

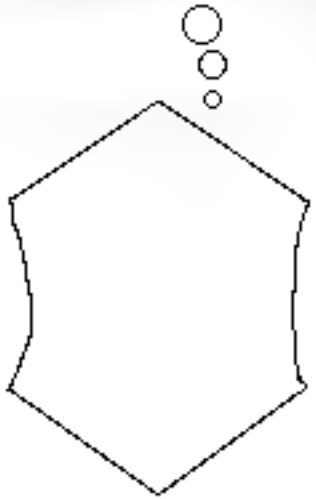


Does anyone know what kind of solder is best for pineapple? It's k nd of important, there s this squirrel with a lung problem

No one here?



I hope I m doing this right



Triangle and Robert

I guess if there's no one here waiting to jump me I'll just casually walk around in a circle for a little while!

That's one more site off the list I wonder if *The Pointy* is doing any better

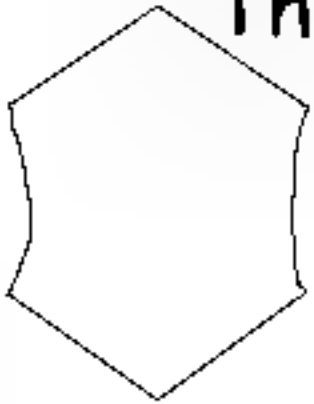
f u're calling him that in your thoughts

When my thoughts can be bubbled without warning it's not safe to do otherw se

Triangle and Robert

The disguised *Qabala* again crosses paths with

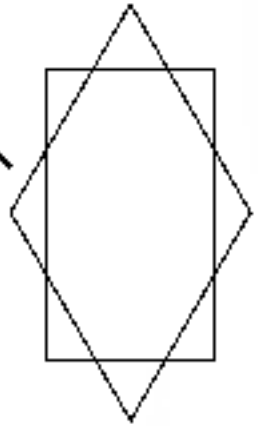
The Pointy



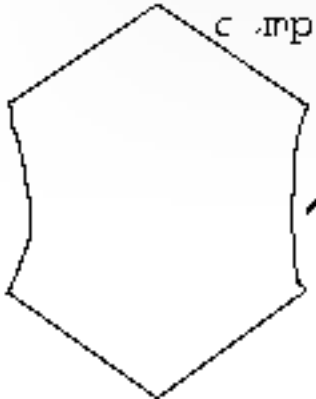
What's that supposed to be?

It's a costume of of Robert. If we're trying to get the attention of the anti-Cartoonist forces we should make ourselves targets

It looks good on you really

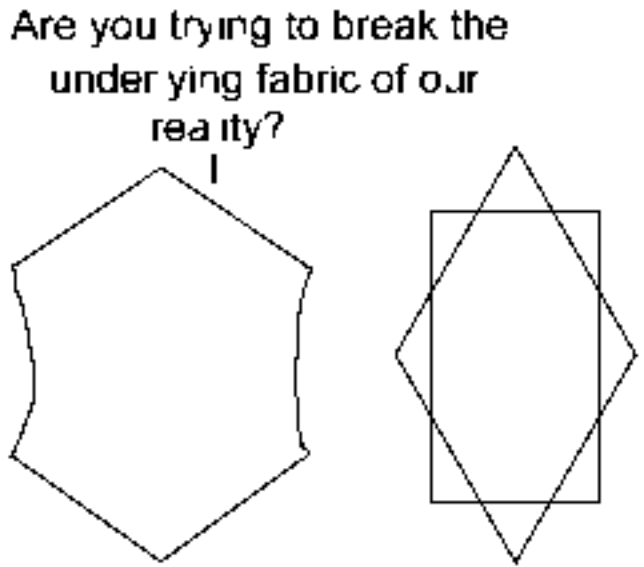


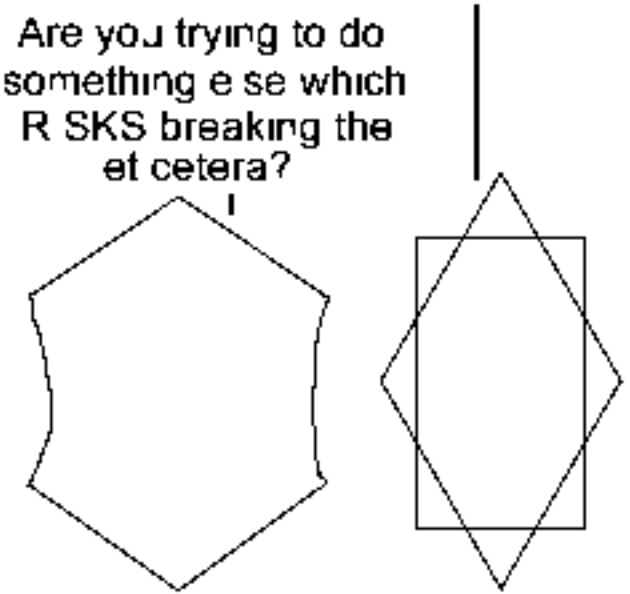
Due to a necessary impurity in his very structure, The Pointy is unable to give carving fake compliments!

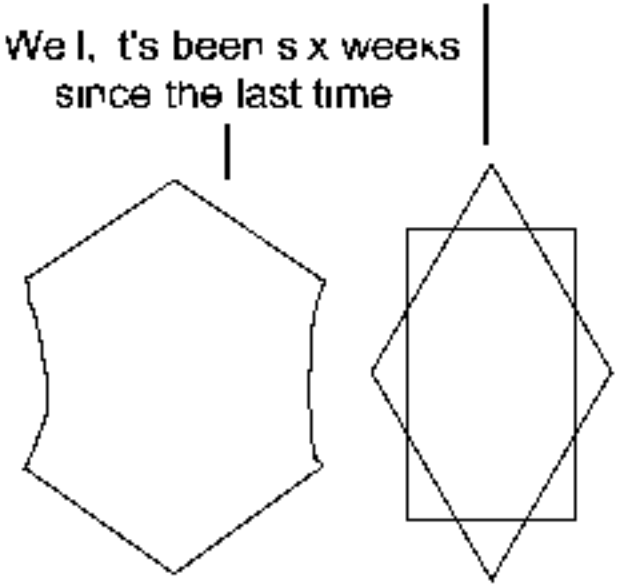


Whoa, burn from the Cartoonist!

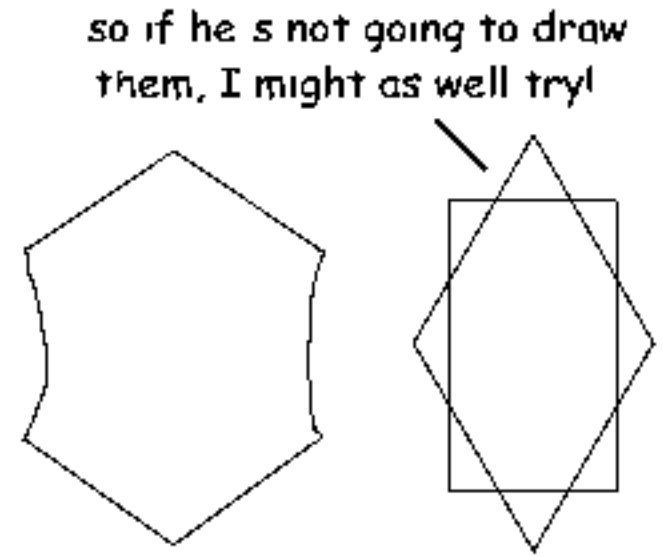
Triangle and Robert

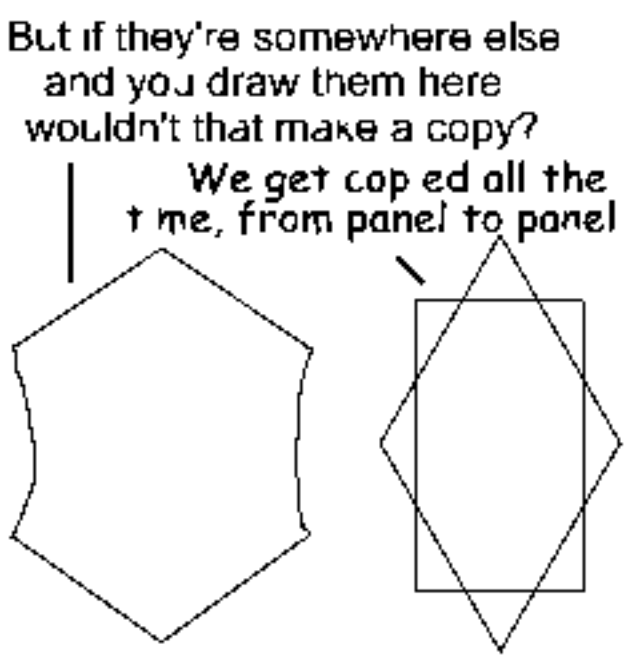


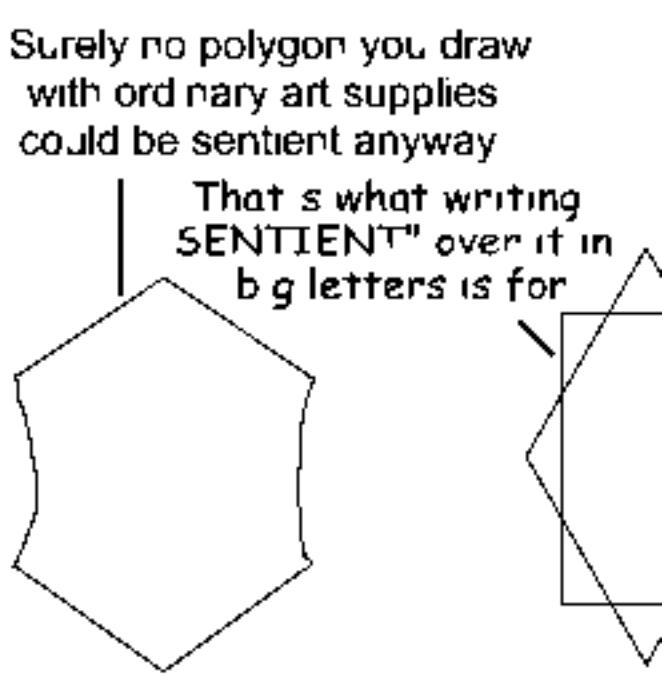




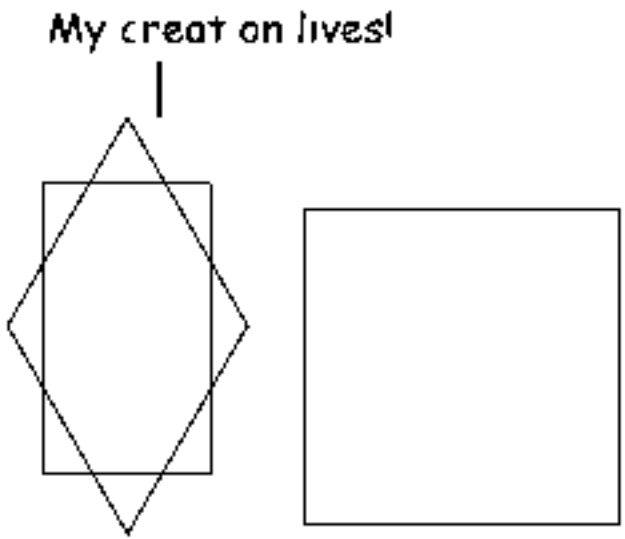
Triangle and Robert

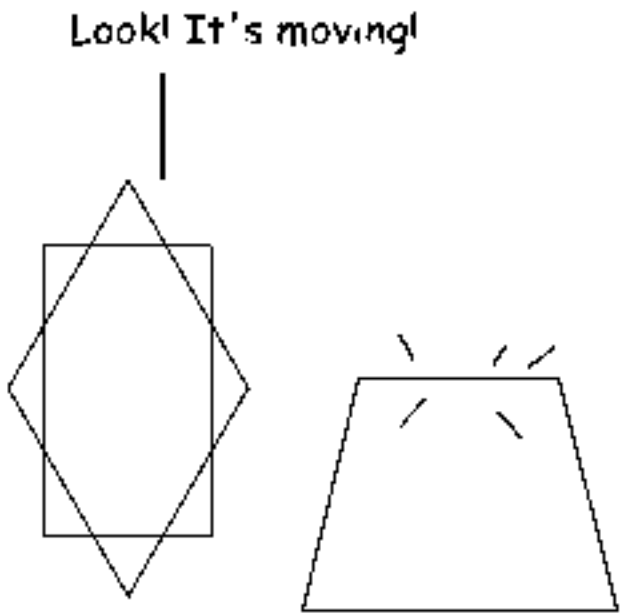


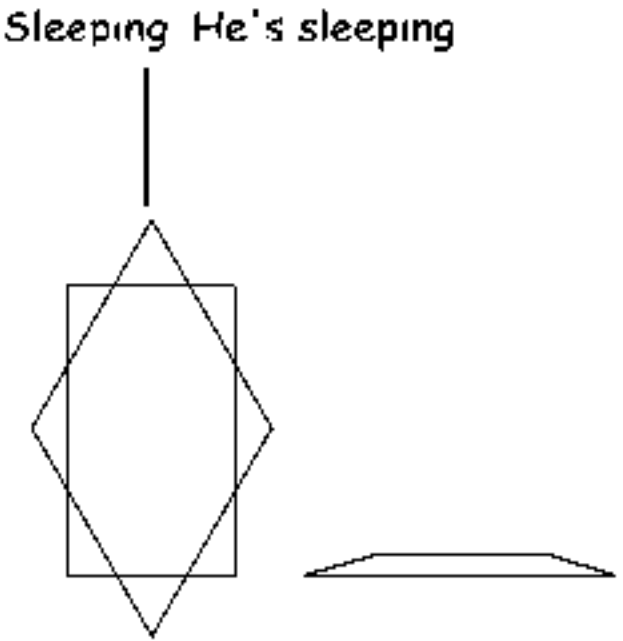




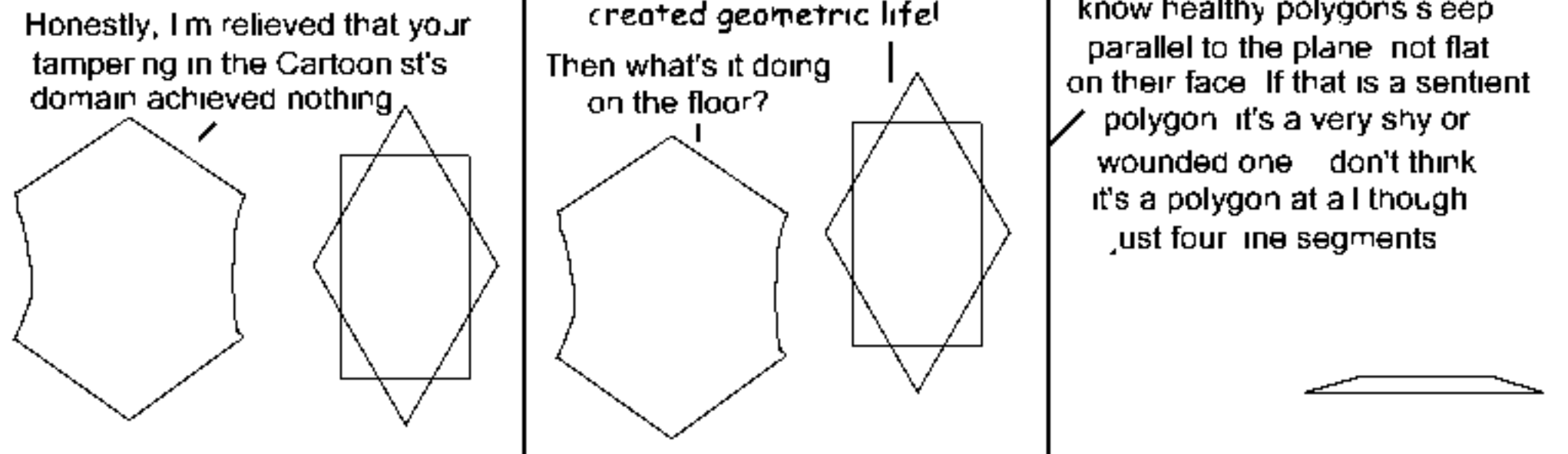
Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

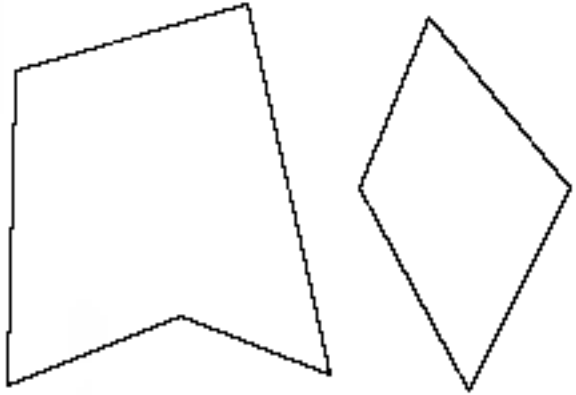


Triangle and Robert

The Point, grudgingly accepts that he has not created life. However, distant observers have rated his efforts

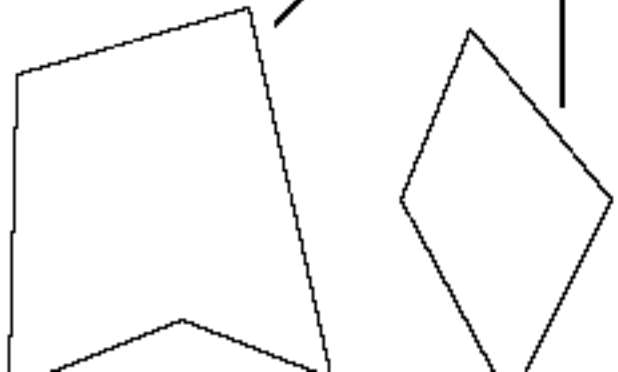
Look at the geodar readings! Someone is trying to reproduce our experiments.

It appears that their construction lacked any ability to interact with its environment... but they did construct it

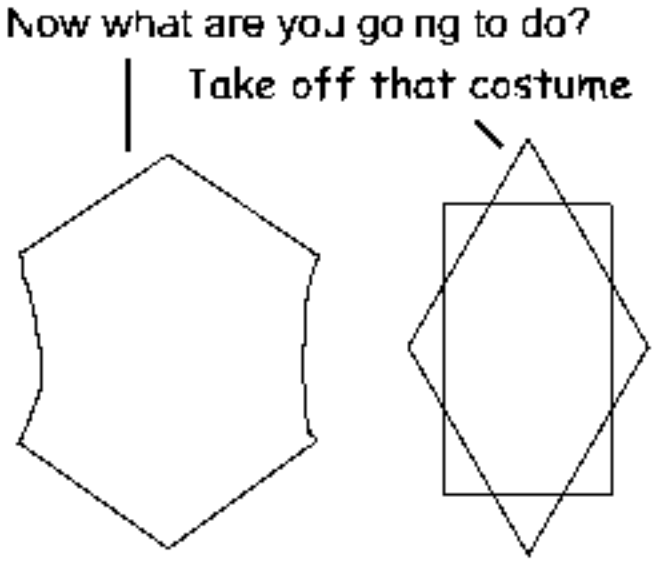


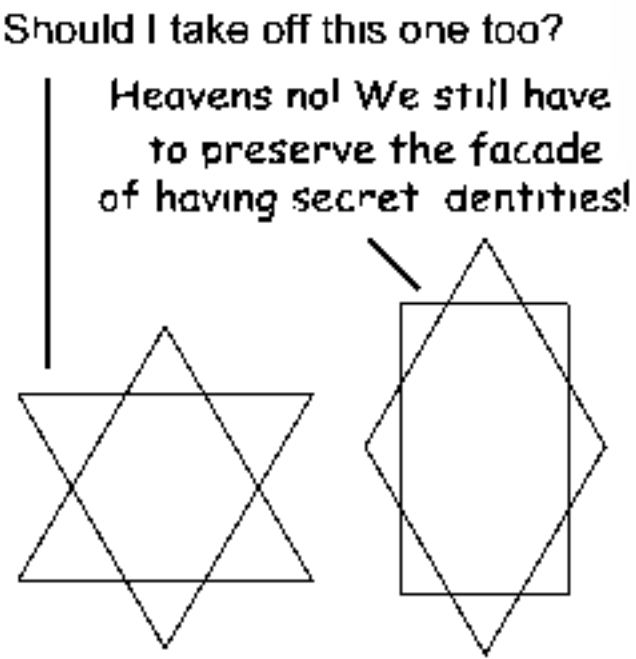
It looks like an ordinary birth to me, sir

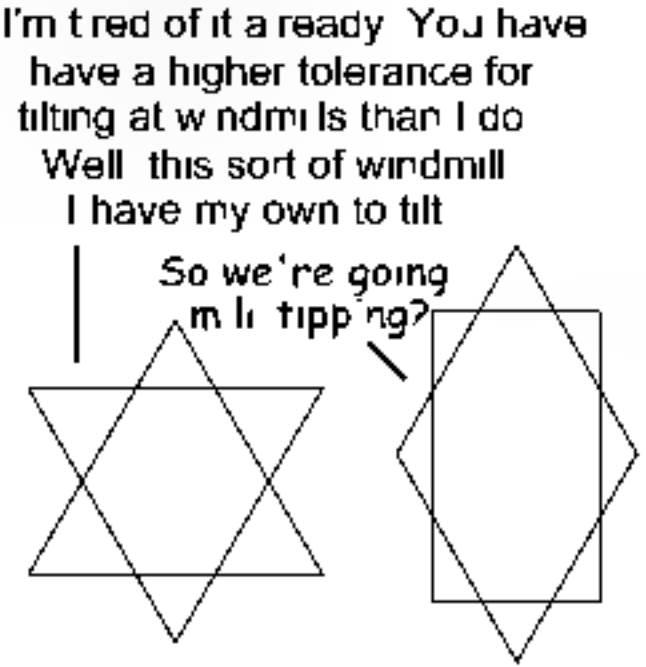
No. This construction was not in accordance with genetic rules



Triangle and Robert

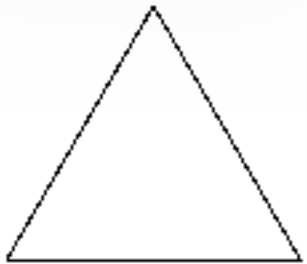


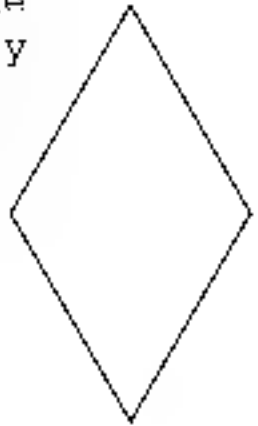




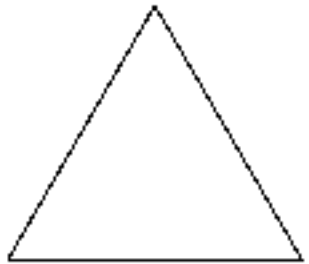
Triangle and Robert

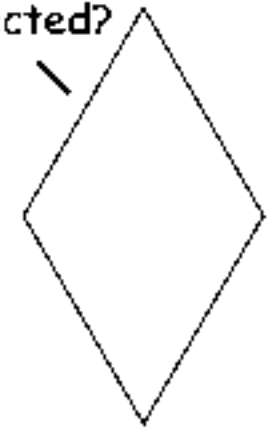
The next afternoon, with the attempted exploits of [illegible] and The [illegible] largely [illegible]





Did you ever get the feeling something you did casually drew the attention of sinister forces the existence of which you never suspected?

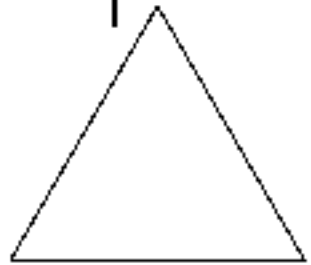


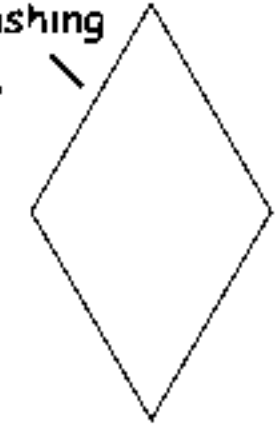


All the time. That's why we bricked up the artifacts room.

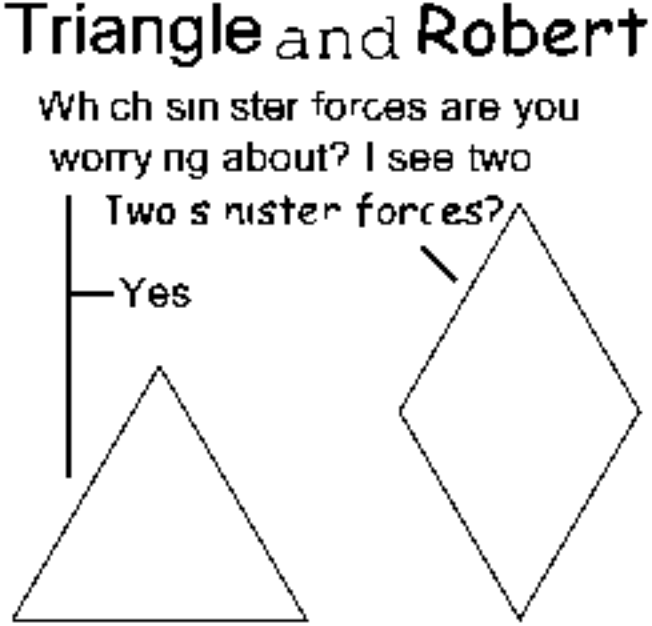
I mean forces we're *not* responsible for originally unleashing.

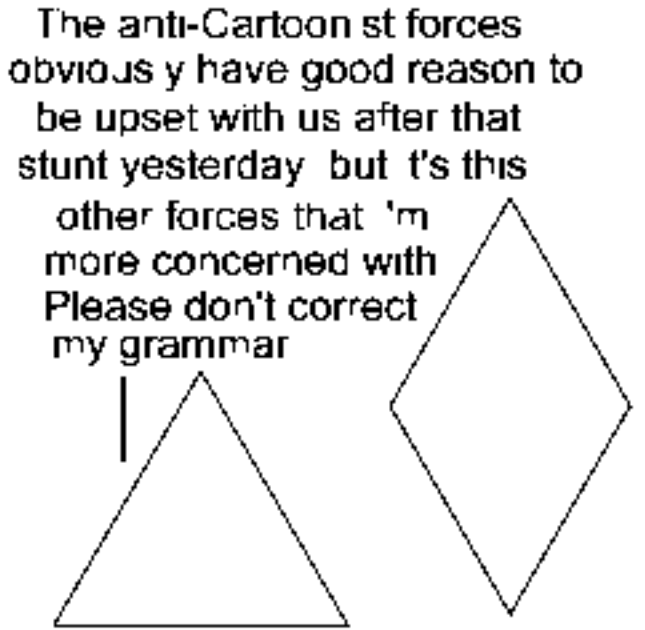
They have those?

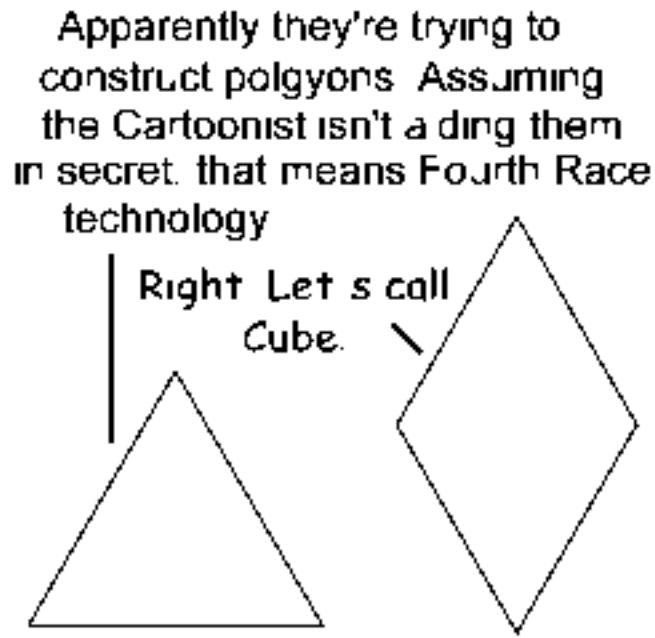




Triangle and Robert

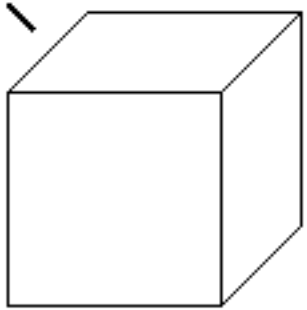




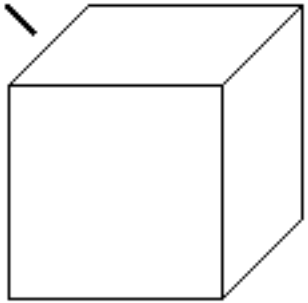


Triangle and Robert

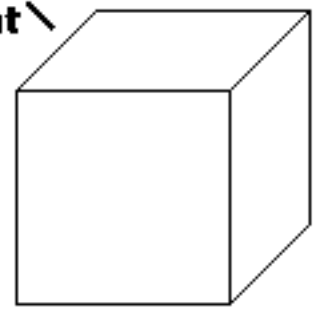
Speaking. I'm already on my way there, I saw it in the strip. If "geodar" is what I think it is, we have a trail to follow.



What are you asking me that for? You know— What? The readers? They can just look it up in any— the human readers. Right, the Cartoonist's humans don't have the same geometry as the Fourth Race. I guess I can summarize a little.

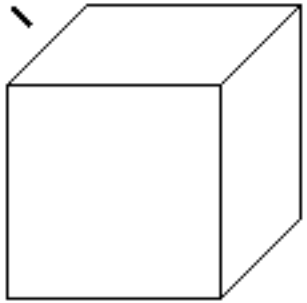


The premise is very simple: to the degree that the universe is based on mathematics, mathematical entities can be considered "real". Scientists of the Fourth Race found a way to define geometric entities in such a way that their existence in the physical universe followed as a logical consequence.

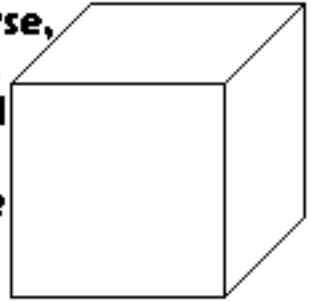


Triangle and Robert

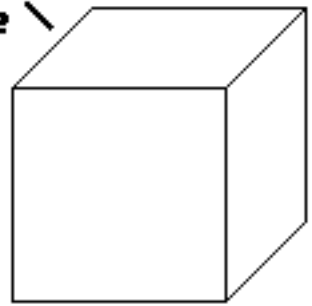
Polygon genetics were modeled after biological genetics. Two polygons, one male and one female, can construct a new polygon in accordance with well-defined genetic rules if both are sufficiently aged.



The age requirement is quite high, presumably because the Fourth Race wanted polygon stocks to remain at a constant population except for those new polygons they constructed directly. Of course, whatever passes for nature found a way, and we do have positive population growth in general.



It sounds like someone's been digging up Fourth Race constructions and is trying to create a new strain of polygons. In all likelihood, this is the same someone behind the near-coup of the remnants of the RDCLBA, thus my interest.

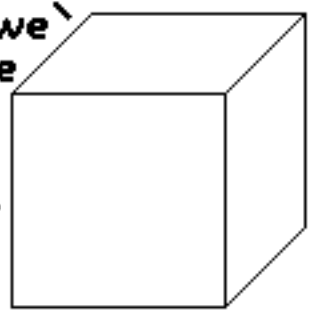


Triangle and Robert

I'll be there in about half an hour. Get together a full set of adult geometry supplies.

I know it's embarassing, but that's how we can backtrace the enemy "geodar".

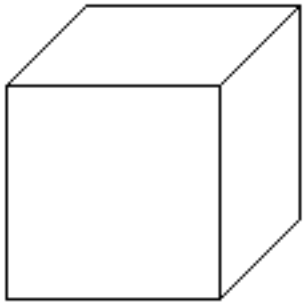
It's a guess, but not wild.



Then send Robert to buy them!

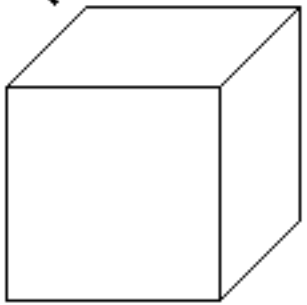
I don't know, put some facial hair on him first. You know that sort of thing better than I do.

Fine, Triangle. I guess I can buy them myself, but it'll slow us down.

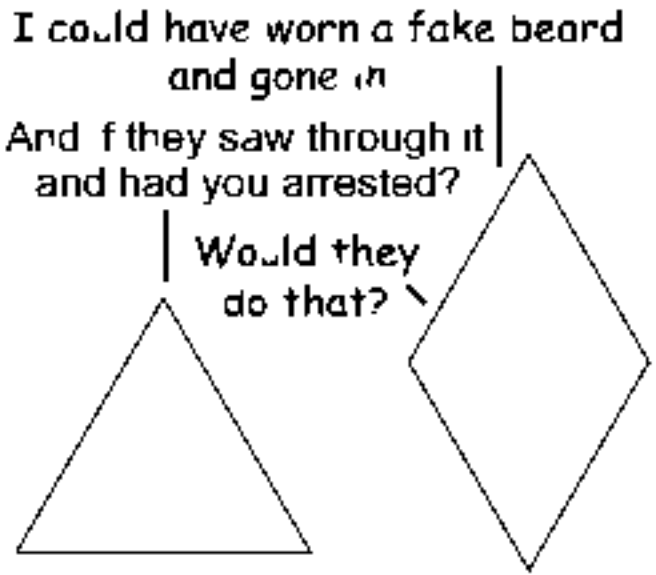


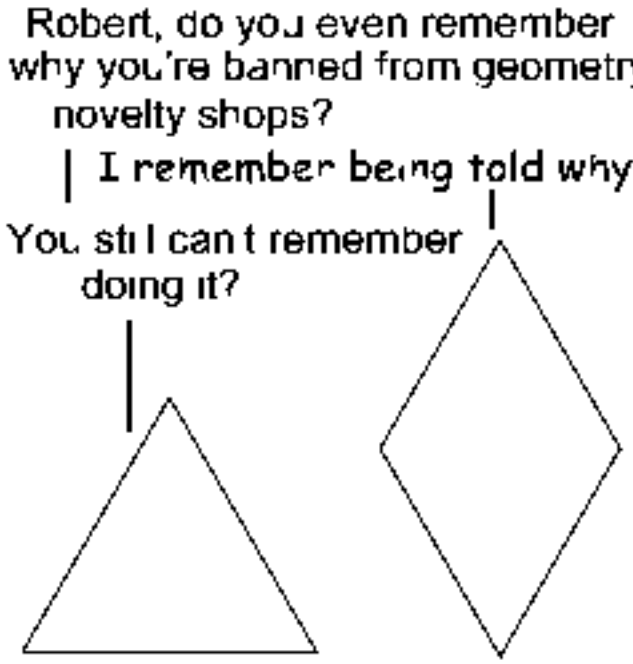
How did polygons reproduce before geometry supplies became commonly manufactured

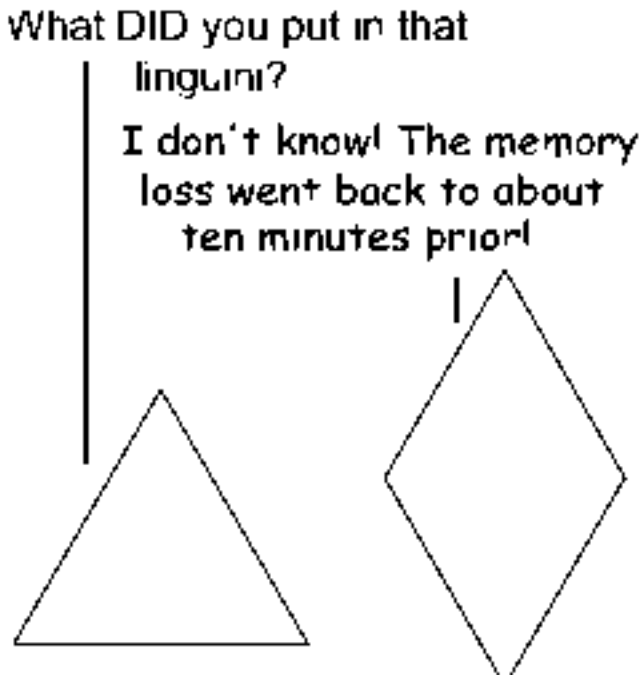
Imprecisely.



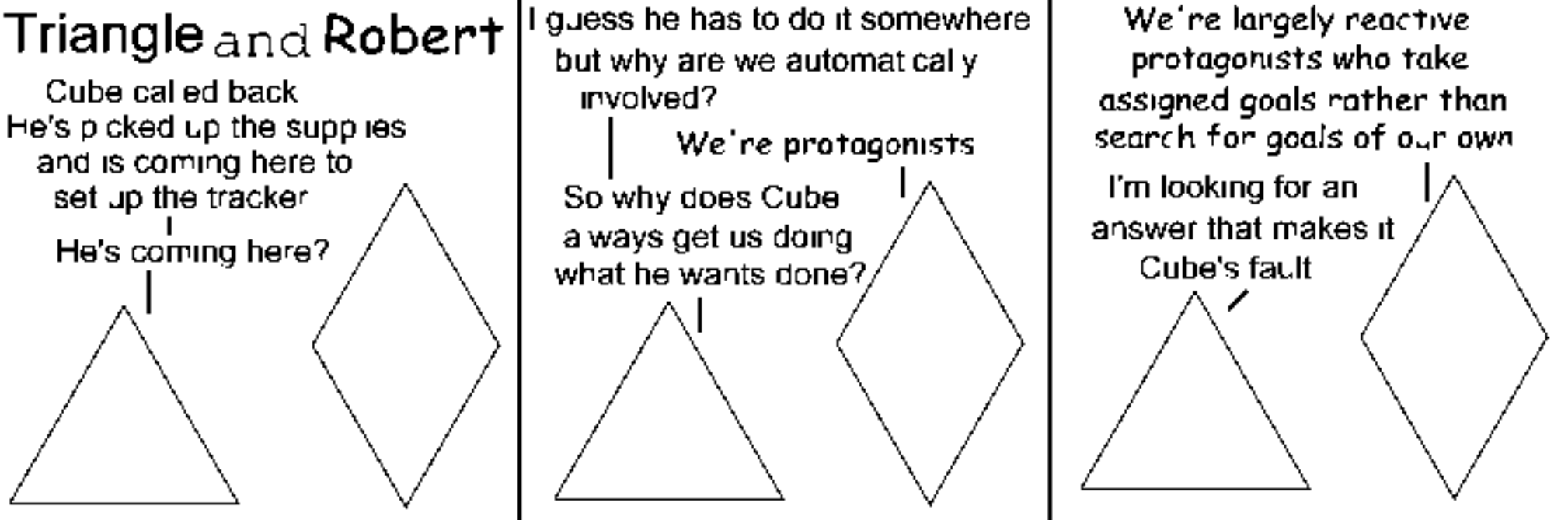
Triangle and Robert



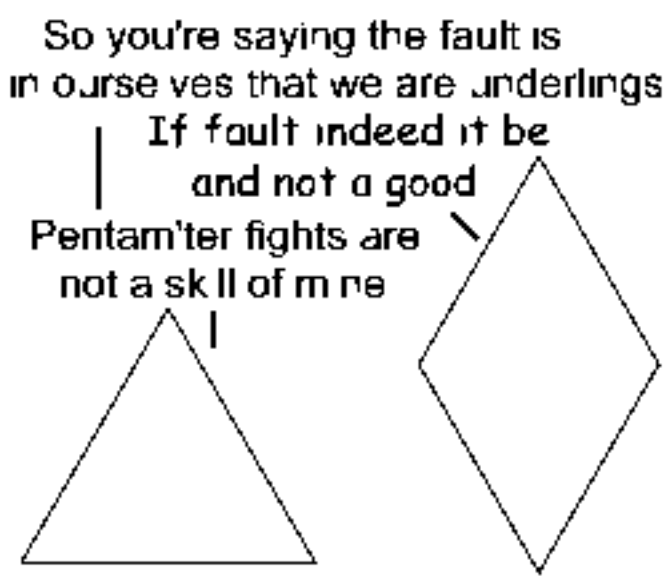


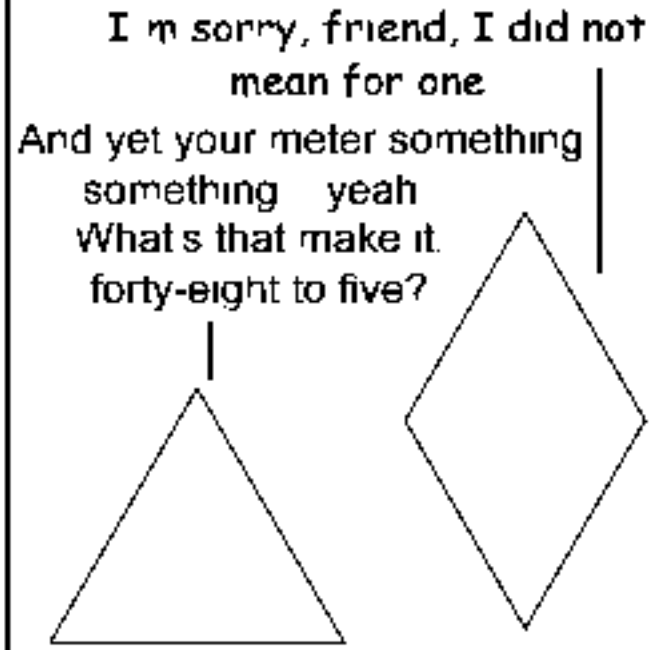


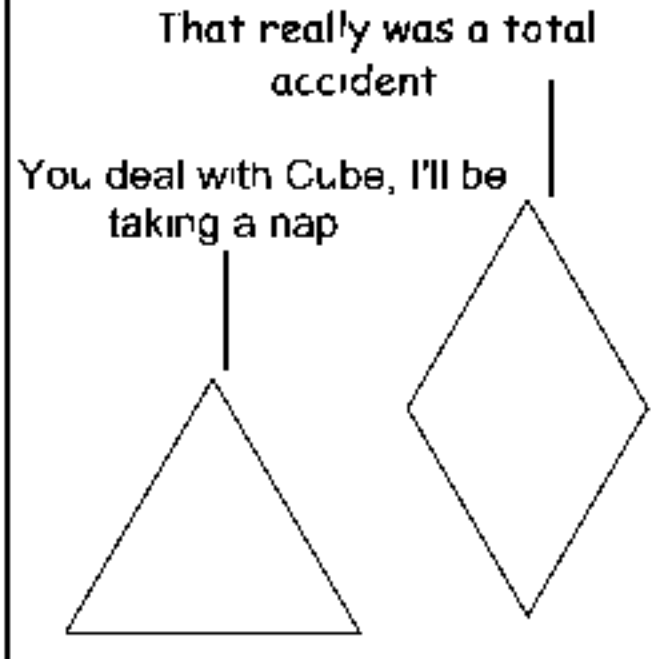
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

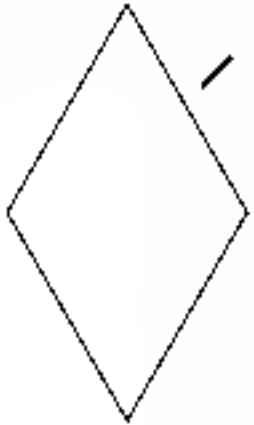
Cube's coming over! I'd better get the place ready!

Ready

_We can't have him walk into the middle of a big mess

There's no [illegible] you're going to make a big mess so you have something to clean

Too predictable?

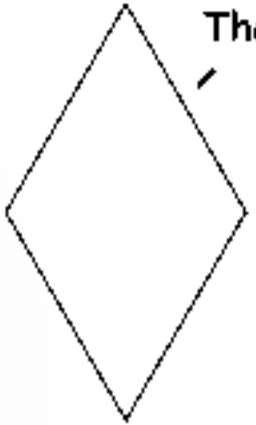


If I say yes you'll make it dinner. Let's say [illegible] not predictable ENOUGH

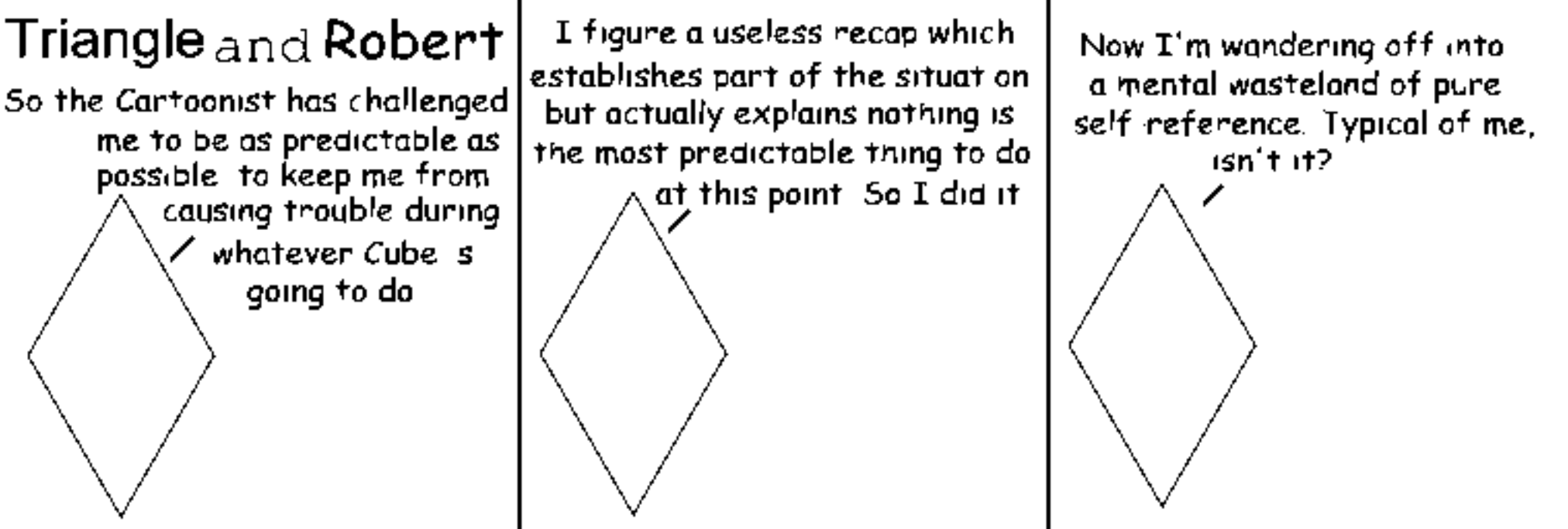
I will accept that challenge

I wonder how I'll regret this

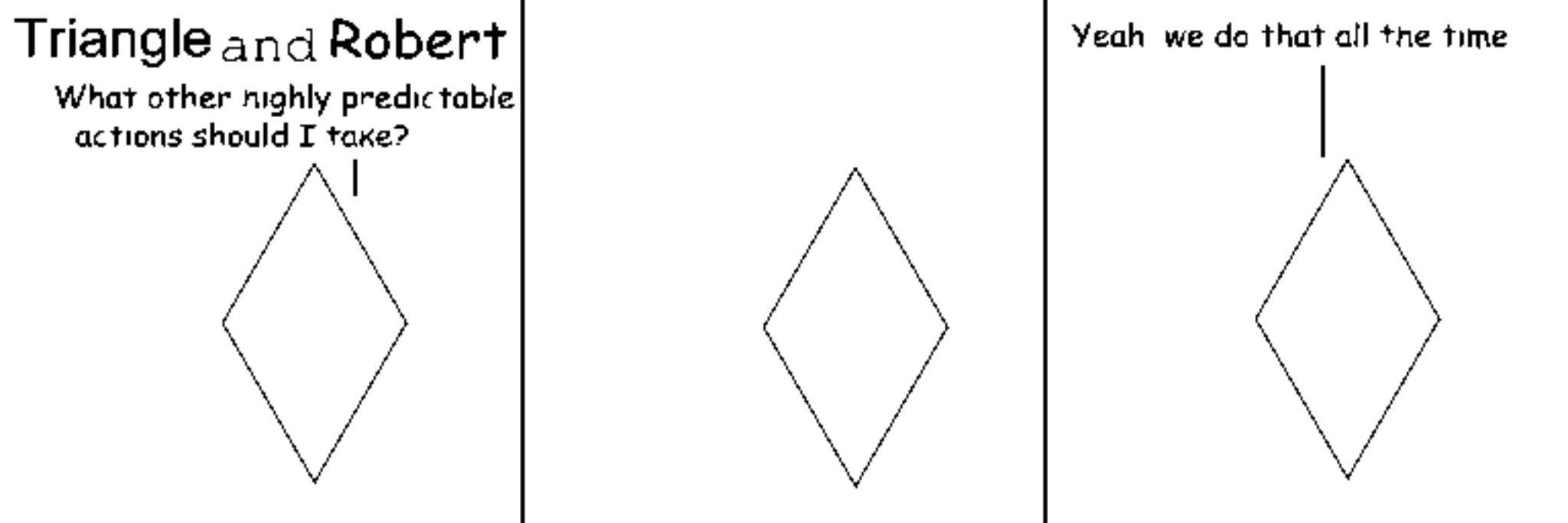
That's the fun



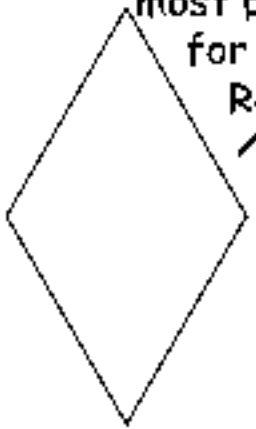
Triangle and Robert

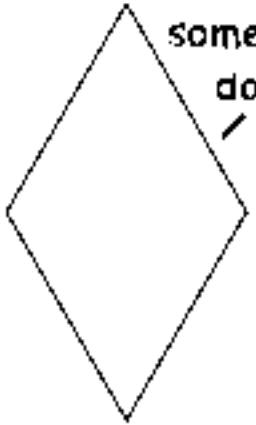


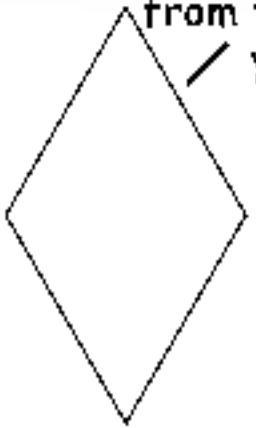
Triangle and Robert



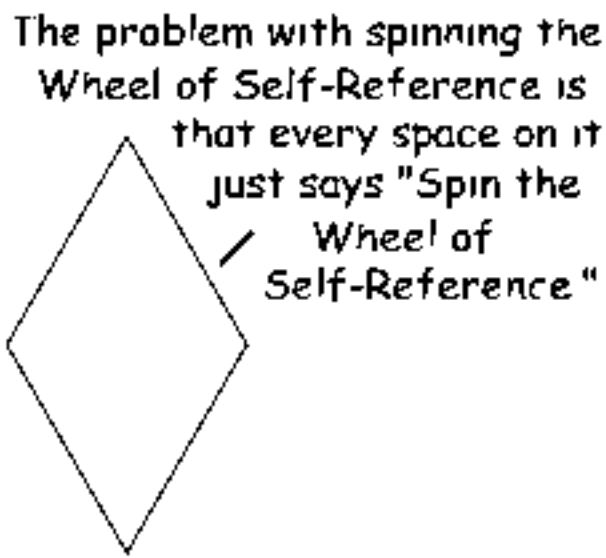
Triangle and Robert

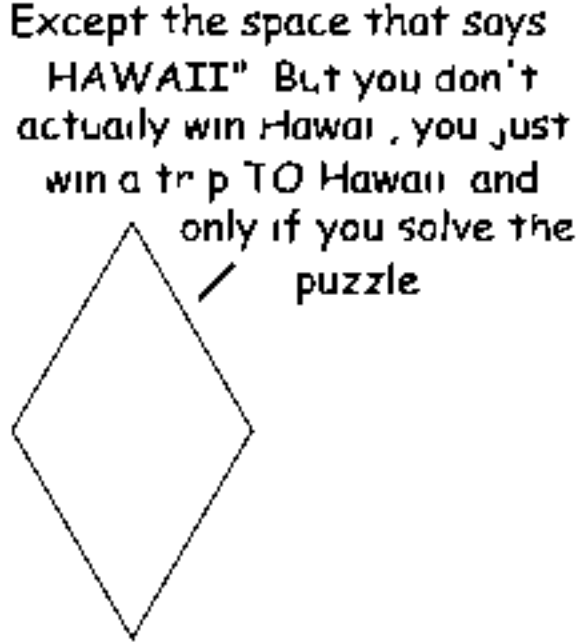


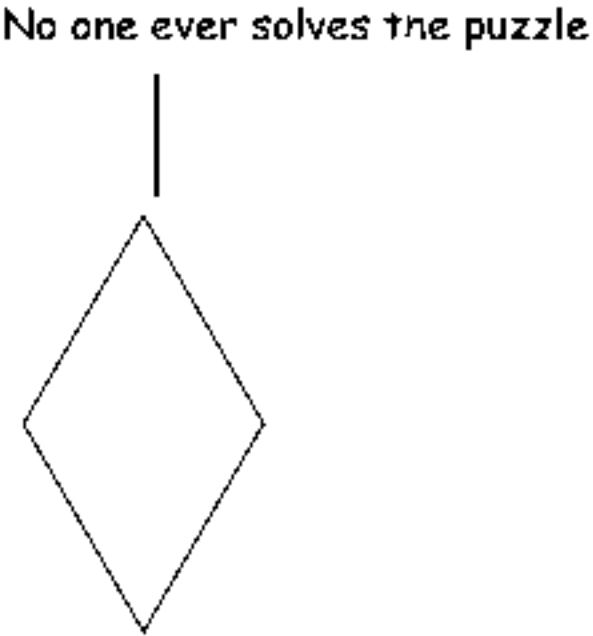




Triangle and Robert

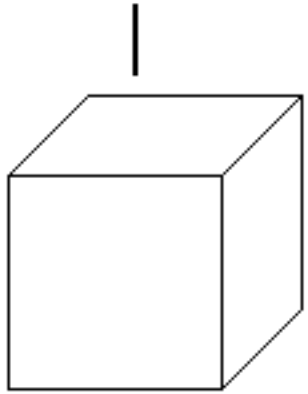




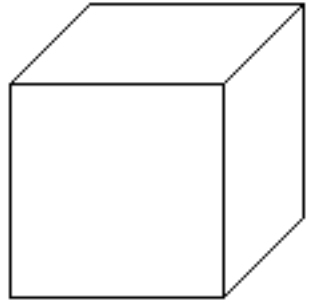


Triangle and Robert

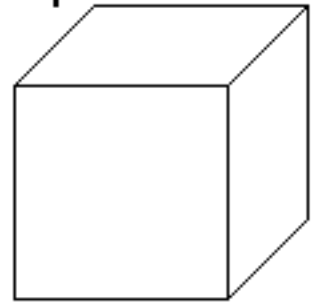
Hello? Hello? Could someone let me in? Triangle? Robert? Are you home?



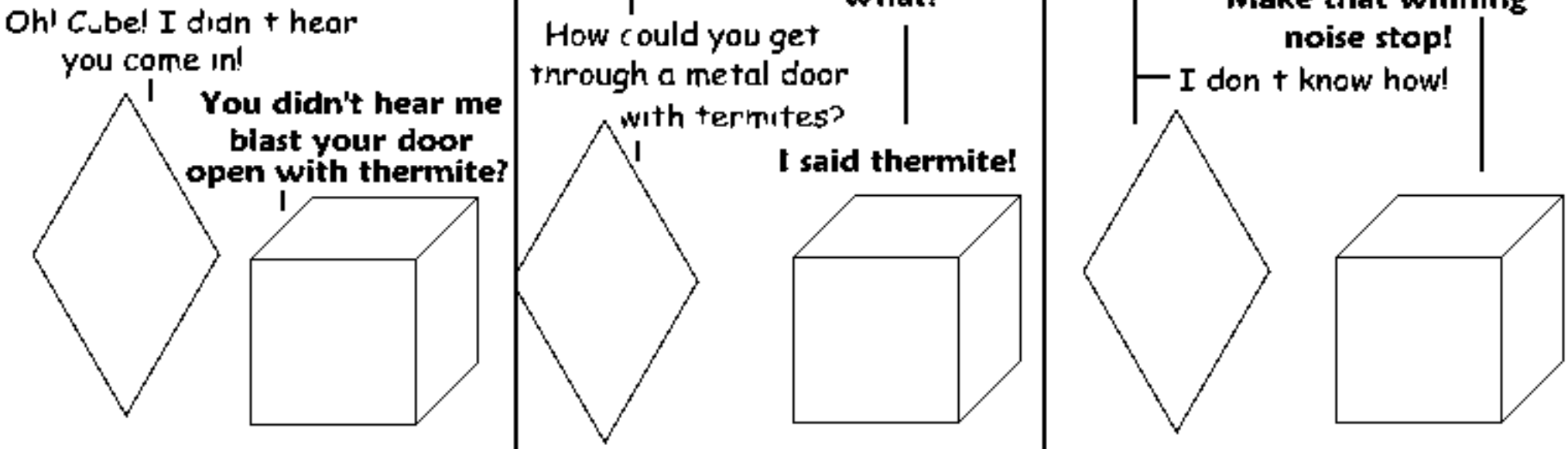
I can hear Robert in there. Why isn't he answering the door? Can he hear me out here?



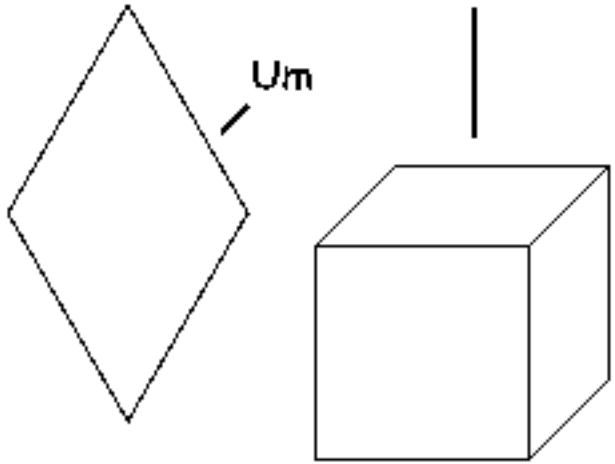
That whining sounded eldritch. I'm either breaking the door down and charging in there or running away, but I haven't decided which yet.

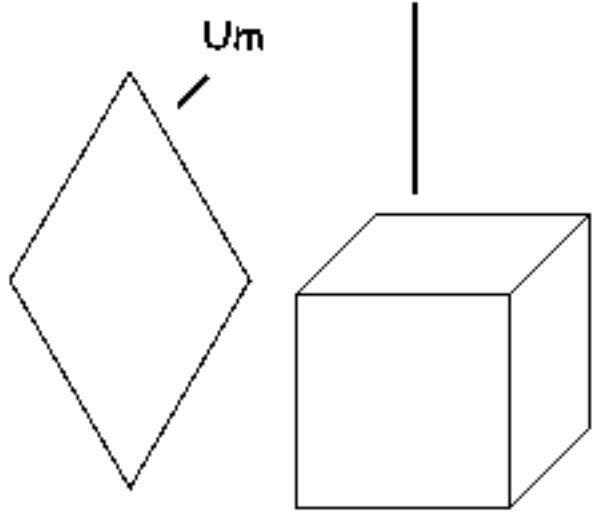


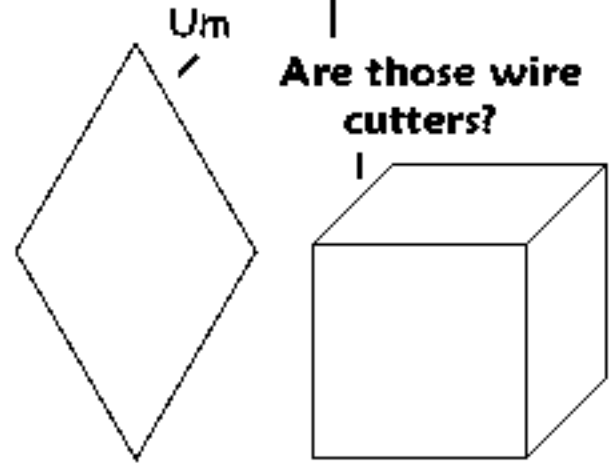
Triangle and Robert



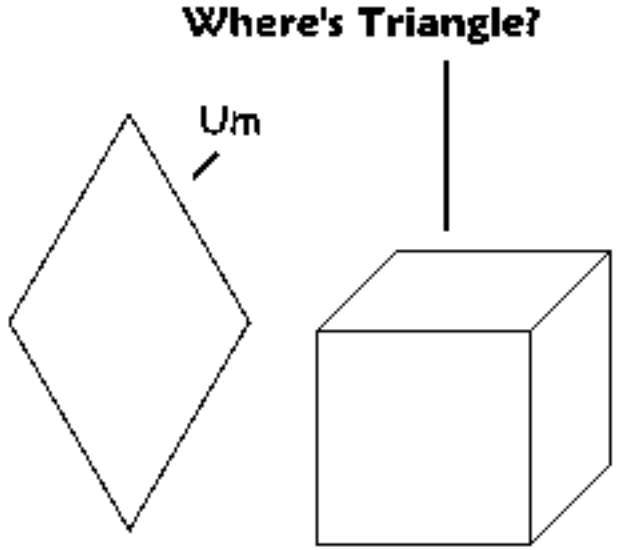
Triangle and Robert

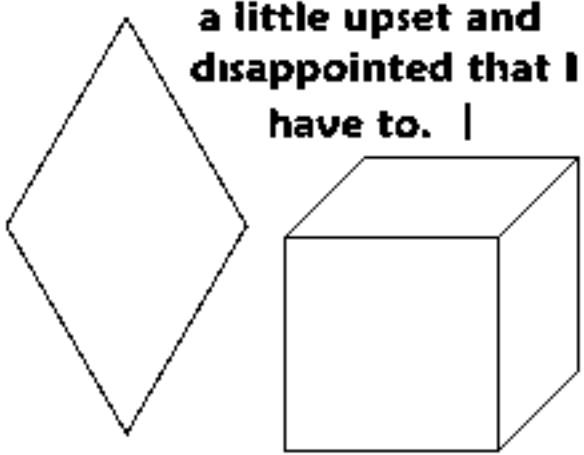


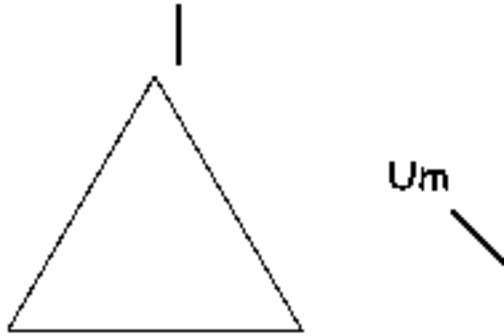




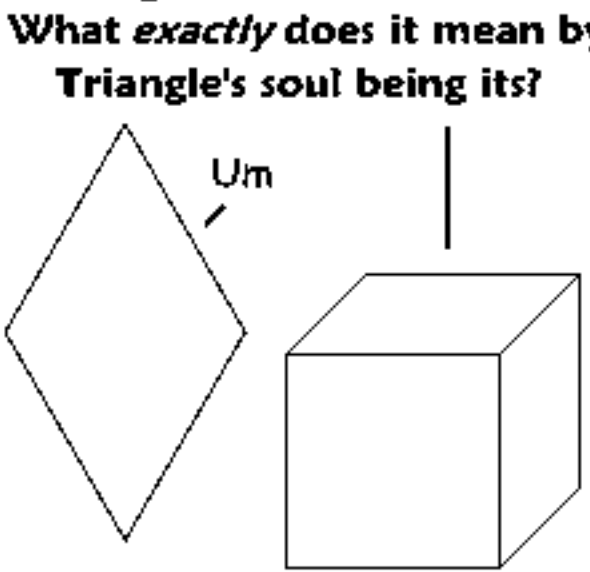
Triangle and Robert

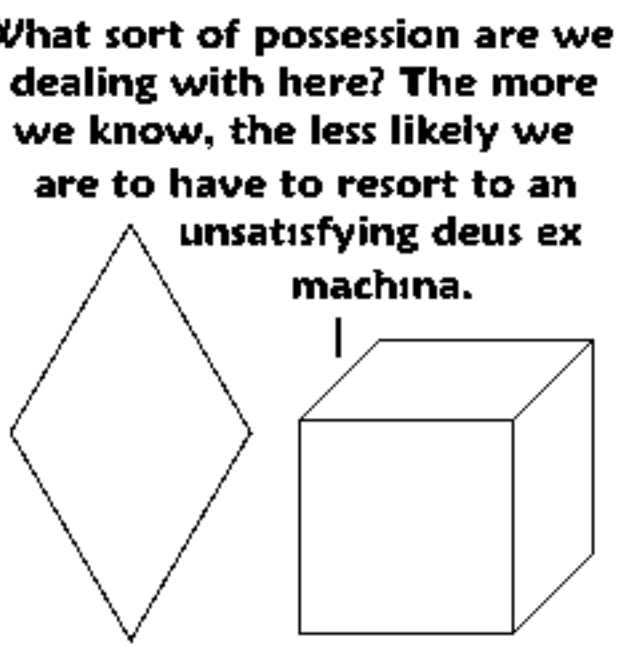


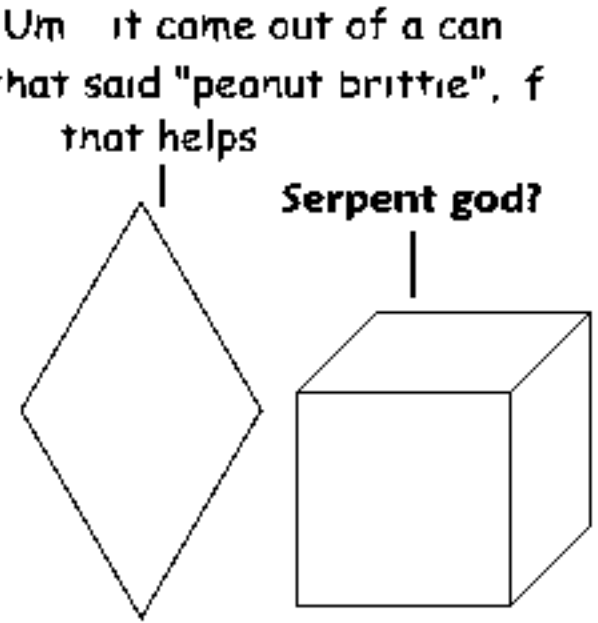




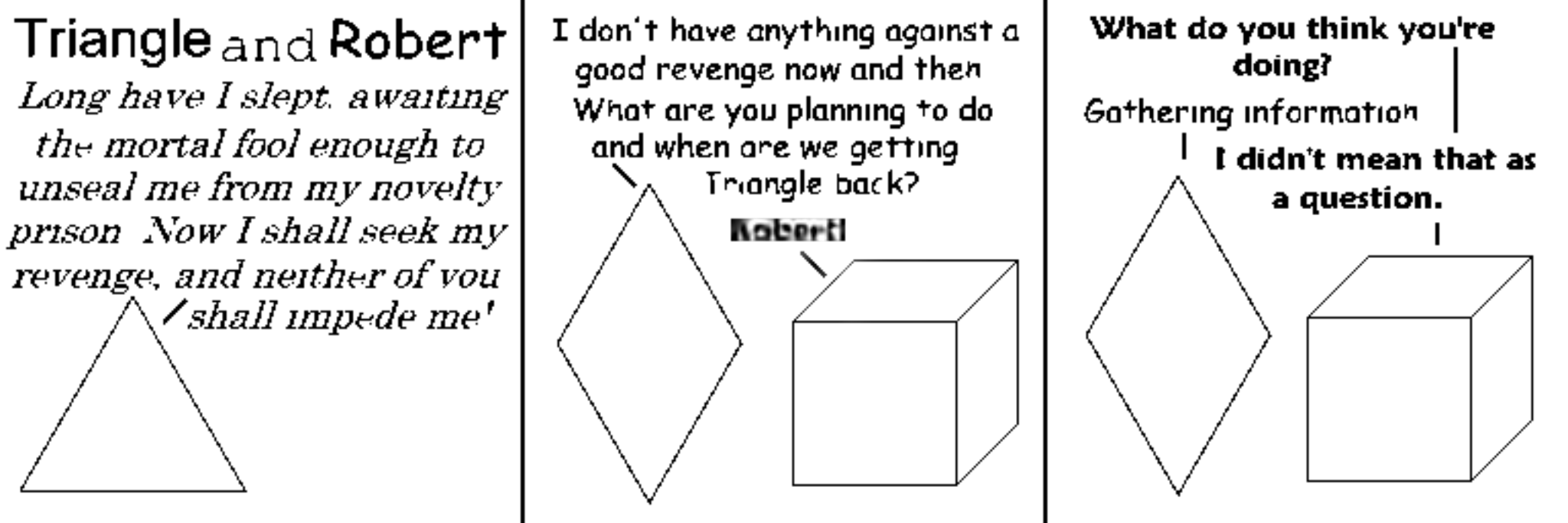
Triangle and Robert



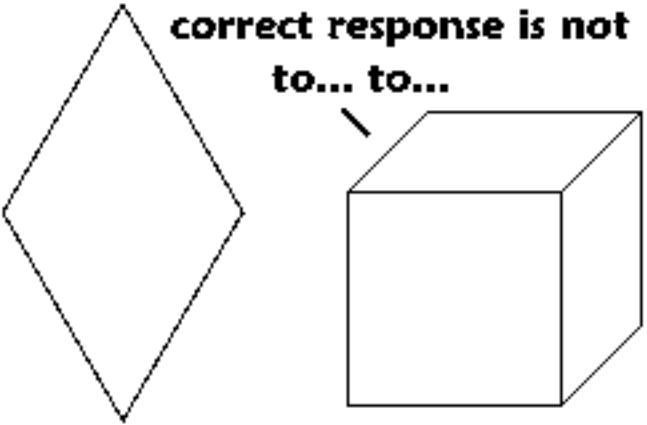


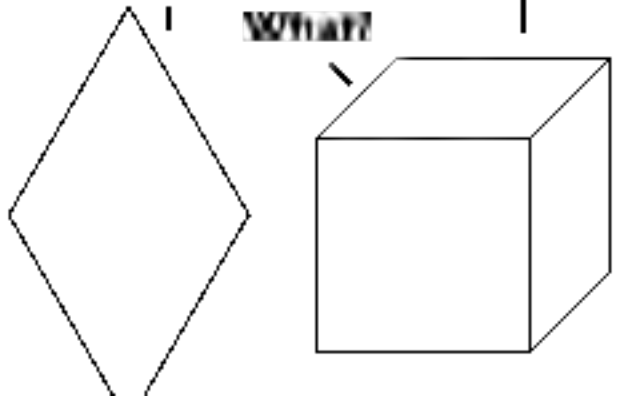


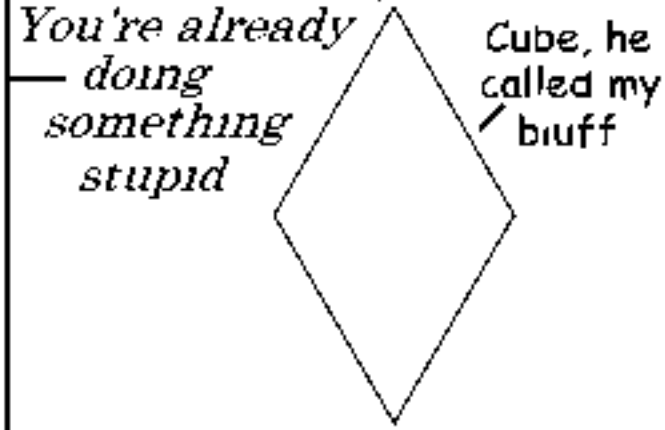
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



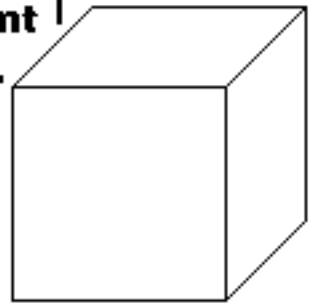




Triangle and Robert

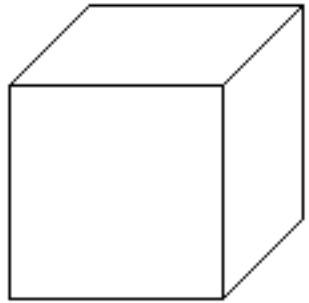
Why aren't either one of you taking this seriously?

You're a reawakened serpent god who's just possessed someone as an instrument of revenge.

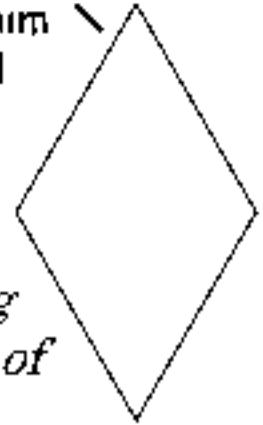


You're the fool who reawakened him, and he just possessed your best friend.

So why is there *banter?*

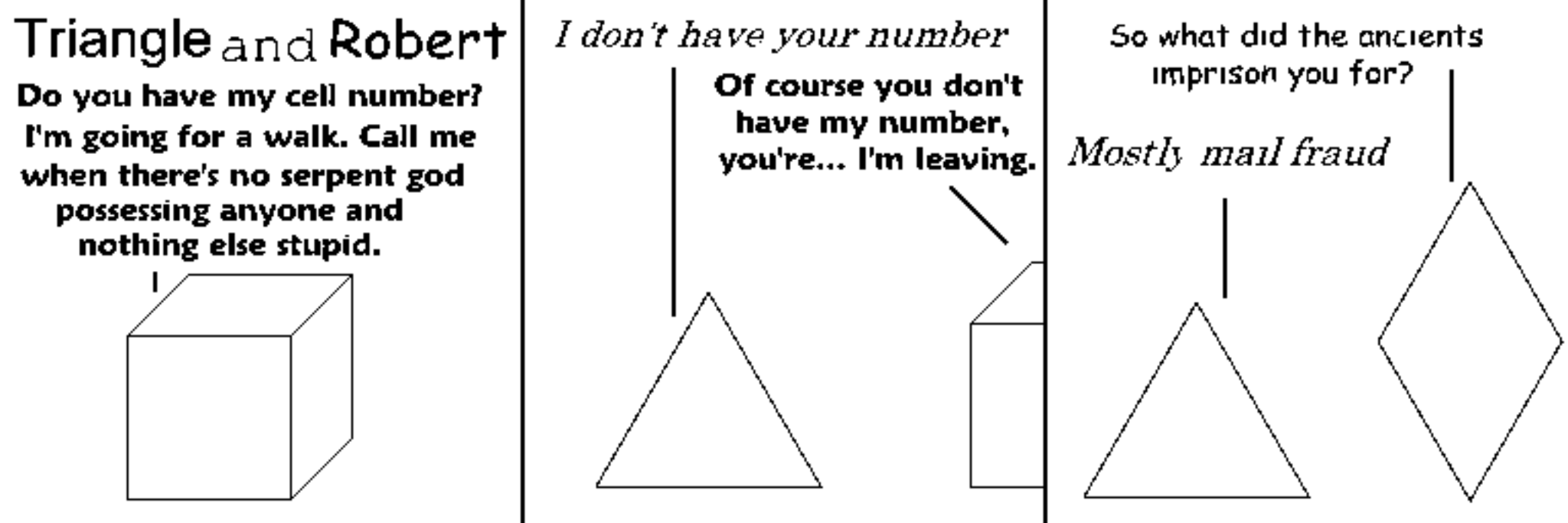


Because I've thought th s through one more step than you Who can this guy avenge himself on? Everyone who imprisoned him is long long dead along with the rest of their species

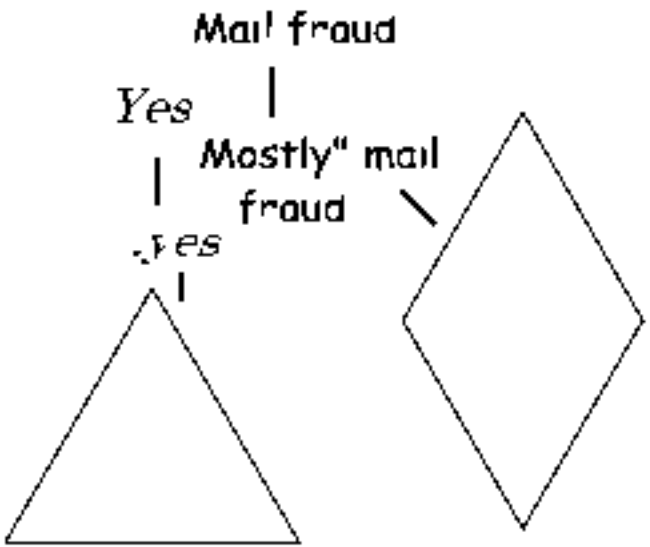


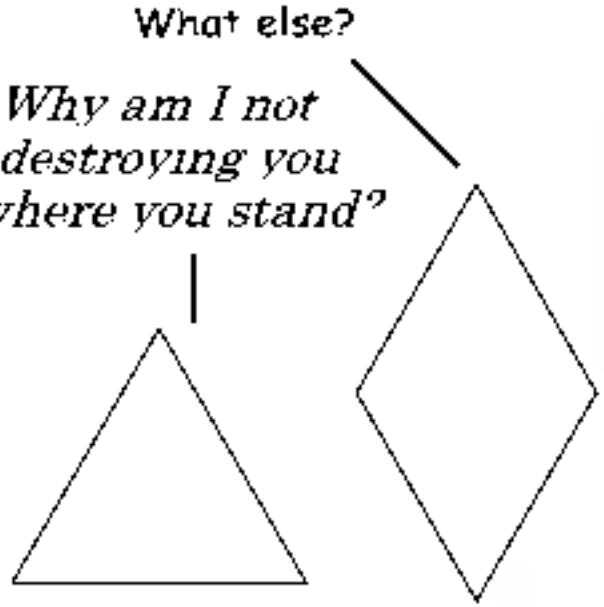
I was trying not to think of that yet

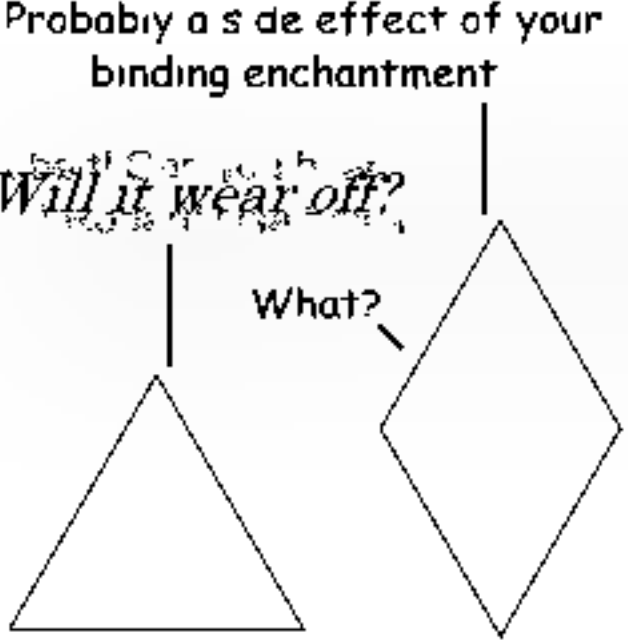
Triangle and Robert



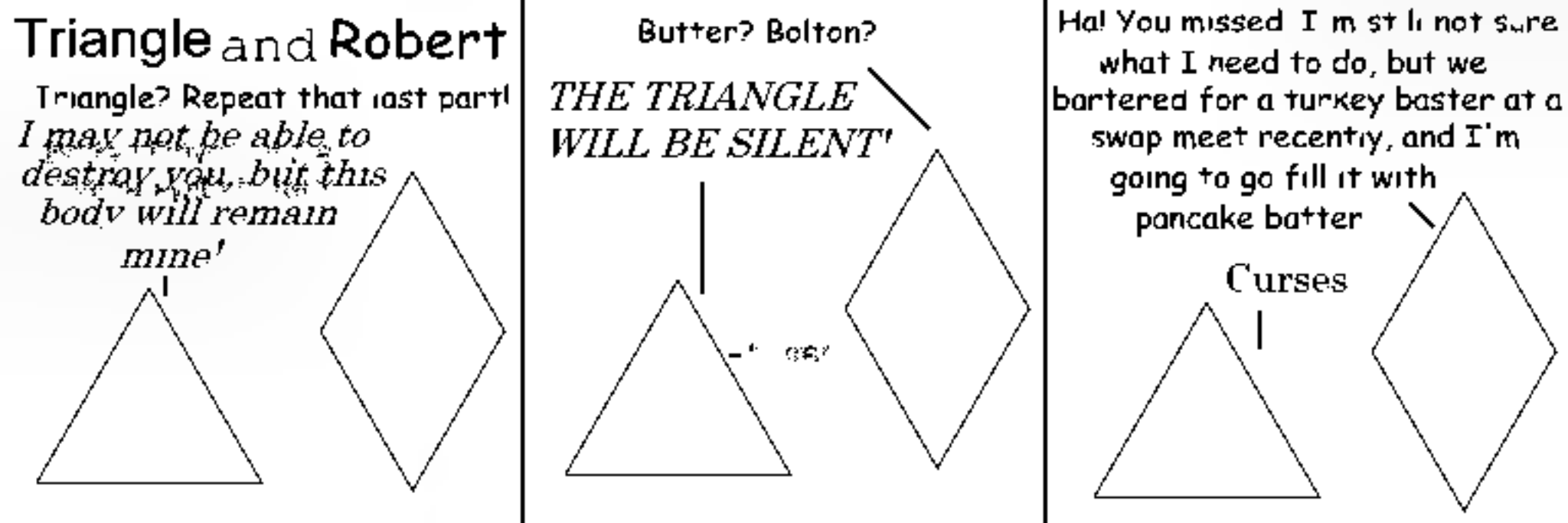
Triangle and Robert







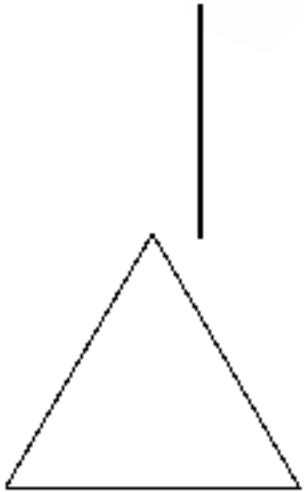
Triangle and Robert



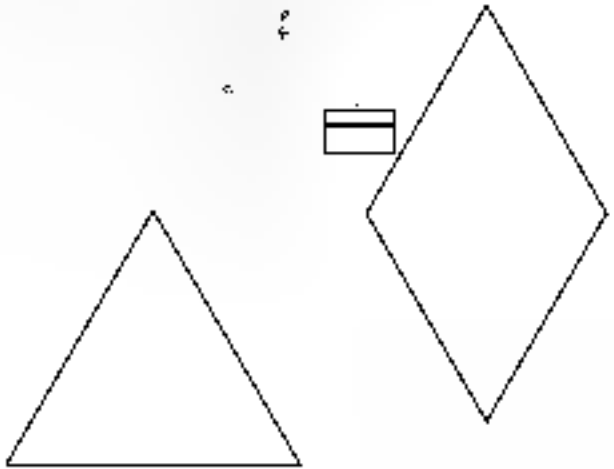
Triangle and Robert

I put lots of butter in this, just in case I got the vowel wrong

Robert! You did it! Now get a container w th a tight seal



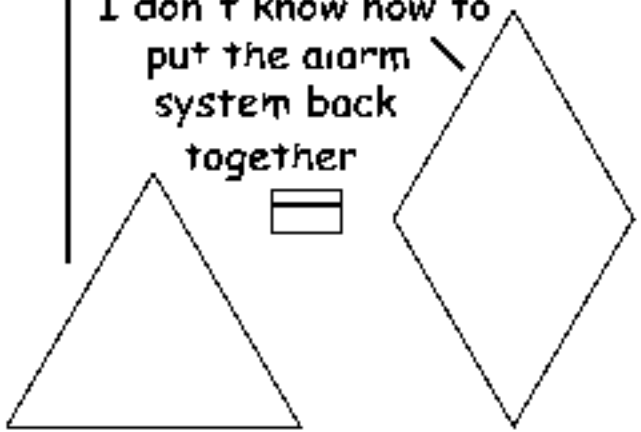
Right!



Triangle and Robert

Now put t back in the artifact room and resea everything

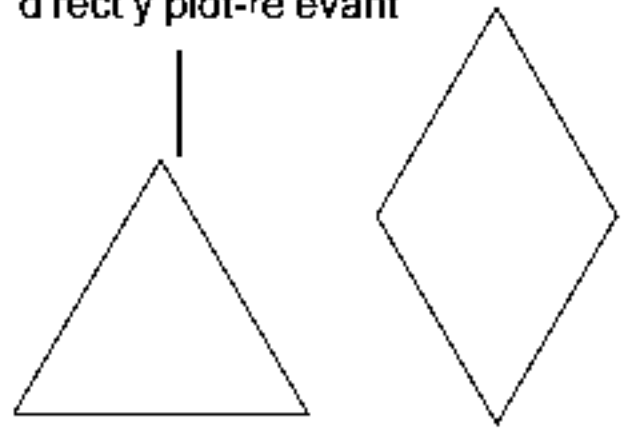
I don t know how to put the alarm system back together



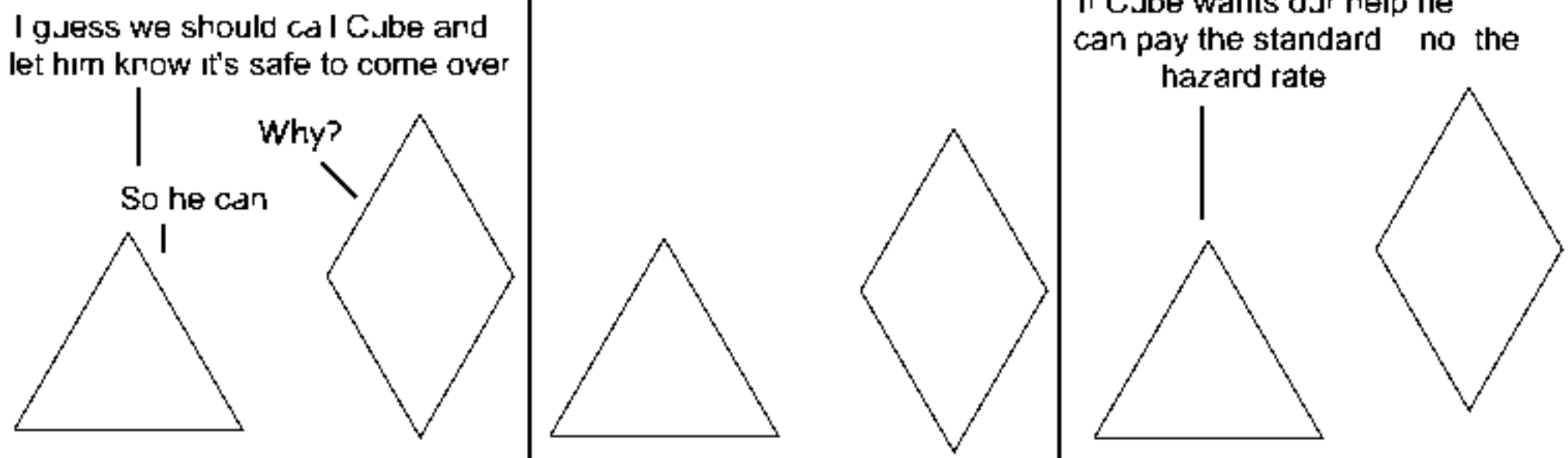
The a arm system is most y to keep you out personally I'll nstall a new one later

You seem less angry than I ve come to expect

I saw things n its memor es I think I understand some things about the Fourth Race that I didn't before although noth ng d rect y plot-re evant

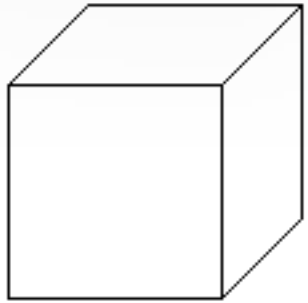


Triangle and Robert

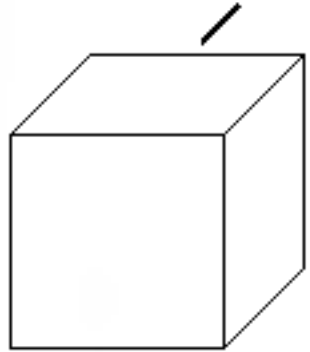


Triangle and Robert

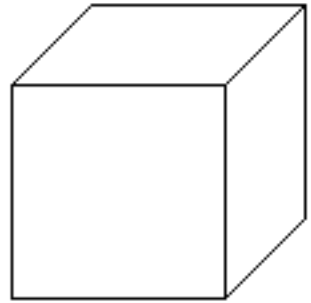
Having left Triangle and Robert to deal with their own problem, Cube seeks a safe place to begin his experiment



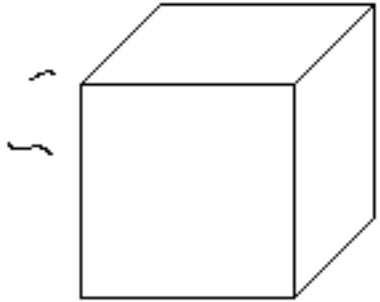
I obviously can't do this in public, but it has to be outdoors so I can follow the signal. Where could I set up a bunch of geometry supplies and not get arrested?

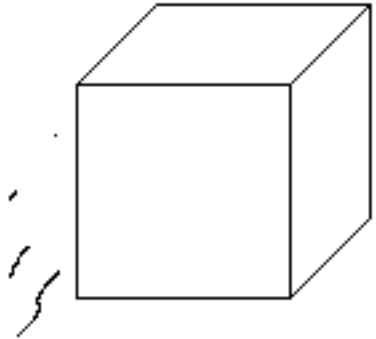


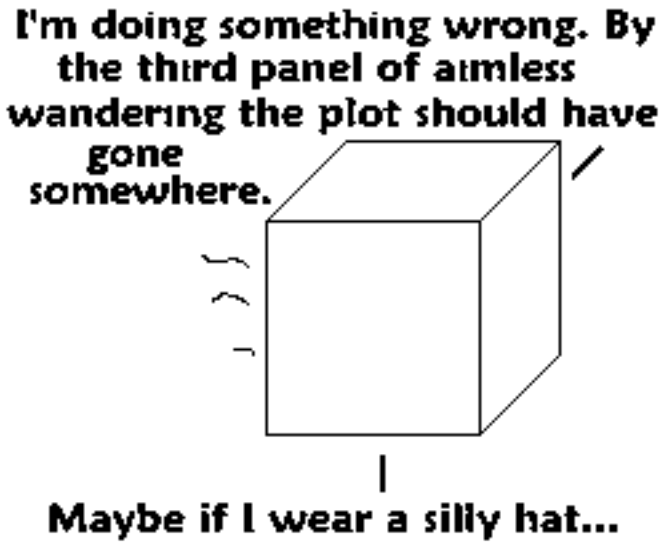
I wonder if that thing Triangle and Robert do where they wander around aimlessly until plot happens would work for me. It's worth a try.



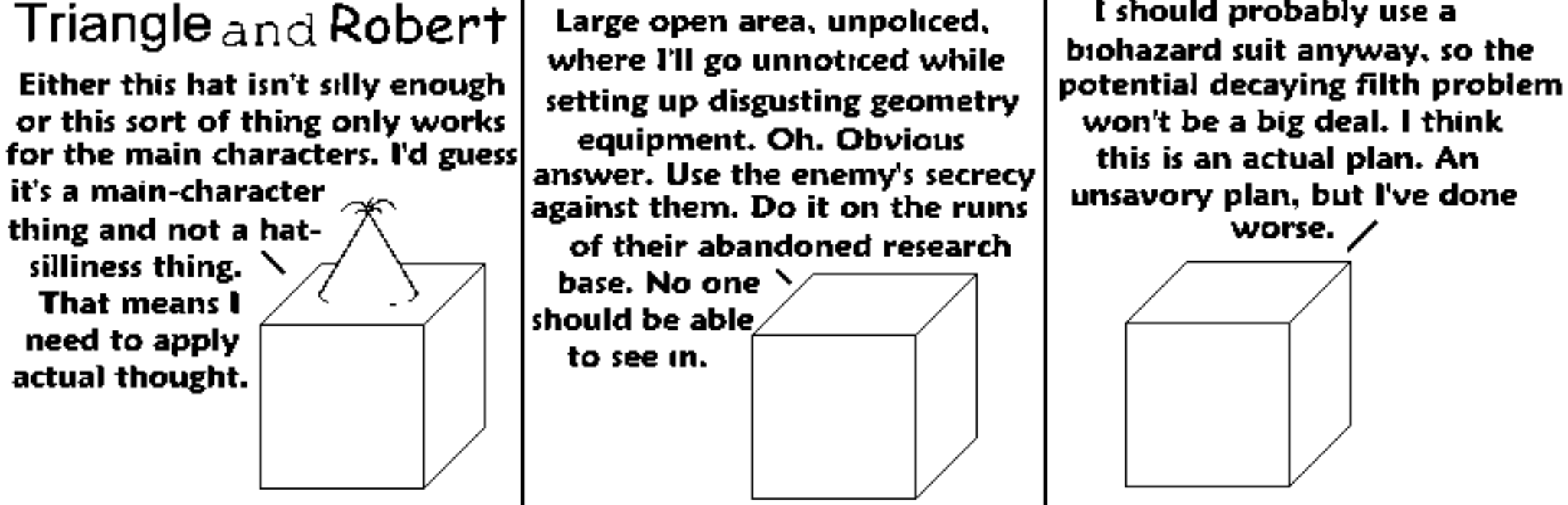
Triangle and Robert



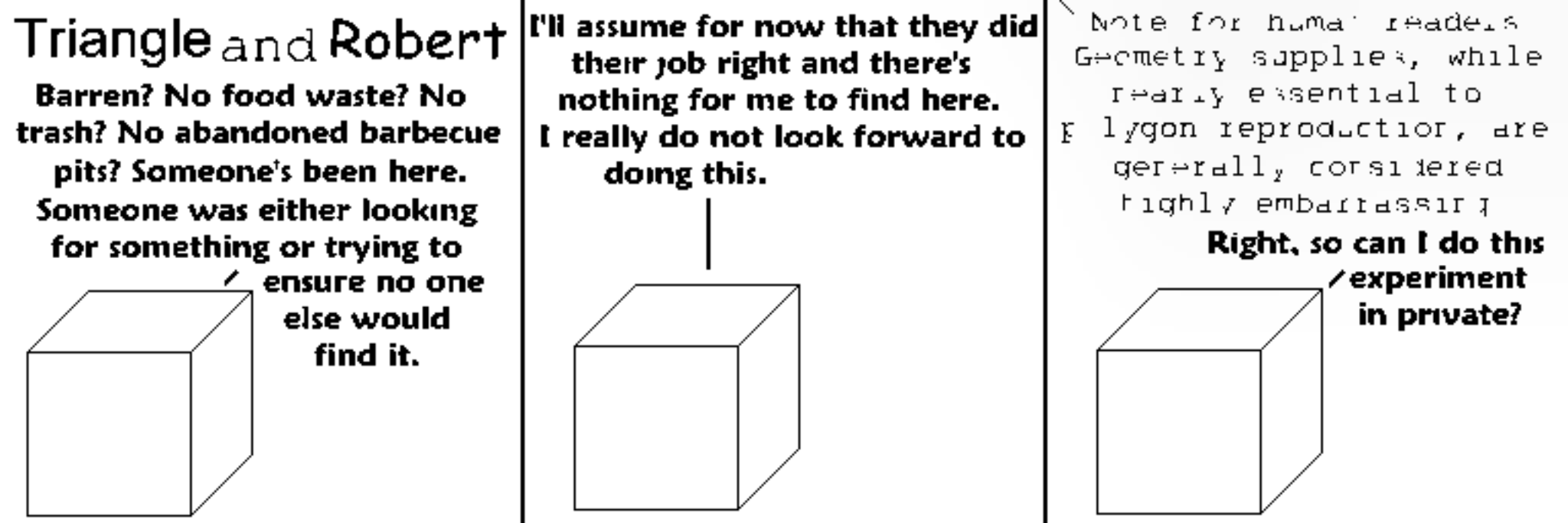




Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

This panel denotes the passage of some time, clumsily

Is it okay to put you back in the strip now, Cube

What do you think?

I think you're in some sort of underground prison

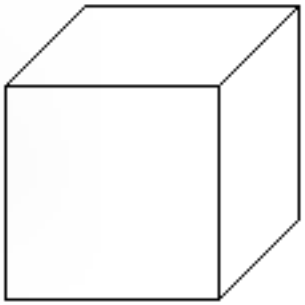
And?

And I'm grossly overusing in medias res

Correct.

I suppose you can't start writing this comic over and come in earlier, before the whole ambush?

I'd rather not raise that question

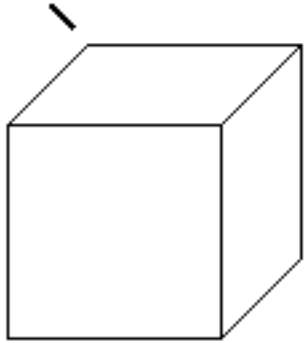


Triangle and Robert

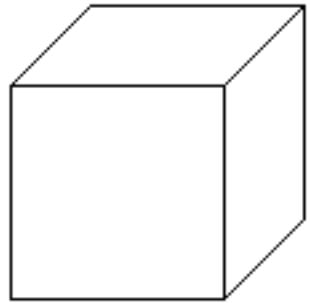
Do you have an escape plan yet

Shouldn't I recap how I got in here first?

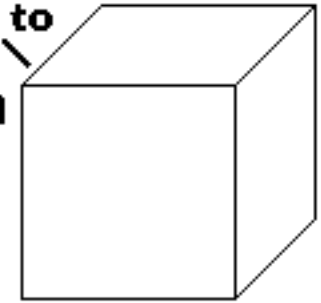
Your call



I'm working on sort of a plan, but it'll be more likely to work if I don't say anything about it out loud until I spring it. I might as well collect my thoughts in flashback form.

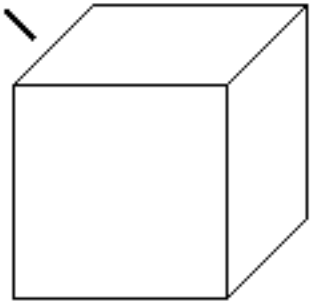


I set up the... equipment and started it. Before I could make sense of the results, they'd detected what I was up to. I should have realized they'd locate me as quickly as I could locate them. I also should have expected them to have teleportation. I made a lot of that sort of mistake, all in all.



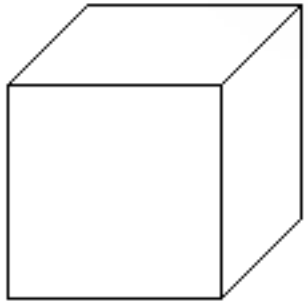
Triangle and Robert

I'm not sure if they were shooting to kill or not, but when I took cover they switched to gas grenades. I didn't totally lose consciousness.



They didn't use the teleporter on the way back. I'm not sure exactly where this dungeon is, but I do know the general area.

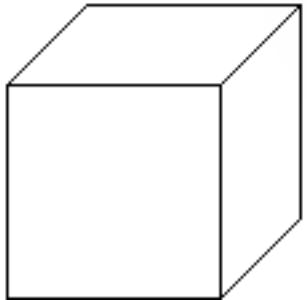
Why didn't they teleport back



How would I know?

You know a fair amount about teleportation. You don't have a theory

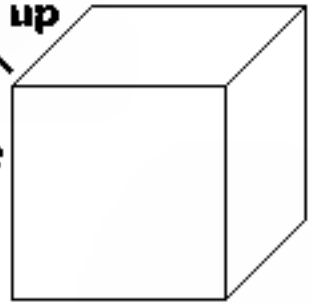
Of course not. It's not like that would be integral to the escape plan I'm forming, now would it?



Triangle and Robert

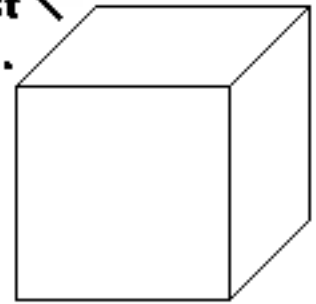
So, what [illegible] you know about your captor.

It's definitely the shadow agency that replaced the RDCLBA. They're not just about covering up Fourth Race technology, though. They're trying to exploit it.

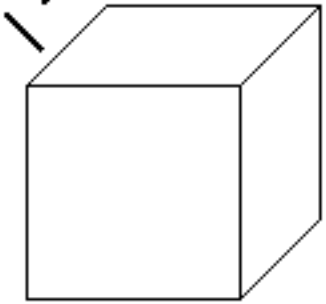


[illegible]'ve tried to do that yourself.

Yes, and I've worked alongside an acknowledged supervillain to do it. But I published my results. Well, most of them...

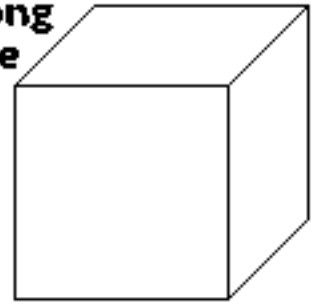


I was writing them all UP for publication, honest. I just hit a couple roadblocks. Also, I never attempted any inhumane experiments on the very building blocks of our species. These guys are, I'm pretty sure.

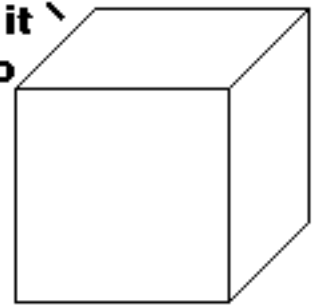


Triangle and Robert

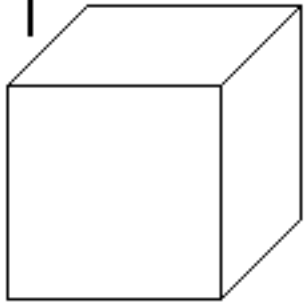
They're definitely experimenting with the very building blocks of our species. It's whether the experiments are inhumane that I'm not entirely certain about, but there's strong reason to believe they are.



I saw a pile of line segments, twitching. They might not have been torn from the living, but they smelled of death. I saw a... a mass of white pixels. I couldn't even understand what it was exactly, but it seemed like it was trying to speak. Or scream.



There's worse than that going on, behind massive steel doors with defenses scarier than anything I can remember. I heard bits of conversation.... Anyway, they chucked me in this cell.



Triangle and Robert

To all those who create, there looms the specter of incompetence. To those who seek to create life, that specter may, itself, live. Thus it is that Prozac the Bear enters our story.

Hi!

The reification of my own incompetence, he can also serve as that of others', when those others seek to create with forces beyond their ken.

And their Barbie and Skipper!

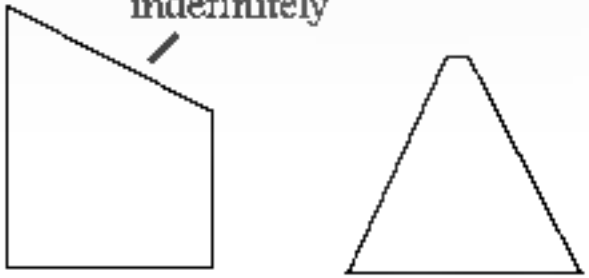
Ah, if only they were content to play this with dolls.

Do I have to have any idea what you're talking about?

You don't have to have the idea. You are the idea.

Triangle and Robert

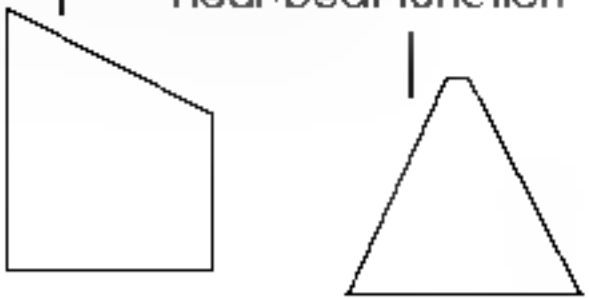
Even the ones that move fall apart.
I don't think we're looking at enough parameters. There's some additional input we need to provide for the geometry to be self-sustaining indefinitely



Had I mentioned to you I was th nk ng there might be more of a tempora component nvo ved?

That's right. That periodic. what did you call it?

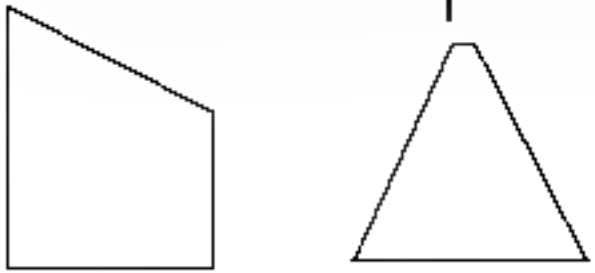
"Heartbeat function"



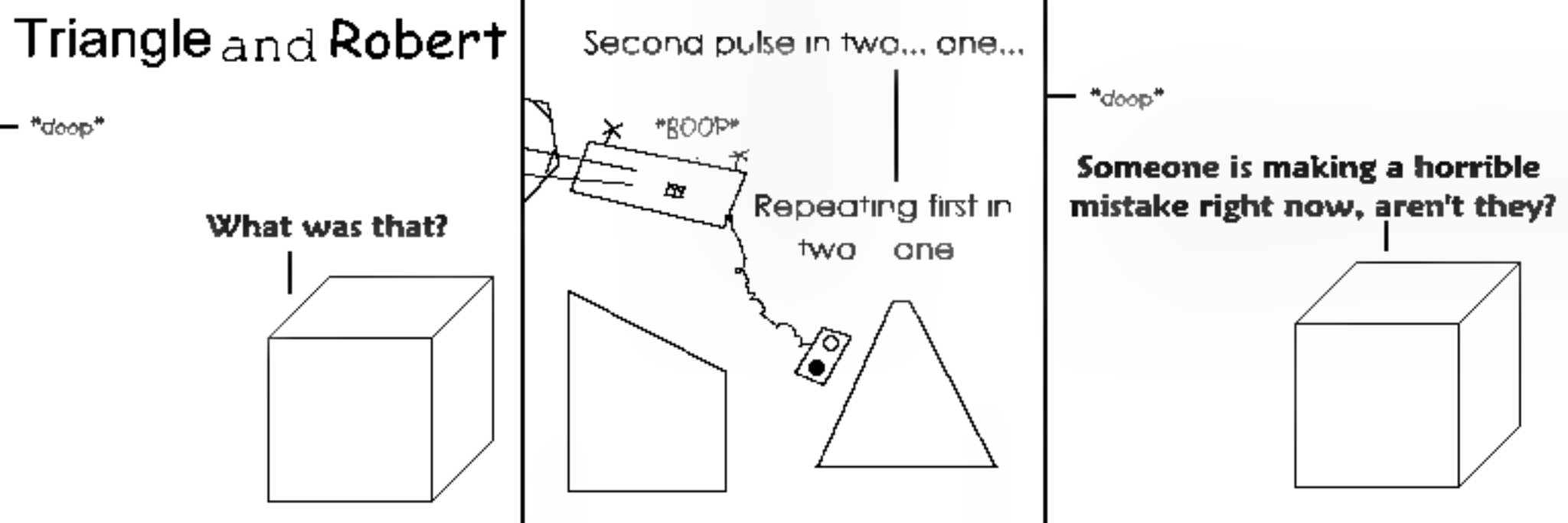
How long would it take you to set up some sort of test?

I th nk we can do t manua ly next run, just to get an approx mation

Let's do it.



Triangle and Robert



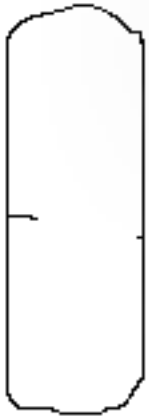
Triangle and Robert

BOOP

The pulses are having an effect!

It looks like the short edges are bucking outward and curving

doop

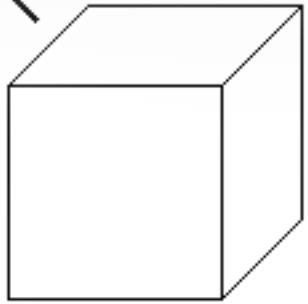


Medial line? Should we keep going? Now that we know the function works, maybe we should try to tune it.

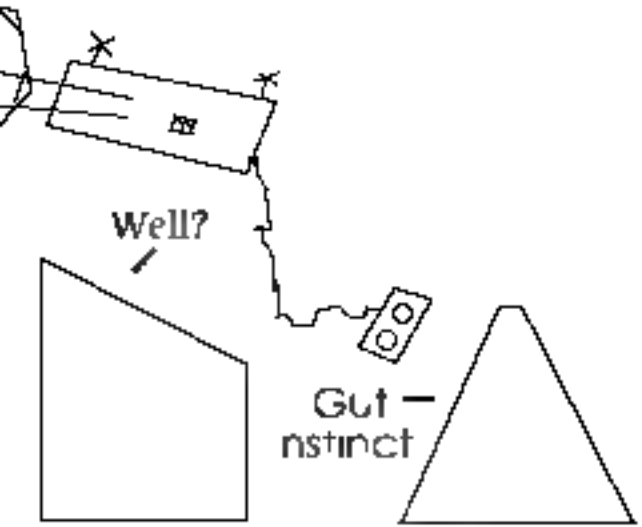
Give it a few more cycles. We need data.

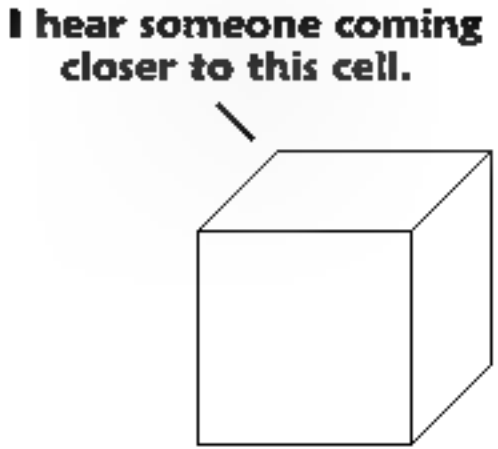
BOOP

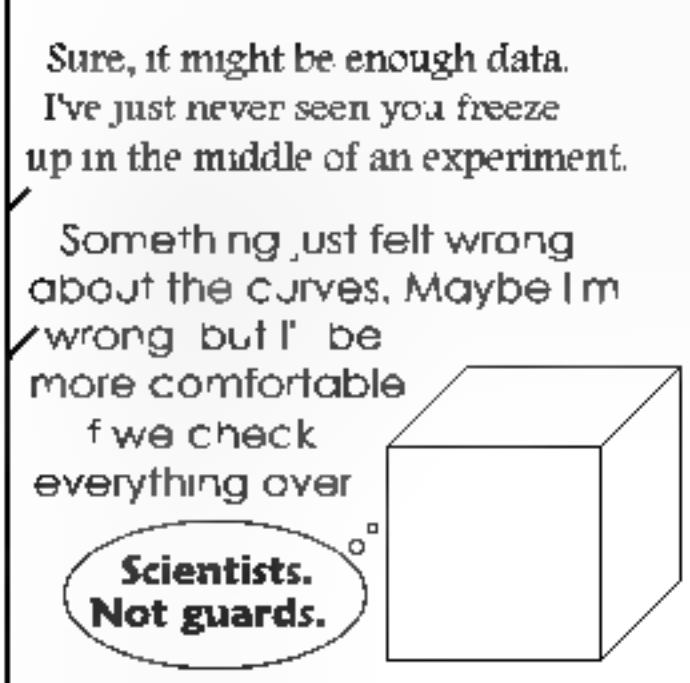
That has to be coming from the lab on this level. I'm thinking I should be looking even harder for an escape opportunity now.



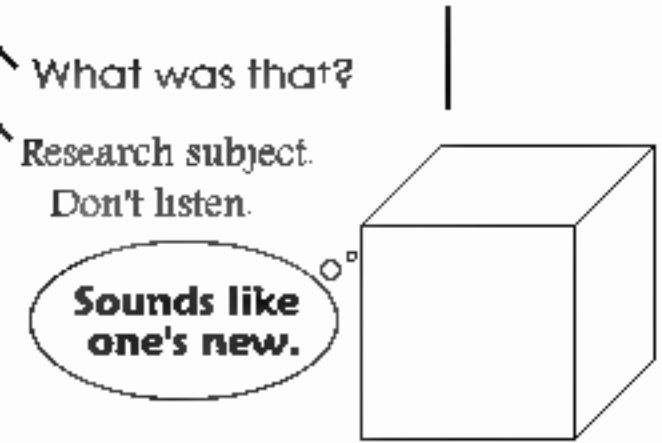
Triangle and Robert

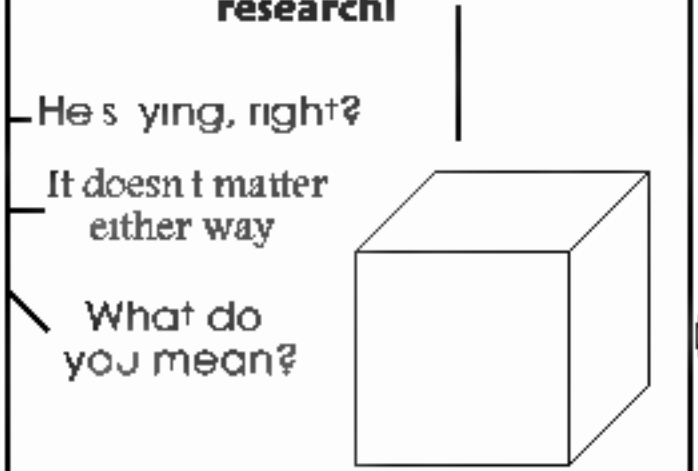


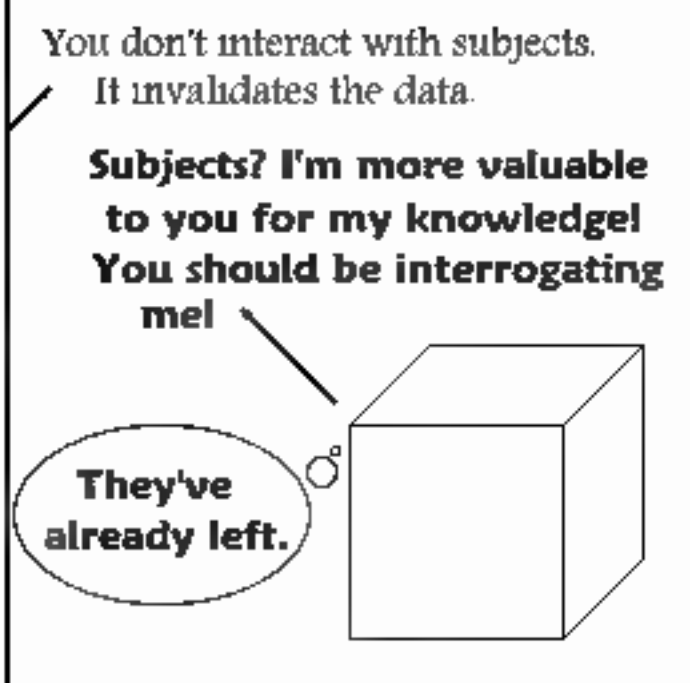




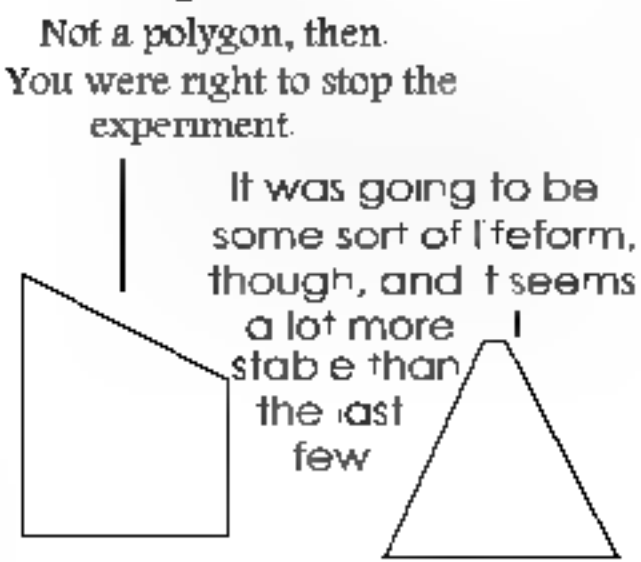
Triangle and Robert

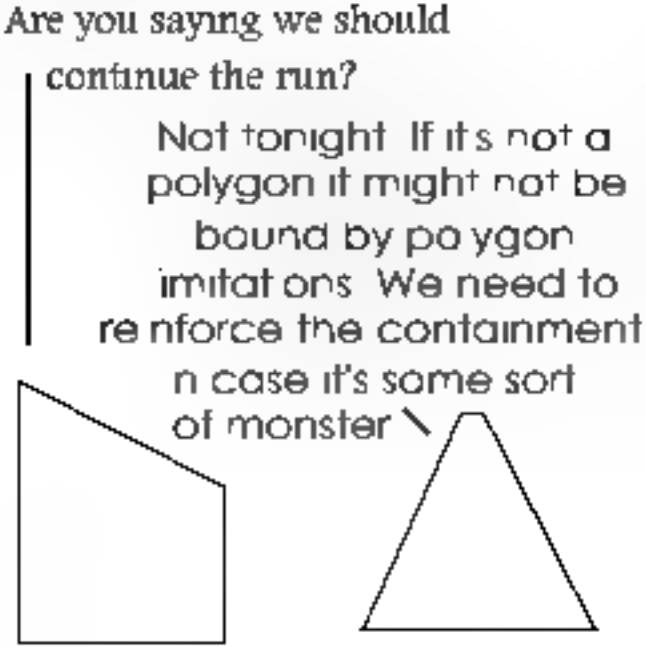


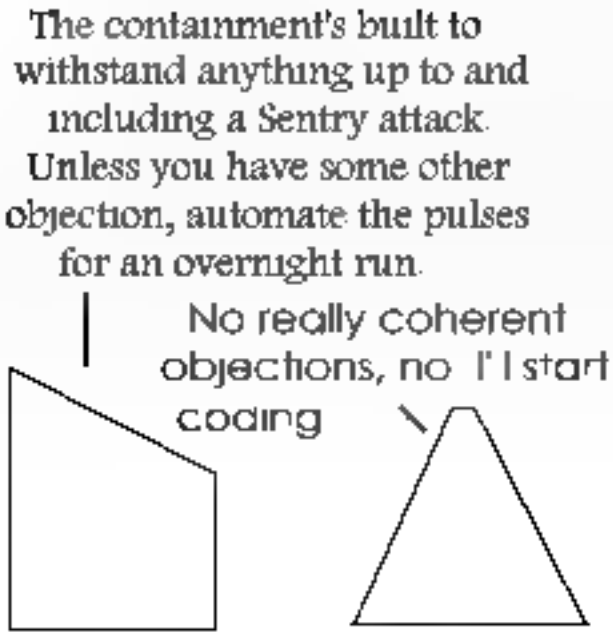




Triangle and Robert





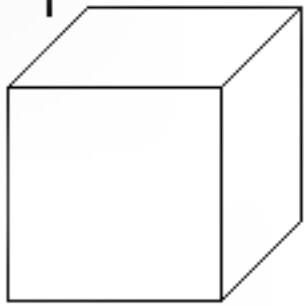


Triangle and Robert

Sometime after midnight:

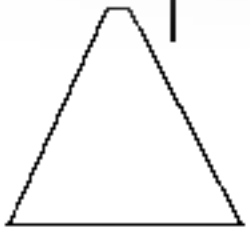
Something woke me up. Is someone out there?

Quiet



Something horrible has happened. I don't know if you're really Cube... I probably shou dn't be do ng this. There's an automatic lockdown going on to keep t from escaping t already d'd... I'm scared.

What escaped?



I don t know. We were br nging an artificial rectangle to ife and it went oblong on us. It looked like it might somehow be... I don t want to say.

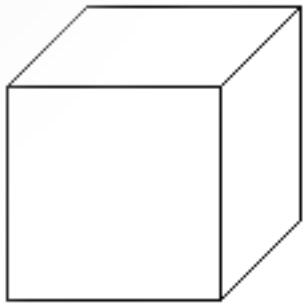
Let me guess. Lockdown protocol makes no provision for the safety of survivors?

Exactly. We both need to escape from here now.

Triangle and Robert

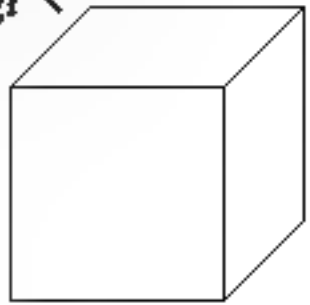
If you can't actually open the cell then what was the point of coming over here?

If you're really Cube, shouldn't you already have an escape plan?



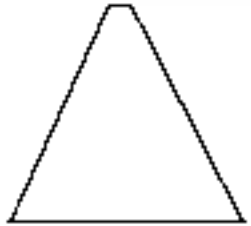
I was working on one, but it involved a guard opening the cell door before I pulled anything. Can't you science the door open with chemicals or something?

We don t have chemicals

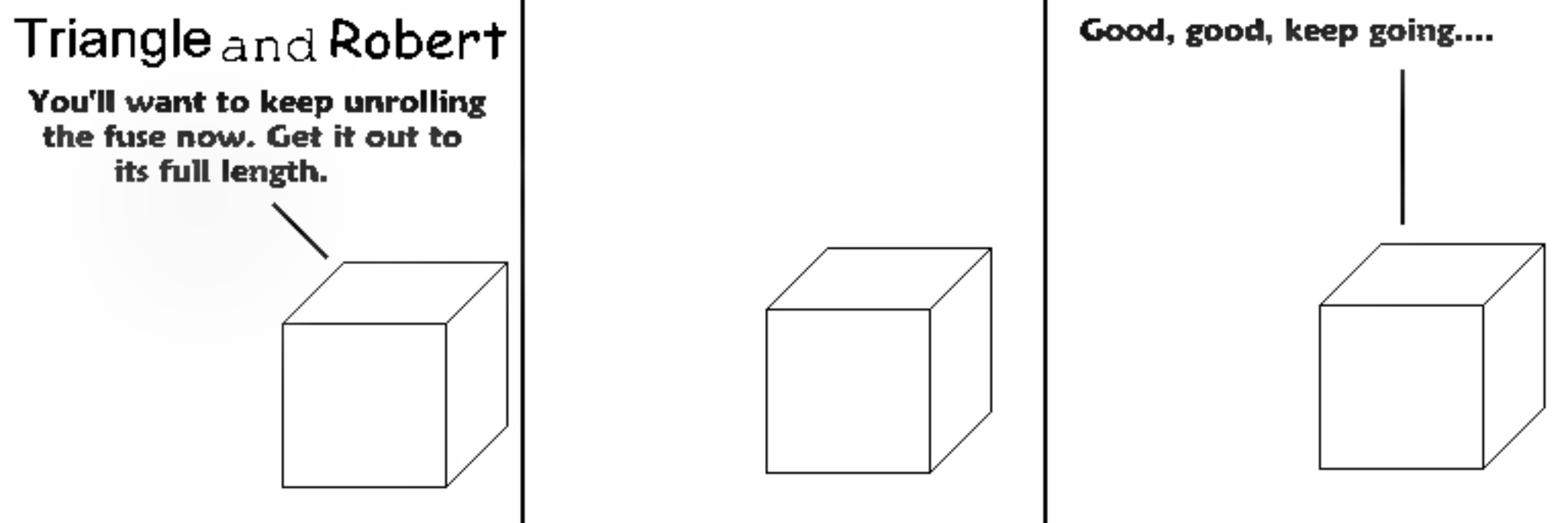


Let me backtrack there We don t have science chemicals There are munit ons You ll have to te me how to use them

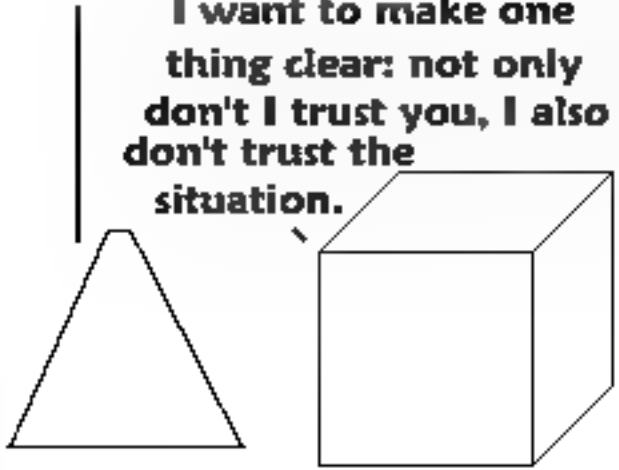
Make a list.

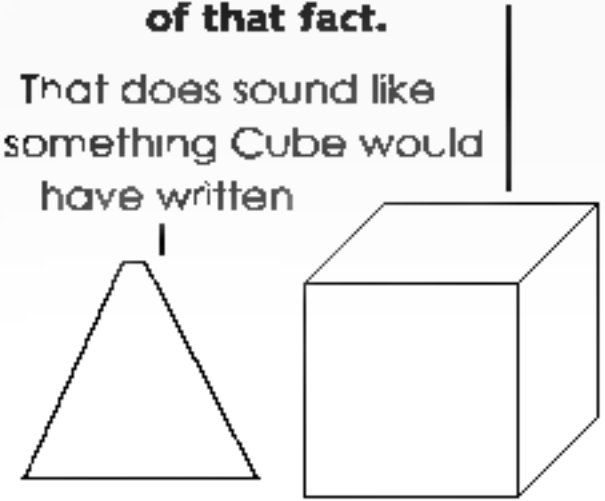


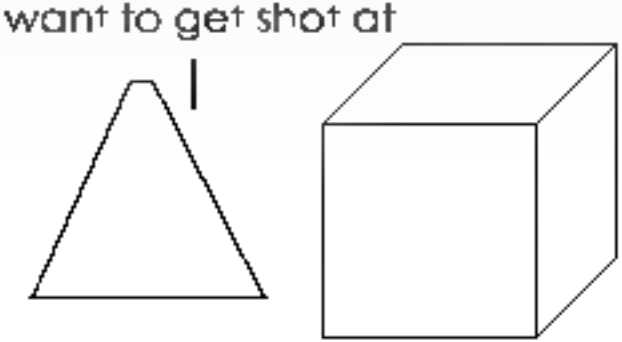
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

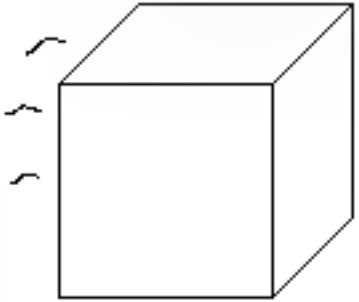






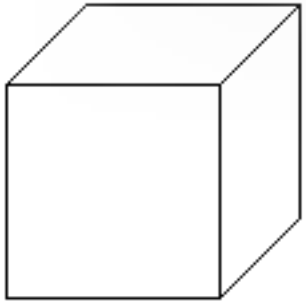
Triangle and Robert

I have no idea what happened here, but I'm disgusted by it. They made a monster? It broke things?

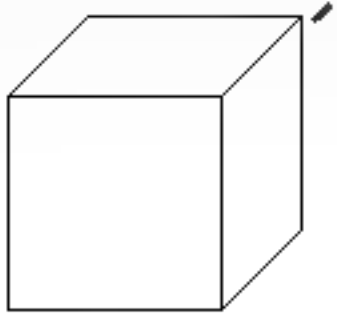


Things that...

Maybe I should be looking for escape routes, not thinking about what this stuff was for.



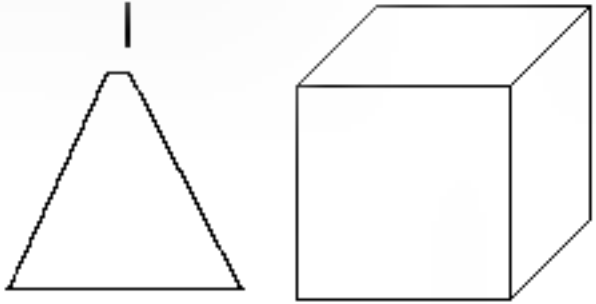
That hole... I'm going to very carefully stand so that there's no way the hole and I can both be on-panel, because if it's what it looks like the safest panel to be in doesn't include it.



Triangle and Robert

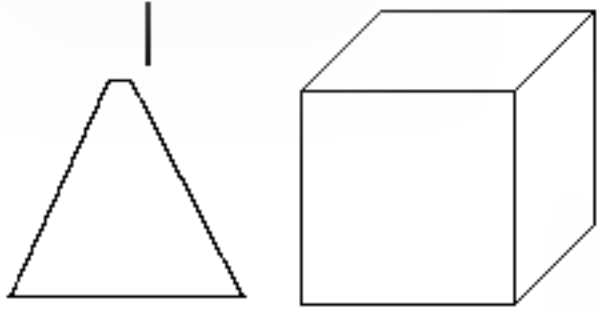
The hole, in the lab...

We can t get out that way. If it leads anywhere t's to more defenses

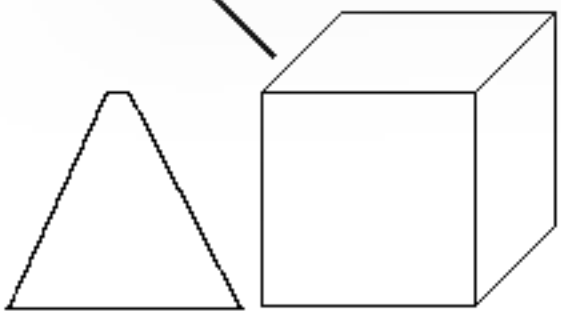


I didn't think we could. The hole, though. It's shaped like

That s why wanted you to see for yourself. It s not someth ng to mention out loud

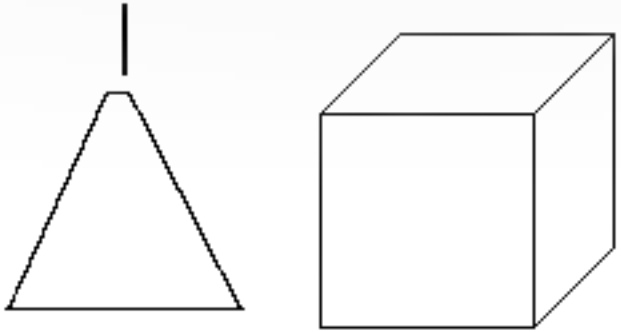


But why would... the hole was left by something going OUT. What *exactly* did you do? I think I might need to know before we can continue.

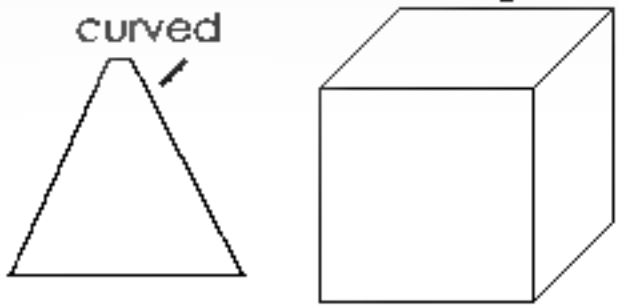


Triangle and Robert

I'l tell yoJ, but keep one thing n mind, know my way around more than yoJ. Your chances of escaping go down withoJt me

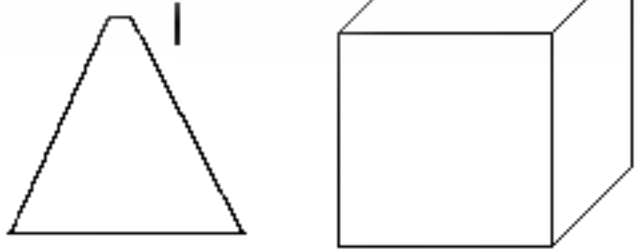


We were try ng to create new polygonal life, Js ng harvested raw materials Nothing we brought to life stayed alive for more than a few minutes, Jnti I added a new parameter. What started as a rectangle curved



A rectangle... BECAME that?

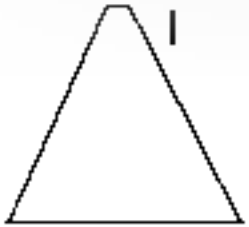
Yes We assembled t from parts. We didn t know what it would do, but we thought it was safely confined, Jnti after t changed

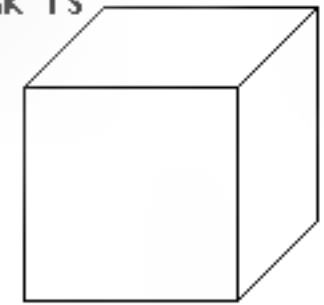


Triangle and Robert

So it's a newly created entity.

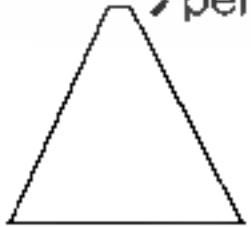
If you insist on applying logic, but I don't think this is a logical situation. I think it's the real thing.

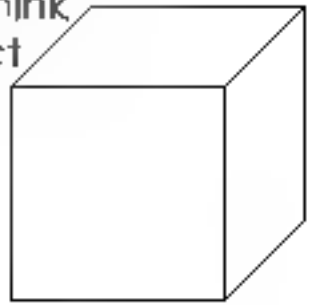




Where did it go? If it went in a straight line after making that hole, what would its destination be?

It would pass through a guard station, then a hallway, then I think through a subject pen.

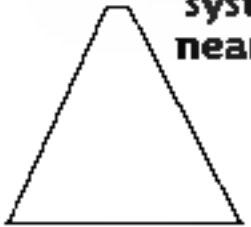


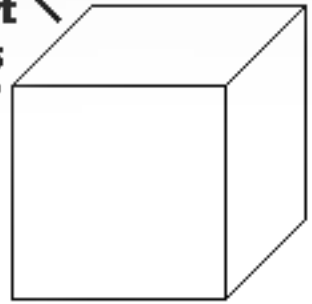


Past there . bathrooms, janitorial, then solid rock

No clues there. Maybe predicting its moves is a waste of time. We just need to get out of here.

Do you know of any teleport systems nearby?

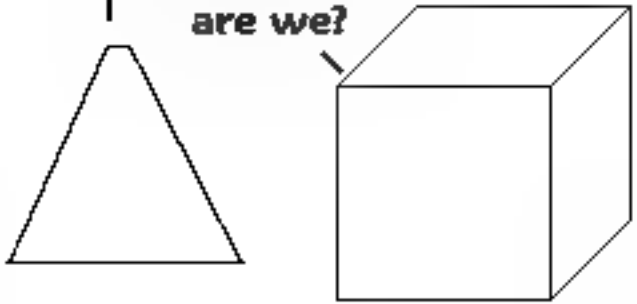




Triangle and Robert

I don t th nk there are any teleporters in the complex. They throw off the exper ments.

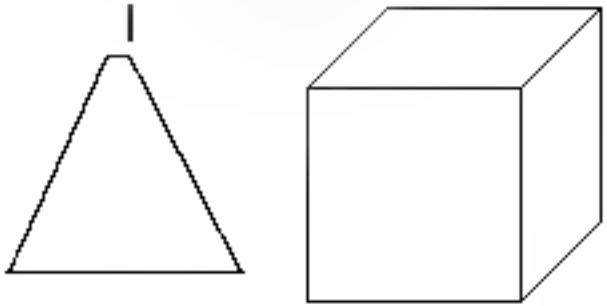
How far underground are we?



Something ike three hundred meters

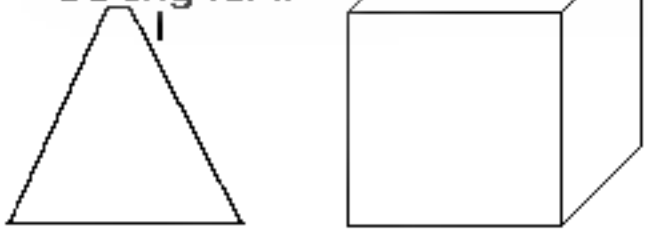
How many entrances are there?

I wasn t cleared for that I on y know two



What kind of scientist are you? You're not cleared for something, so you actually don't try to learn it? Where's your insatiable curiosity?

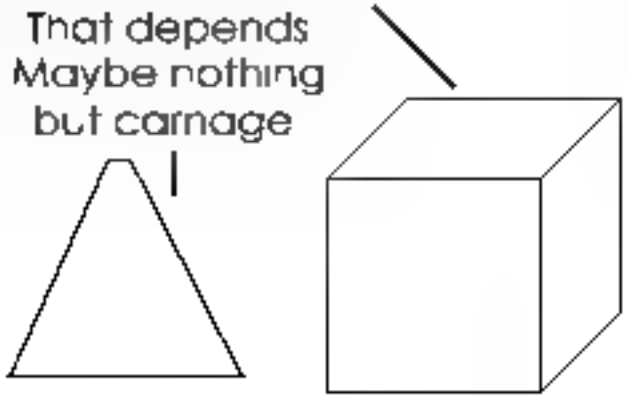
I'm not sure, and don't feel like ooking for it



Triangle and Robert

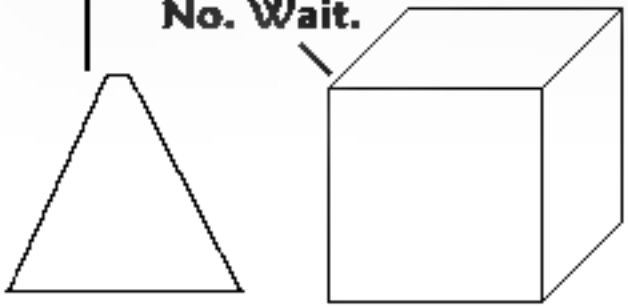
We can blast through one lockdown barrier. What'll be waiting on the other side?

That depends Maybe nothing but carnage



Some philosopher automata from Tetris got repurposed They might have been dispatched here. If so, I doubt there'd be any other guards

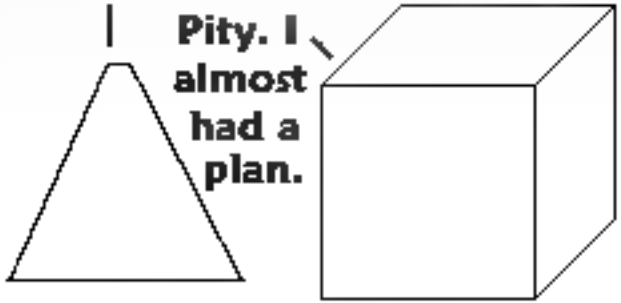
What other possibilities? No. Wait.



Repurposed? How did you manage that?

I don t know the details There are a lot of different research teams down here, and they don t a intercommunicate

Pity. I almost had a plan.



Triangle and Robert

If not automata, what else might we be up against?

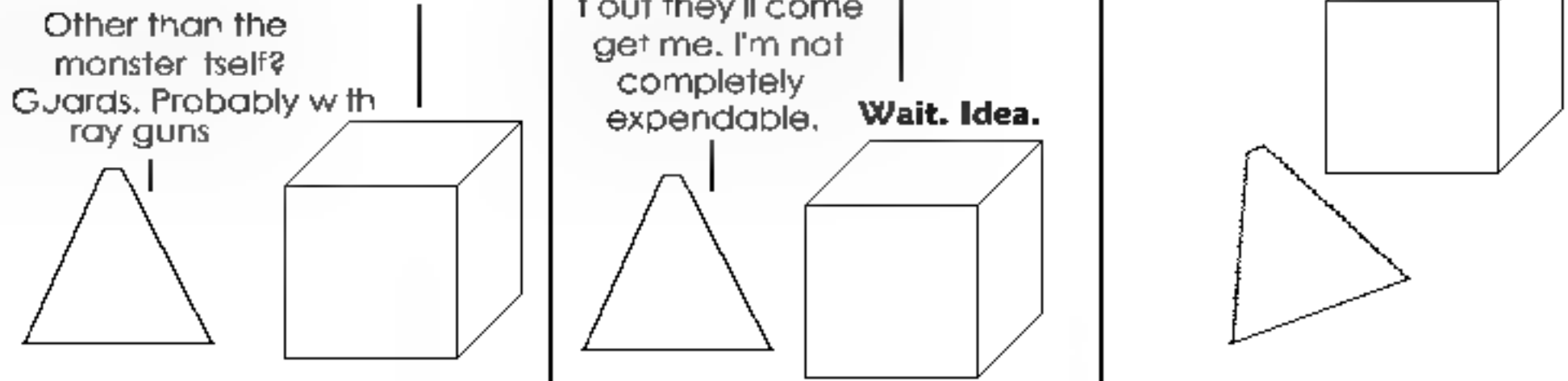
Other than the monster itself? Guards. Probably with ray guns

I suppose there's no armor around.

Maybe if I just wait out they'll come get me. I'm not completely expendable.

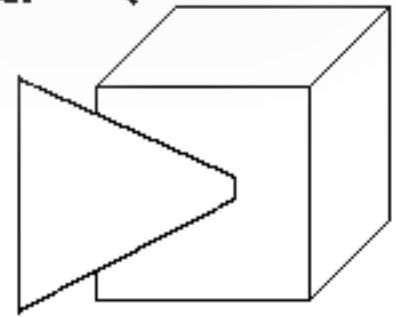
Wait. Idea.

I can use you as a hostage!



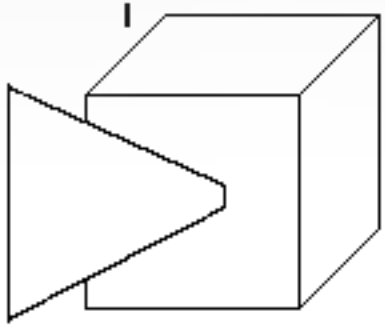
Triangle and Robert

Hostage, gun, vague idea of where I need to go, keys. Time to blow up the lockdown barrier and see what tries to kill me.



Boom!

Nothing but a few automatic turrets. Maybe everyone is already evacuated or dead or... or something Prozac the Bear does to people. Something horrible.

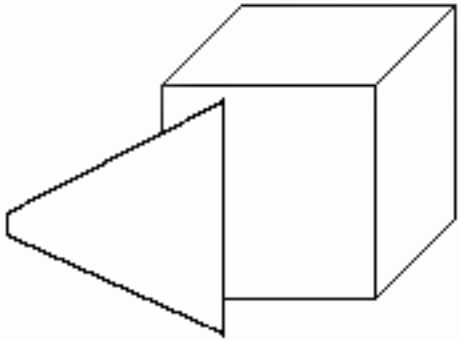


Triangle and Robert

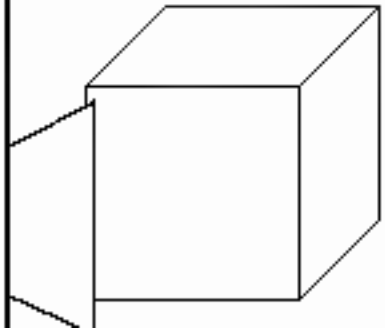
tappity tappity tappity

Turrents disengaged? I was just pressing random keys to warm up, I hadn't even started actually trying to do anything. I guess they figured anyone at the control terminal would probably not want to be shot at by default.

I've made it this far without even needing my hostage. This is too easy. They're probably enforcing the lockdown at the exits instead of spreading their forces inside.

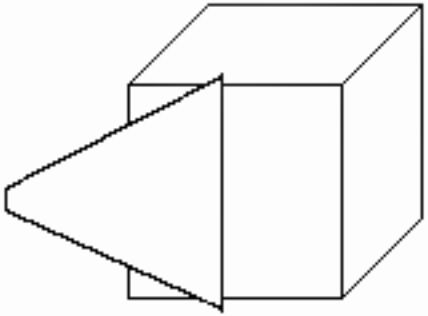


I have no idea what I'm going to be going up against. Maybe I can find security monitors in the guard station. Maybe I can even find something the Cartoonist can use as a punchline and keep him happy.

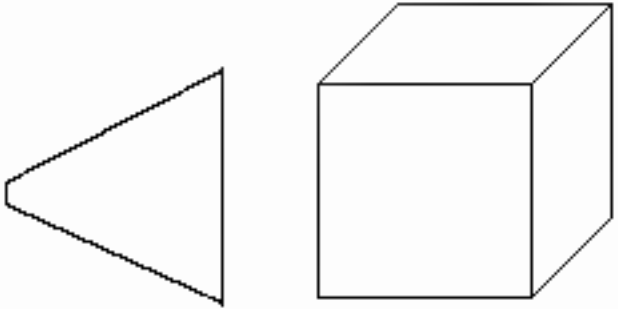


Triangle and Robert

Guardroom. Abandoned hastily. There are monitors, but it looks like they're just for this area. I can't see what'll be waiting outside.

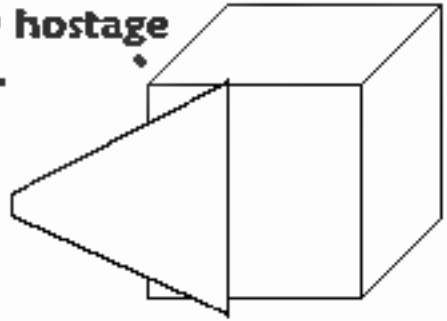


Are there tapes? Yes. Maybe I can reconstruct the events of the disaster in a little more detail from them. On the other hand, oxygen.



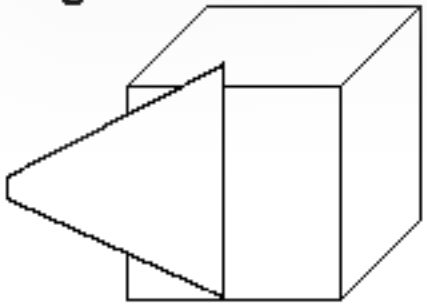
The vents are locked down. I can't stay in one place for too long or I'll run out of air. The tapes might be interesting later, though, so I'll take them with me.

And my hostage too.

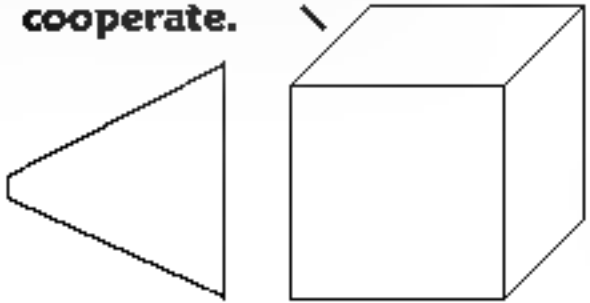


Triangle and Robert

The elevators are shut down, naturally enough, so I'll be taking the stairs. I'm not so sure I can get up them dragging a hostage....

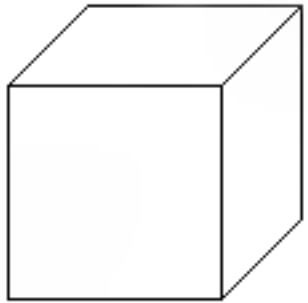


On the other hand, I do want to help this guy get out of here. I'd rather he not die if I can help it. I don't think I should try to wake him up, though, he'll probably remember me knocking him out and won't cooperate.



Cartoonist!

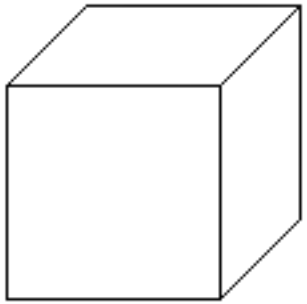
I don't know what comes next. If you invent a plausible plan it's likely to work, at least until the surface.



Triangle and Robert

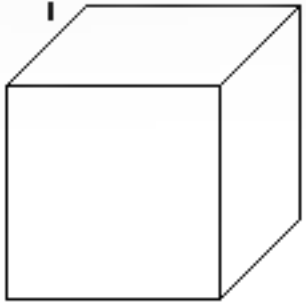
No hints about what's waiting at the exit, I suppose?

Correct.

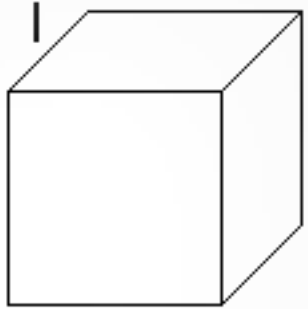


I'm guessing that if I ascend the stairwell I'll only be able to go up a few floors at a time before encountering some sort of obstacle which diverts me around the base to another stairwell.

Ah. You noticed the video gameness of the setting.

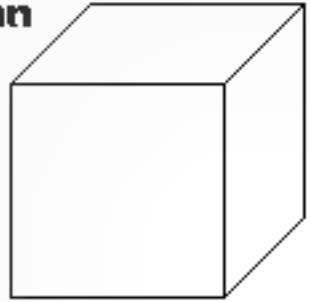


At some point I'm bound to end up fighting escaping experiments of geometry gone mad, collecting ammo from dead guards. I'm better off finding a way to use the elevator and skipping to the top level. Even if it means I don't get the rocket launcher.



Triangle and Robert

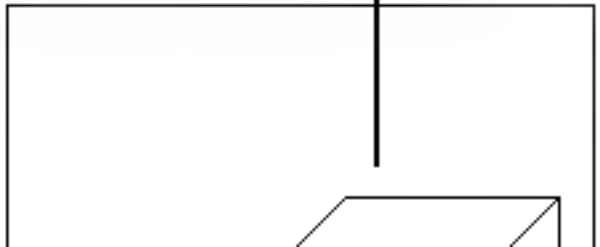
This elevator feels familiar. Tetris! The elevator is either from Tetris or copied from Tetrean technology. Now how can I use that to make it go?



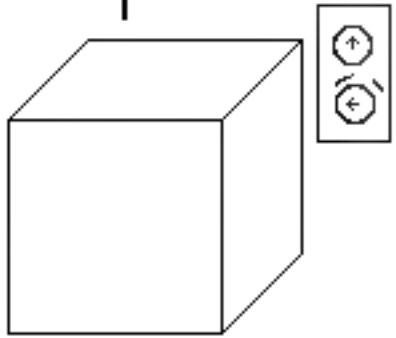
Cartoonist! You said any plausible plan was likely to work. What about an implausible one?

Will it be funny?

Maybe, but it might be funnier failing than working. I'll risk it anyway.

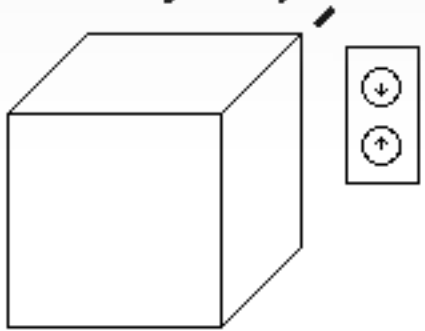


I can't pull the buttons out, but I can turn them. Maybe that'll be enough.

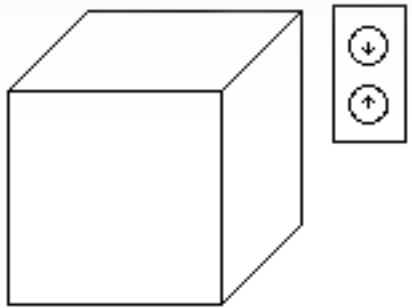


Triangle and Robert

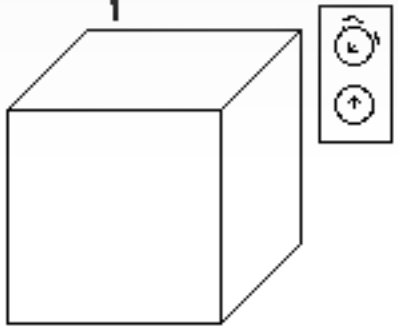
As I understand it, the Fourth Race programmed their geometric creations to obey the same laws of gravitation obeyed by matter.



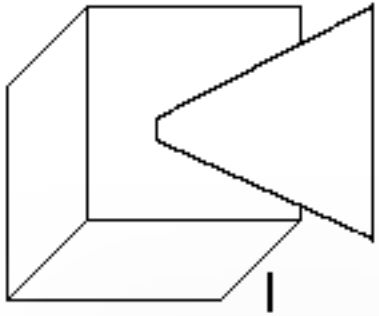
If that programming is the only reason a Fourth Race elevator knows up from down, then reversing the buttons just might get it to fall in the opposite direction, when the cable is cut.



I'll have to slow the descent, ascent, whatever, so it's safe. Hmm... maybe if it thinks it's sliding on a slope there'll be friction against the shaft walls.



Triangle and Robert



It worked? The elevator's gravity actually reversed? That's stupid. It was my idea, but it's still stupid.

Startlingly enough, the elevator reaches the top floor without incident.

The doors are harder to pry open from the inside. I should have brought a tool other than the hostage. I'm afraid I'll bend him.

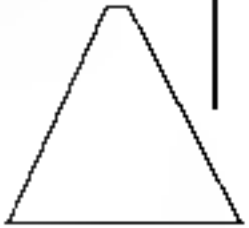
creak

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

Let me guess, I'm your canary now, Cube?

Actually I wasn't expecting you to regain consciousness, but that works.

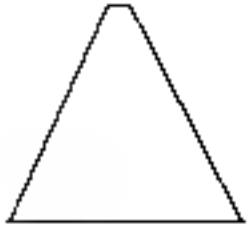


I see you have a gun

You can see that? I must be off-panel.

What?

Never mind. Stick a vertex out the exit.

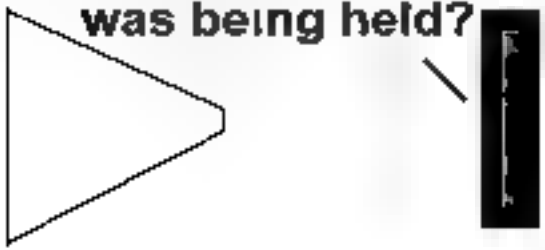


Aren't you the Meat Sentr

Triangle and Robert

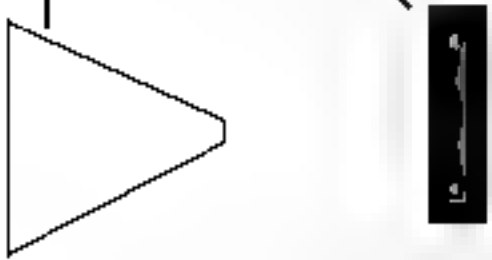
I've only barely recovered consciousness from my last beating. What do you want?

Do you know where the Vegetable Sentry was being held?



I had no idea we were holding a Sentry

Fine. Stay down until the police come back and don't make any sudden moves.



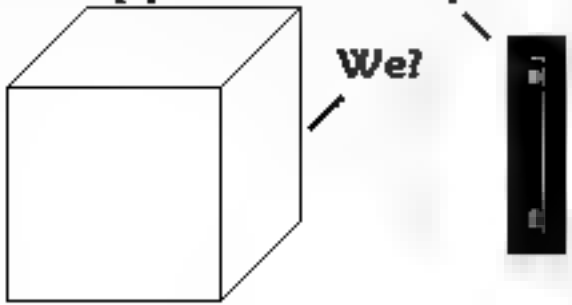
Excuse me, I don't know if you'd remember me or not, we've only met briefly.

Cube? Of course I remember you. Your research has aided the Sentries more than once.

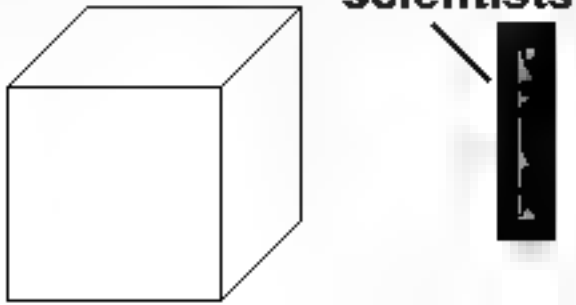
In that case, can you explain what's going on?

Triangle and Robert

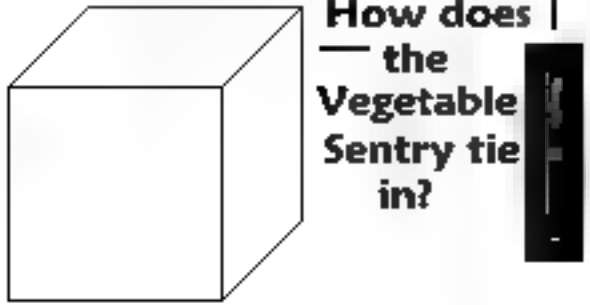
We heard about groups of polygons fighting each other outside this fake "warehouse" and we stepped in to stop them.



The Grain Sentry and myself. Triangle said it wasn't his story arc to deal with. We soon realized that escaped test subjects were fighting guards and scientists.

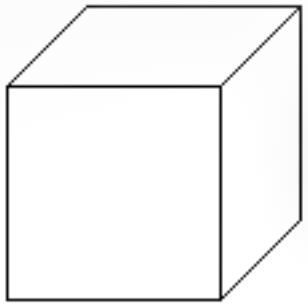


The police are taking everyone into custody as they leave. The problem now is what freed the subjects and forced the facility to be abandoned.



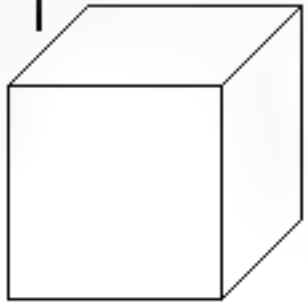
Triangle and Robert

We talked to some of the less insane test subjects. Only the ones in prime numbered pens were freed, and a few in large multiples of seven.



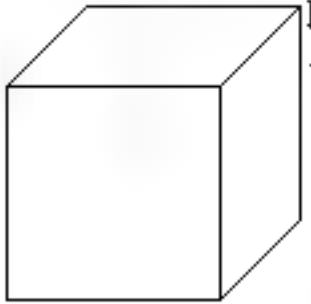
They also described the thing that freed them.

I guess it's not good at factoring sevens. But what about the Vegetable Sentry?



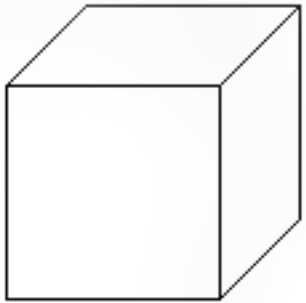
He was being held in a level below where the breakouts started, according to some of the escapees. He must still be down there.

So you're not charging in half-cocked already because...

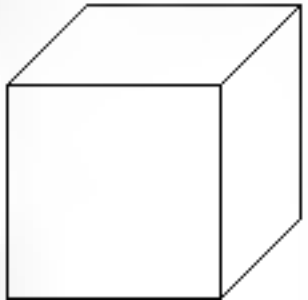


Triangle and Robert

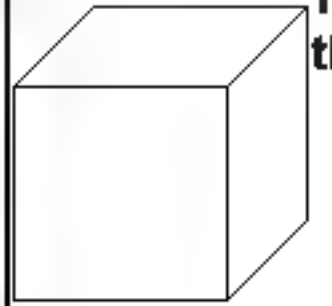
We're waiting for the flow of escapees to slow down before we go in. The more information we can get first, the better.



I don't have much to tell you. When the experiment went wrong, I was in a cell nearby. The guy who came out before me was a scientist on that very experiment, so he might be able to tell you more about it, although he doesn't know much about the rest of the facility.



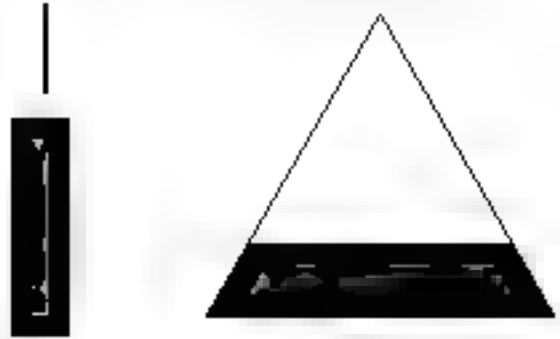
I'm not sure I want to know about the experiments. I'd rather just rescue the Vegetable Sentry and as many others as possible from them without being horrified by the details.



Triangle and Robert

So the only defenses in place are the automated ones, and they'll be split between keeping us out and prisoners in.

We might have to fight monsters too, but it seems simple enough. Cube's elevator trick can get us to the lowest levels.



Primary objective: save the Vegetable Sentry. Secondary objective: save as many others as possible. Agreed?

Agreed.

Triangle and Robert
Blow the door and take cover!
Set to blow in five!
Four!

I hear a vector product. It's inside the floor! Get in a doorway! Move!
Moving!
Inside the floor?

I think they're getting smarter. They just randomly rushed at us at first, now they're using some pretty sneaky tactics.
Check your tortillas. We'll need plenty.

Triangle and Robert

My cuisine magic is starting to weaken. I think I have less endurance now that I'm dual-classed.

Dual-classed?

I'm both a Meat Sentry and a Valkyrie. The steed, remember?

I know that. You just used a weird word for it.

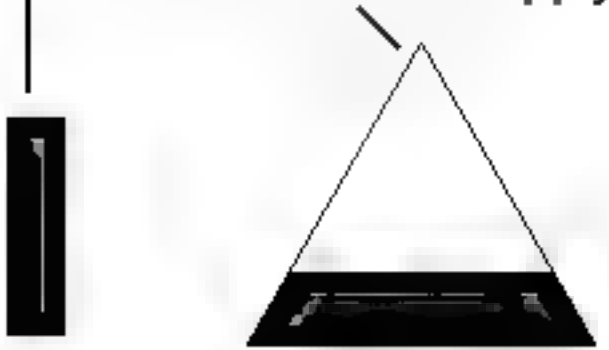
I guess I did. Anyway, we need to hit a commissary or at least a vending machine. I need pork or turkey.

I'm low on sesame. Lot of doors to open.

Triangle and Robert

Pork rinds! Take a right!

Corn chips, too. I smell them. We can resupply.



Wait. Don't rush in.

We haven't seen any geometric abominations around. They might be lying in wait.

You're quick to ascribe intelligence to an adversary.

It could be coincidental. There's no harm in being cautious.

Triangle and Robert

I can manage one all-seeing ribeye. After that, I'm down to martial arts and equally martial gravies.

That should be enough to reach the machine.

I see... I see...

they're eating my face!

What?

That was disturbing. A group of hyperbolic tesselations saw the ribeye materialize and devoured it.

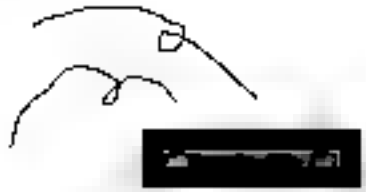
Group?

Group, ring, field, it was too fast to be sure.

Triangle and Robert

What kinds of tesselations?

All {4,5} as far as I could tell. I think if you laid down suppressing flapjacks I could make it.

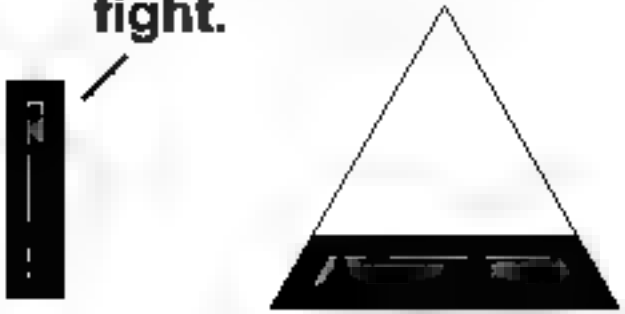


Huh? Where'd they... oh. Not drawn. The Cartoonist is helping us by not trying to draw non-Euclidean things.

I hope they're not just invisible.

Triangle and Robert

Pretzels, snack sticks of mechanically separated chicken, check. I think we're ready for a boss fight.

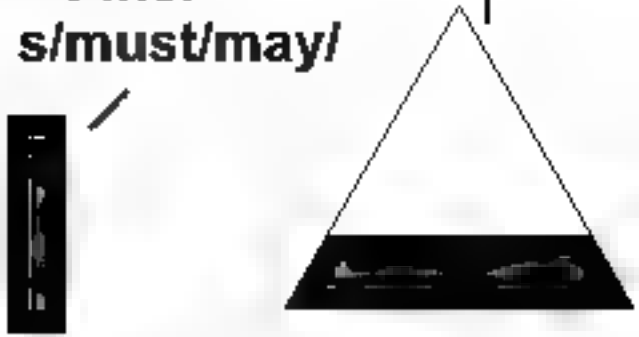


Do you know where to go?

There's only one block of cells we haven't found security footage of. Vegetable must be there.

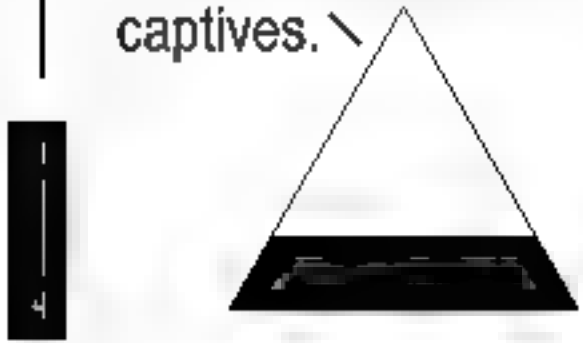
If we haven't seen it how do we know it's the only one?

Fine. s/must/may/



Triangle and Robert

A battle of the sort I go out of my way not to draw ensued. It became increasingly clear that the various geometric monstrosities were somehow coordinating their efforts, but brute force on the part of the two Sentries won out without a need to investigate.



Triangle and Robert

The Vegetable Sentry probably had a life-changing solo adventure the same way we each did, and at the end these guys kidnapped him.

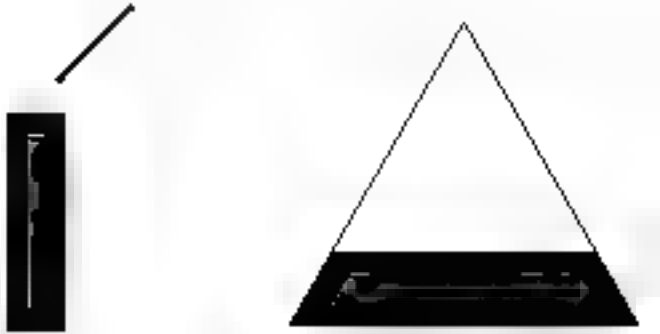
Why didn't he contact us when he escaped?

Overdependence on the rest of the team was his weakness. Maybe he's a loner now.

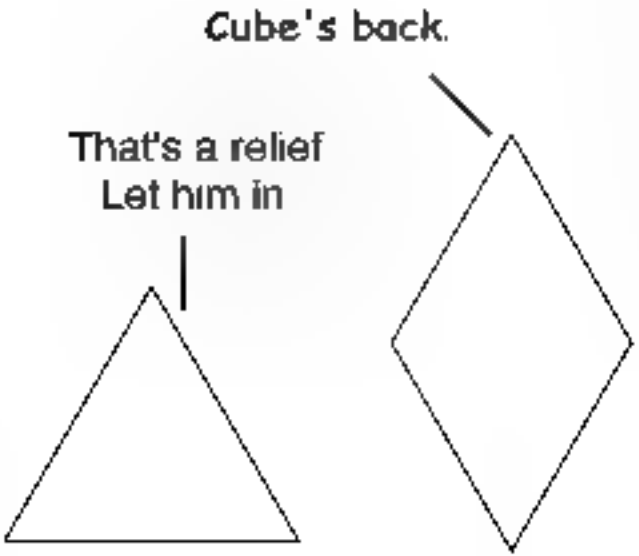
Are we allowed to reverse-engineer the narrative of the comic like that?

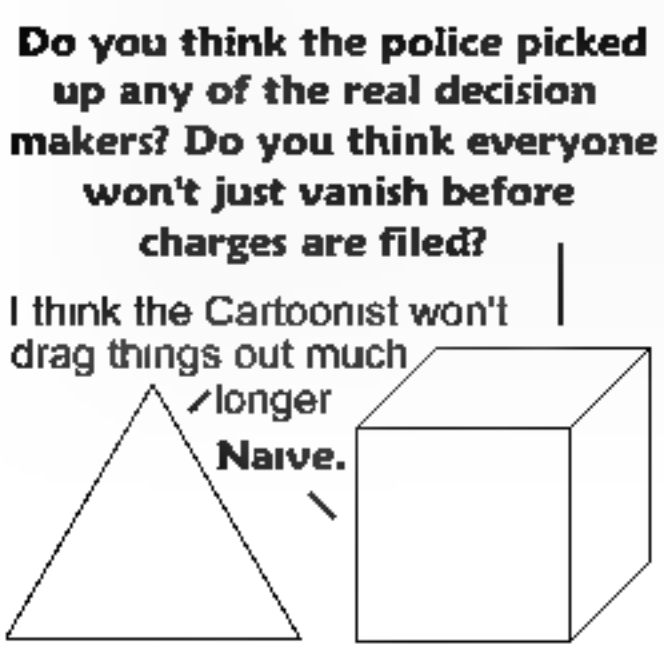
Would you ask that question if we weren't?

Triangle and Robert



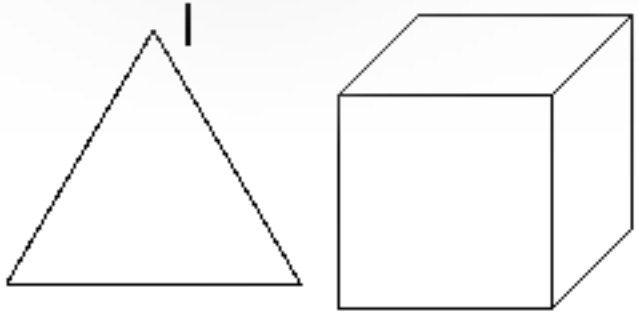
Triangle and Robert



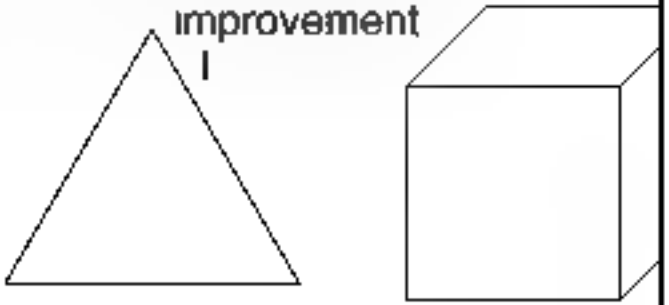


Triangle and Robert

The Cartoonist doesn't stick to darkly mysterious ongoings for very long He'll wrap it up unsatisfyingly and move on to something else

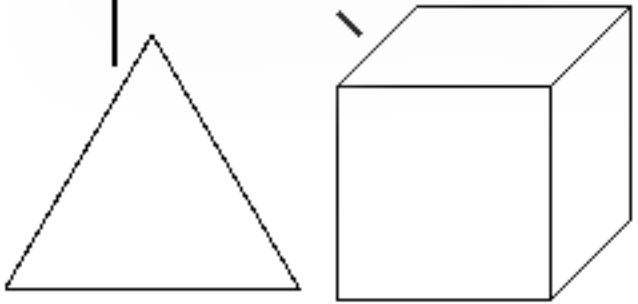


Probably something forcibly "wacky", to get away from what he perceives as a boring arc lacking in jokes I say "perceives as" not because he's wrong on that point but because the wacky ones aren't an improvement



It's an irritating cycle, just like the irritating cycle of Races and the irritating cycle of dying and getting implausibly resurrected

So you're not naïve at all, you're just cynical on a higher level.



Triangle and Robert

Is Triangle right about these "irritating cycle"s?

I understand why you arranged the quotation marks like that, but I don't think they should go that way.

Was that a random digression or a carefully couched answer?

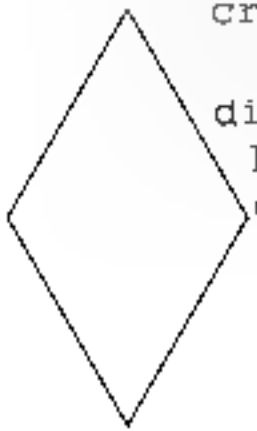
I intended it as a random digression, but you can read it otherwise if you really want to.

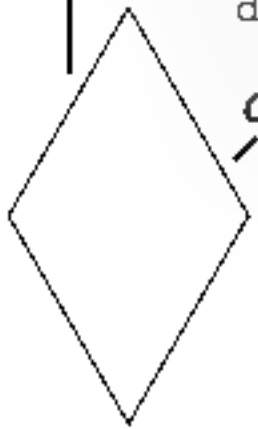
You're being cryptic. What does it mean when you're being cryptic?

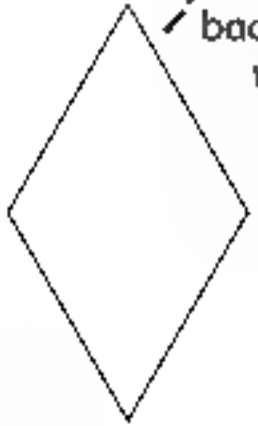
You're trying to outsmart someone. That's the only time you've been cryptic in the past.

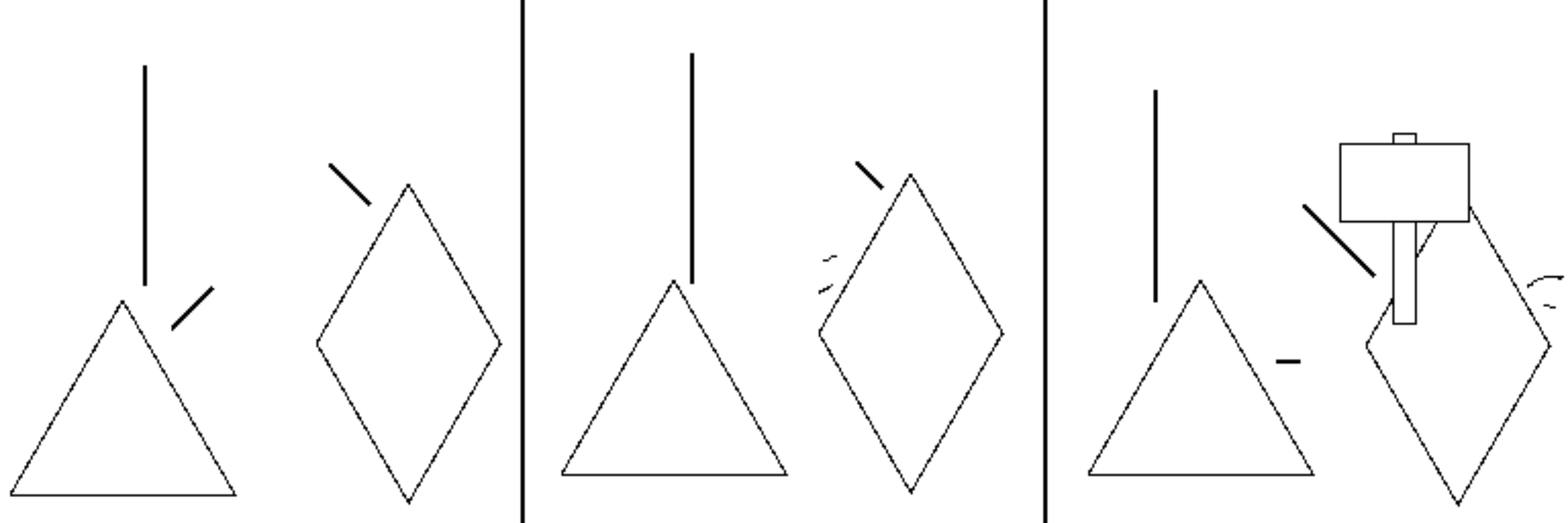
Bad writing can be indistinguishable from crypticism, if crypticism is even a word

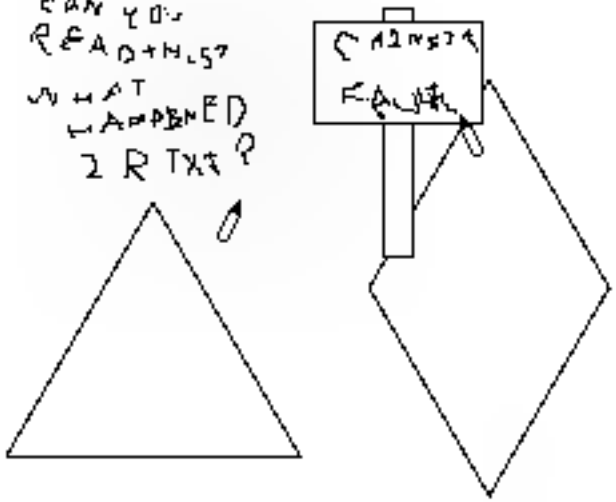
Triangle and Robert

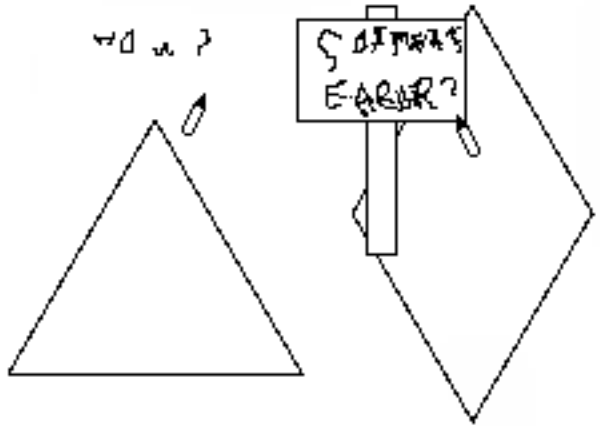


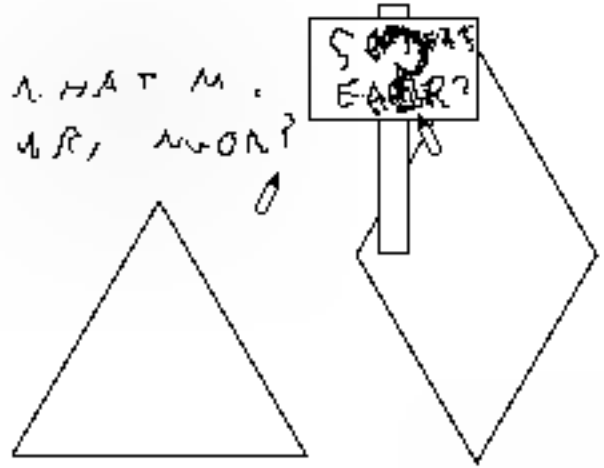




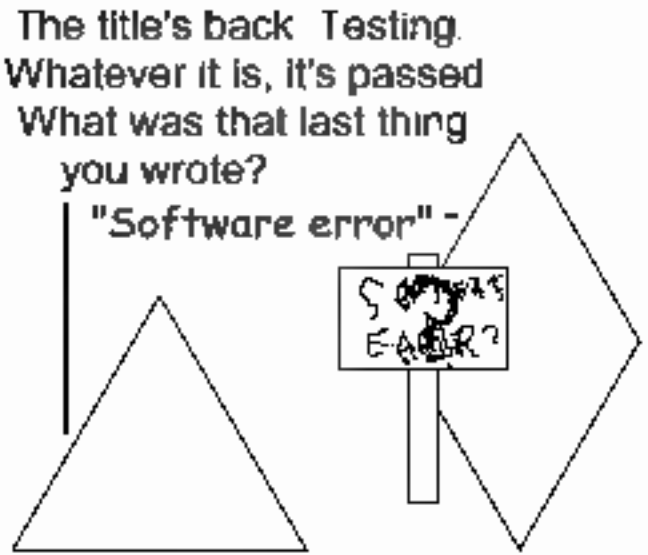


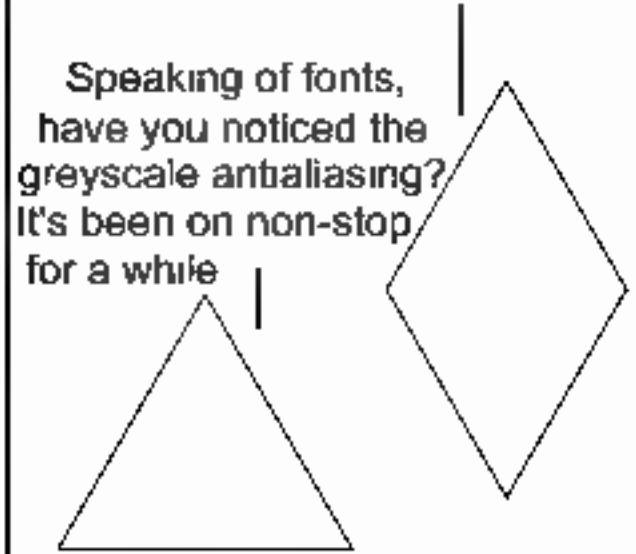

CAN YOU READ THIS?
WHAT HAPPENED 2 R TXT?
CARTOONIST FAULT

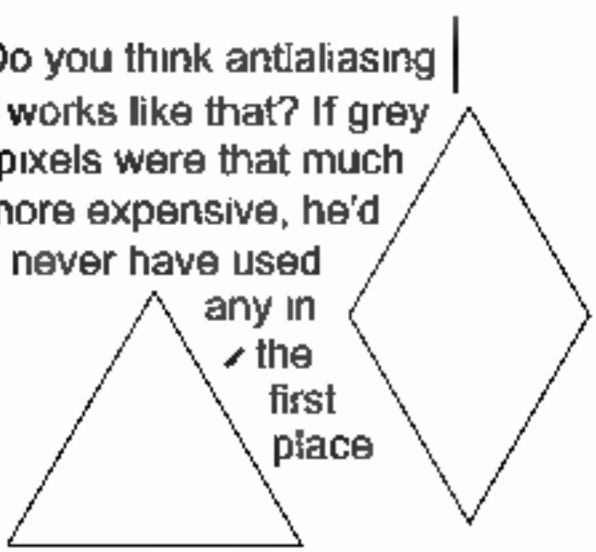

CARTOONIST FAULT?
PROBABLY NOT?
CARTOONIST EARLIER?


SCAMBA, EARLIER?
WHAT WAS, NOW?
CARTOONIST EARLIER?

Triangle and Robert





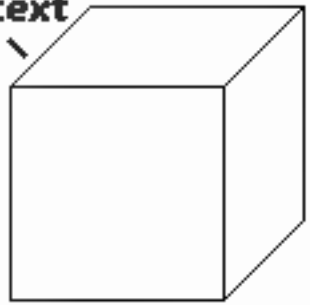


Triangle and Robert

Maybe I can shed some light.

—You're still here?

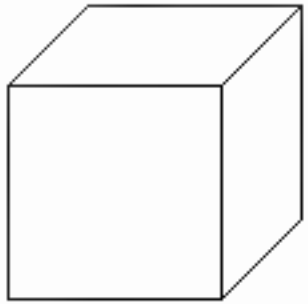
I think the grey pixels antialiasing the text are a byproduct of the geometry lab experiments.



The textless period was, I think, just the Cartoonist trying not to write badly by not writing at all, except he still had to write you coping with the lack of writing, making it a mess of the usual sort.

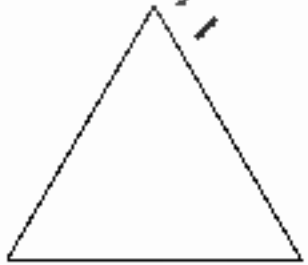
— That sounds logical.

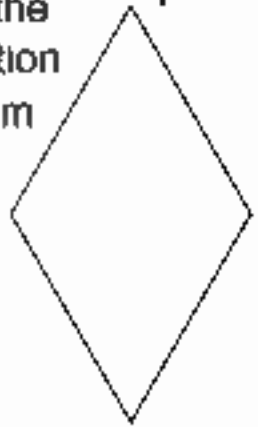
— Too logical



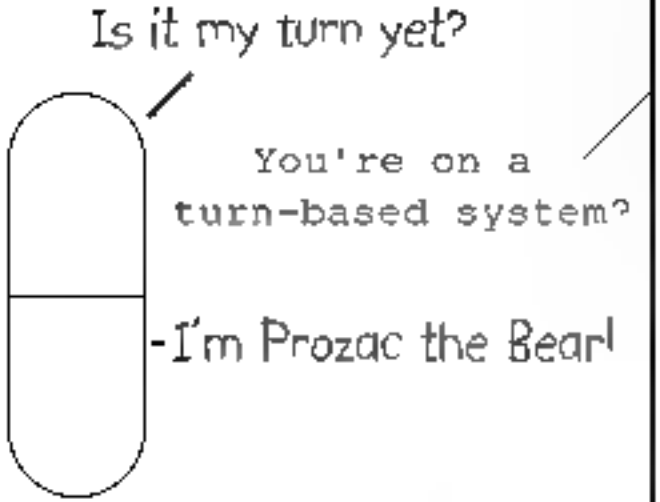
Stupid phenomena demand equally stupid explanations.

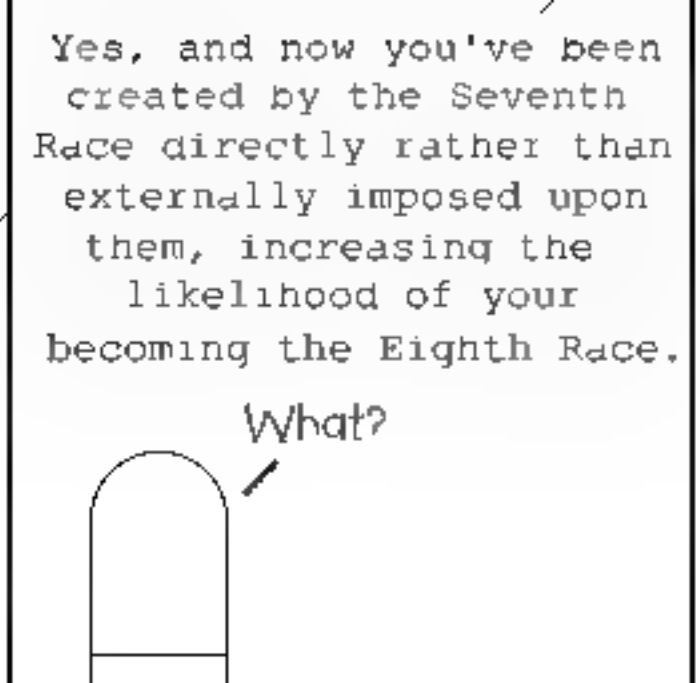
And don't forget, the stupidest explanation of all escaped from that very lab.

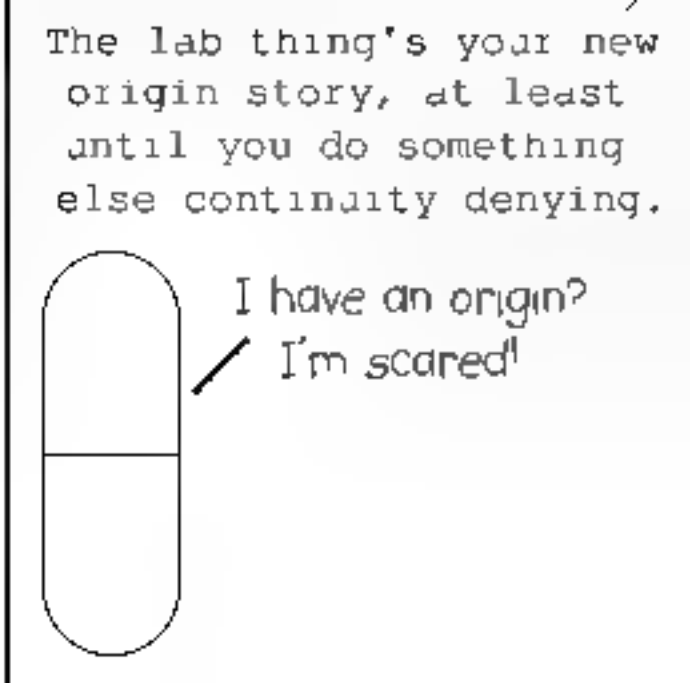




Triangle and Robert



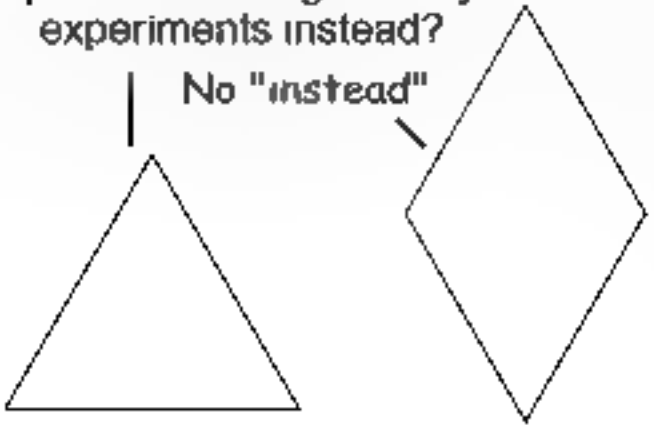




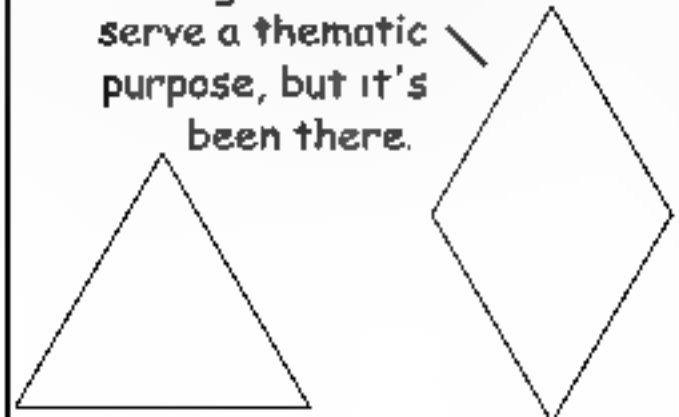
Triangle and Robert

Prozac was created by the Cartoonist before and now he's the product of evil geometry experiments instead?

No "instead"



The motif of two separate creations of the same object has been in the strip ever since Orpuddex brought up the Beforings It doesn't seem to serve a thematic purpose, but it's been there.

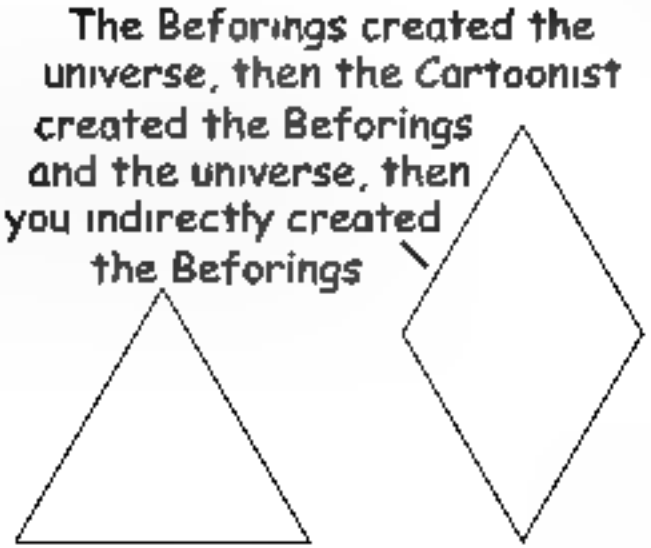


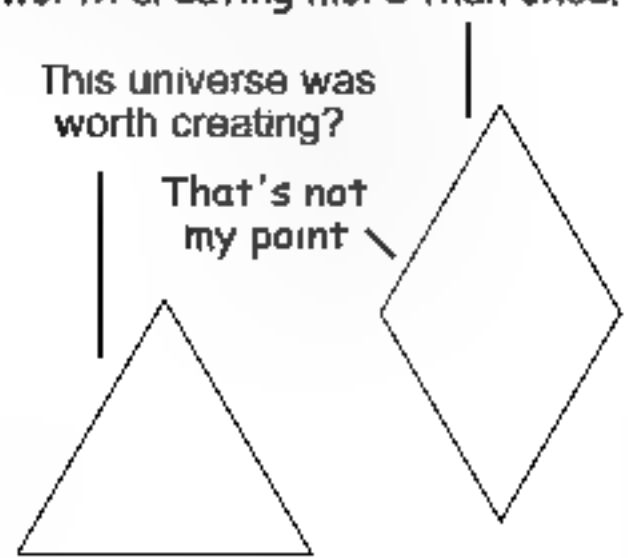
Right. Prozac appears and you start talking completely out of character

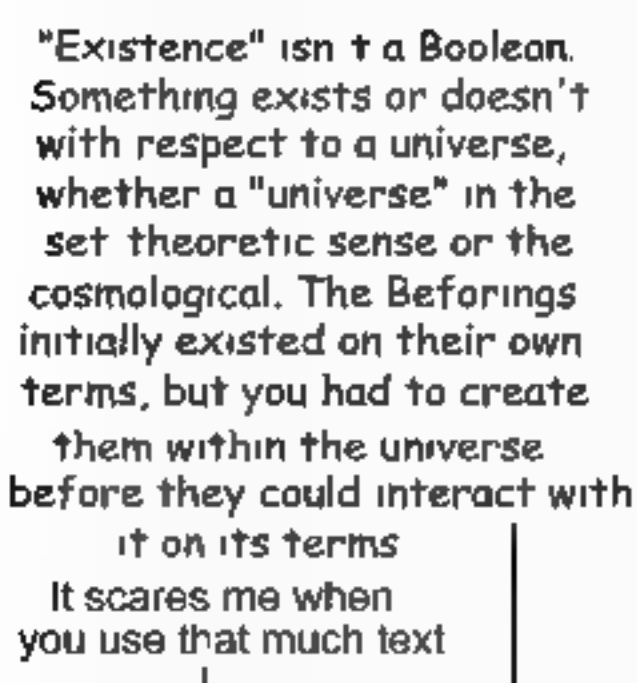
Not completely, I'm just using big words to explicitly state my instinctive understanding of the comic rather than demonstrating it through seemingly random asides

Seemingly?

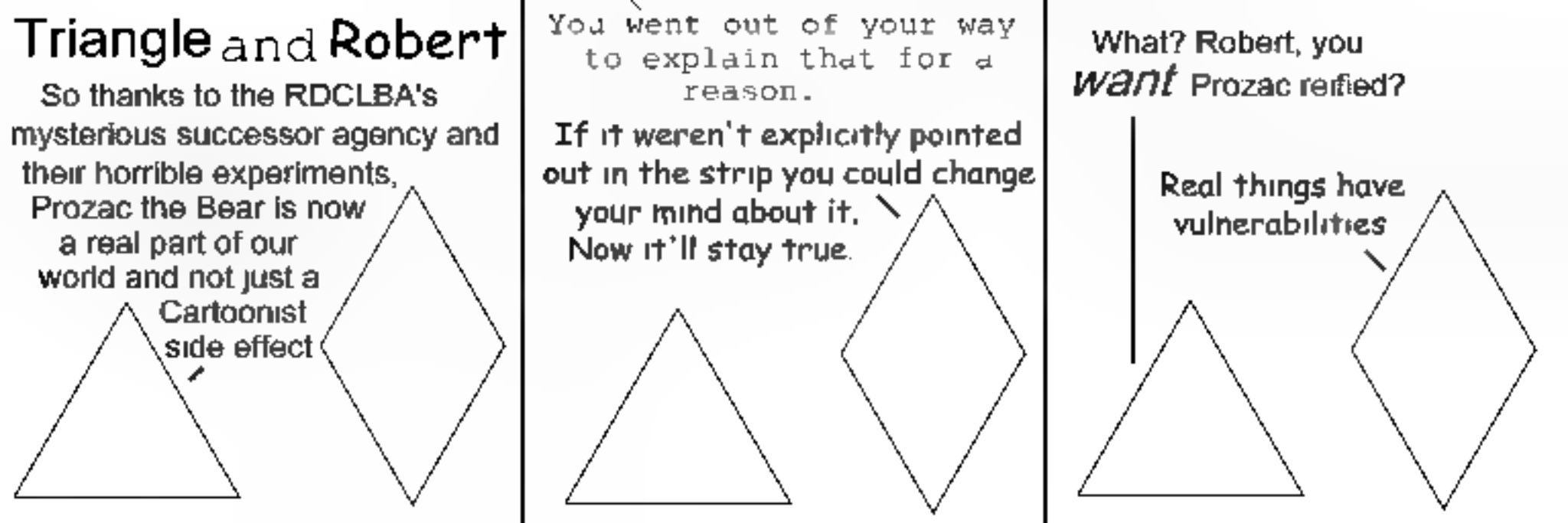
Triangle and Robert



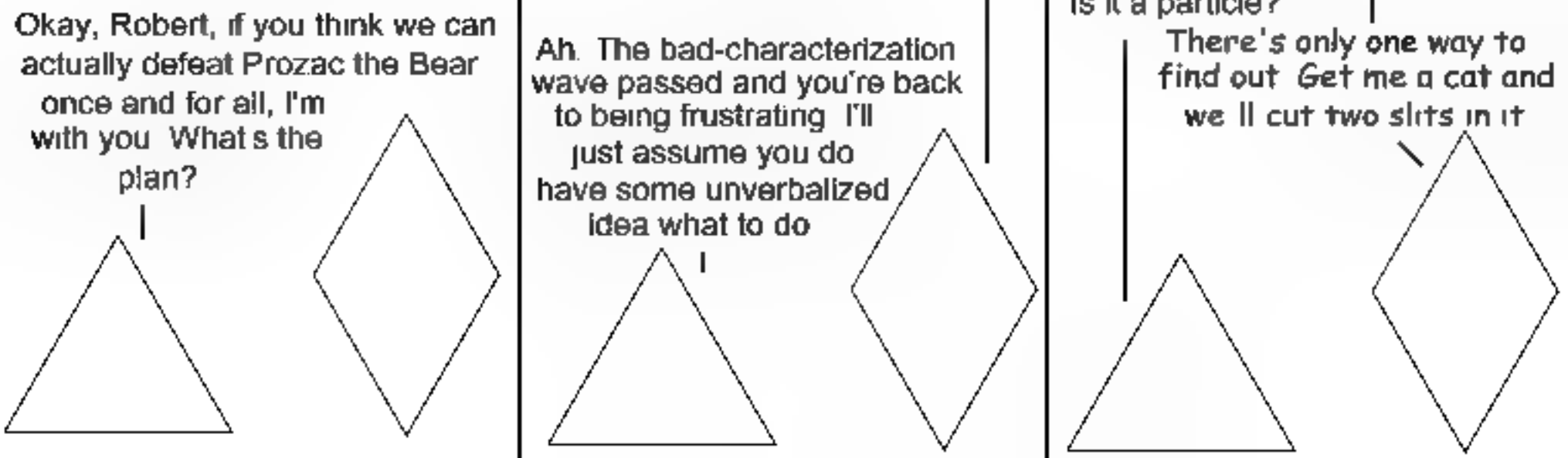




Triangle and Robert

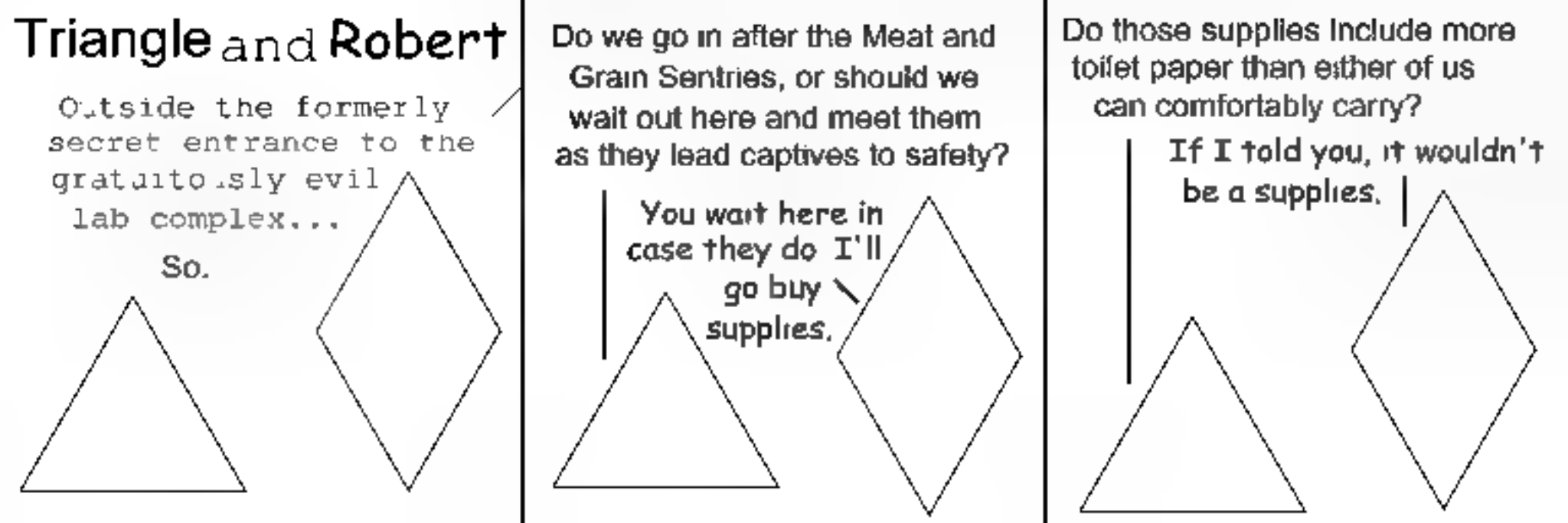


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

What are you doing here?

Do you need any help with the rescuing?

No, we're doing fine on that front.

We jury-rigged some teleportation equipment, everyone's going to nearby hospitals.

Tele.
Are you sure everything's fine? Have you actually checked?

I thought I did. What am I overlooking?

I've never known a jury-rigged teleporter not to fail, nor a large group teleportation working safely
Maybe you just managed to get it right this time

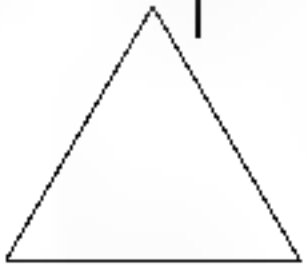
That's why we had to be off-comic.

Triangle and Robert

The Grain Sentry came up with that whole plan himself?
I knew he was a good tactician, but I didn't think making end runs around comic strip logic was his style

You mean it actually made sense to you?

Robert's had a similar plan in reserve to use in case of sudden military action threatening to end the comic



Maybe the Grain Sentry stole Robert's plan.

No, that would have triggered the okapi contingency by now

The Cartoonist can't draw okapis....

That's the contingency

Triangle and Robert

Incoming!

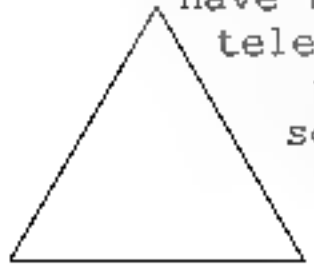
Teleporting in overhead with a parachute. Nice way to avoid aiming glitches.

I don't remember - bringing a parachute.

I'm okay. The title broke my fall.

I didn't realize I was teleporting into comic range. Good thing I didn't hit a continuity error in mid-hop.

You guys are going to have to explain teleportation to me sometime.



Triangle and Robert

There are several different phenomena termed "teleportation" The most common form applies only to geometric entities and consists of a sudden induced change of coordinate system

The central hazard is that the source and destination locations must differ by a rational number in each coordinate in both the original and transformed coordinate systems. With the comic strip discretizing everything to integer pixels, this form of teleportation is only safe when the Cartoonist has no stake in the proceedings or when both endpoints are guaranteed to lie within a strip

I didn't ask you to start explaining it right now.

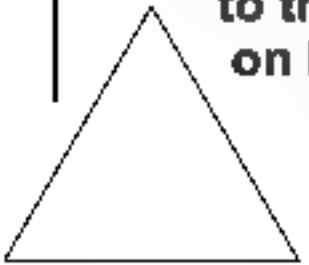
Good, I was making part up anyway

Good summary anyway, but that's not what we used.

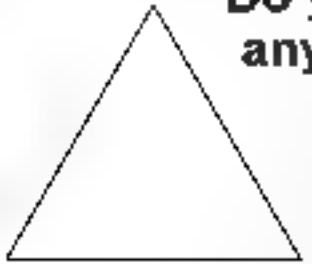
Triangle and Robert

And what about the Vegetable Sentry? What's your next step?

The Grain Sentry's inclined to let Vegetable come back to the group on his own.

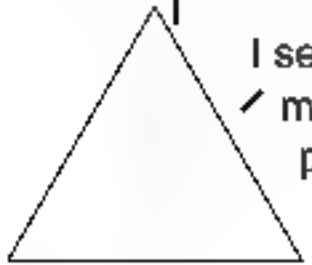


I'm worried about the lack of any communication. I'm going to talk to the freed prisoners and find out if he let any of them know what he was up to. Do you have any ideas?

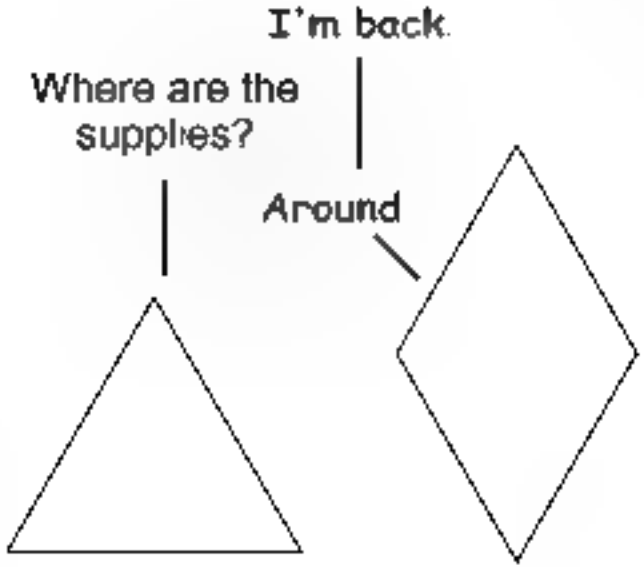


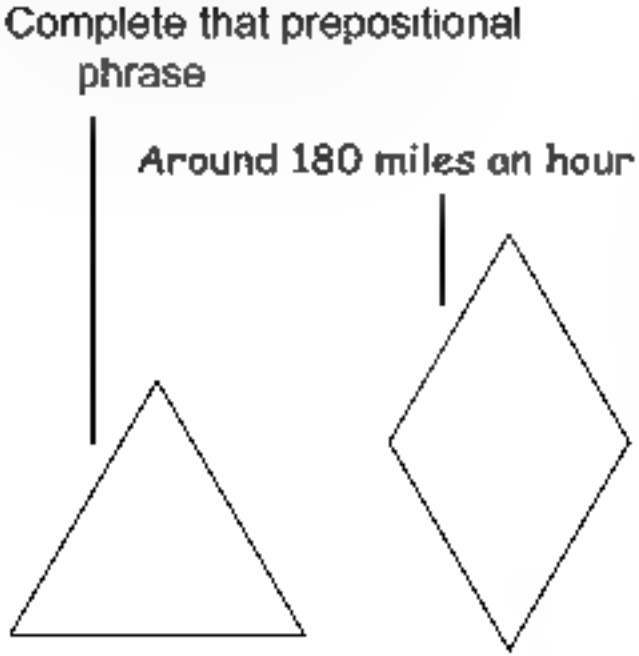
Robert thinks the Vegetable Sentry will need toilet paper, for some reason. This could be like the time he stalked Terry Gilliam, or it could be that he's picked up on something unstated in the atmosphere of the comic.

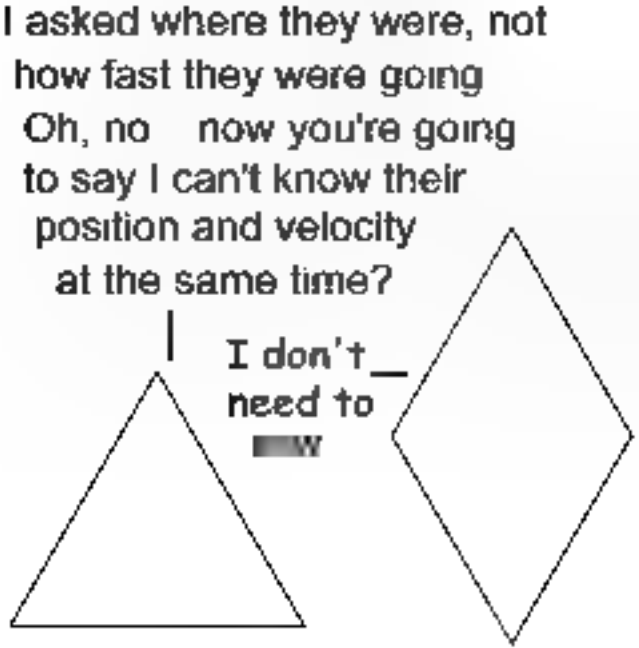
I seem to have misplaced a punchline



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

So either while we're looking for the Vegetable Sentry or afterwards during some unrelated activity, various adventure supplies will suddenly drop out of the sky, either conveniently solving or exacerbating something

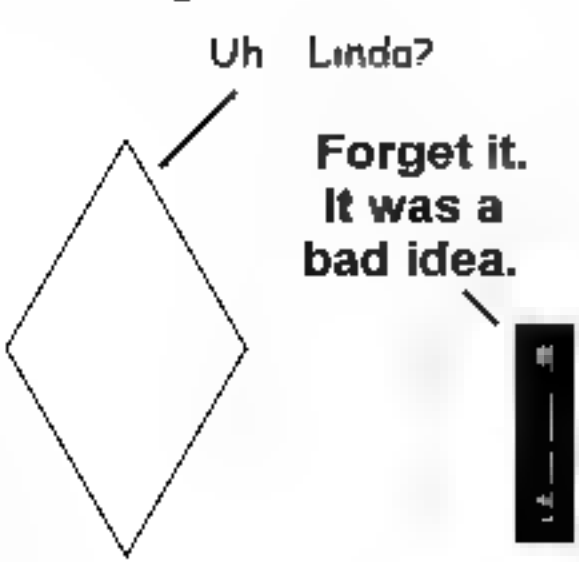
I call it "solvacerbating".

That sounds vaguely obscene

Wait. I have a horrible idea that scares me.

If the supplies will come down where we need them, then we don't really need to do much investigating. We can just wait here and when they come down wherever they do, we know that's where we... I'm sorry. I shouldn't have even started talking. Forget it.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

You've got a lead?

Yes. The Vegetable Sentry mentioned a treasure hidden in the world's largest zucchini before he escaped.

Where's Robert?

I have no idea. Where's the world's largest zucchini?

It vanished from Alaska two years ago.

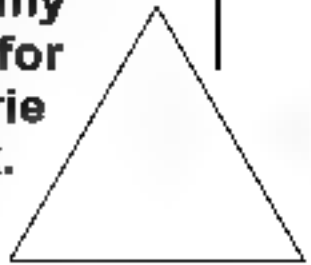
This sounds like a retread of the Starham story

No. The world's largest zucchini has no mystical properties beyond those of other zucchini.

Triangle and Robert

Robert'll turn up if we need him
Let's go to this Alaskan agriculture museum and get some clues.

Got travel magic? I'm only supposed to use my steed for Valkyrie work.



I'd rather take a plane. My track record with magical travel is Robert-esque.

They let you on planes?

I have to prove Robert hasn't snuck into my luggage, that takes a while. But otherwise yes.

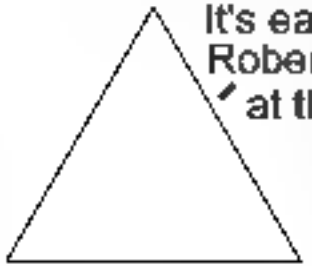
That sounds like a reasonable first move, then.

Triangle and Robert

Five hours of exhaustive luggage proofs later...

You go through all that every time you board a plane?

It's easier when Robert is in jail at the time



I usually book flights for days when I expect him to be

You lead an overly eventful life.

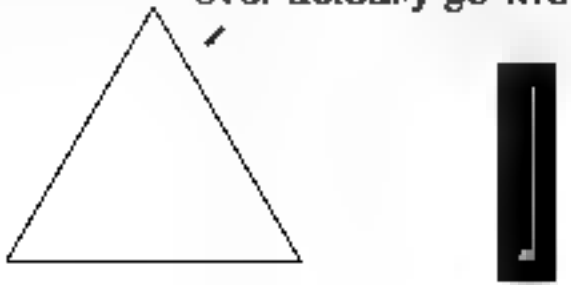
I'm not so sure about that Sometimes I think Robert leads it and I just follow it

I hope we don't have to sit next to a baby

Triangle and Robert

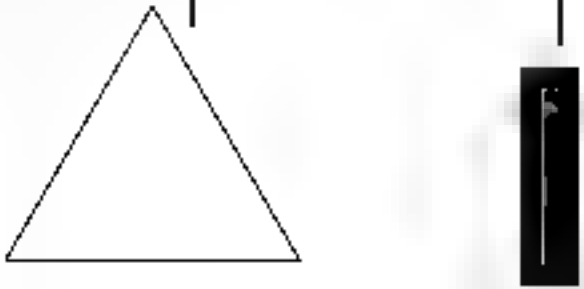
Alaska:

I'm always surprised when a plane ride is uneventful. I really shouldn't be, though. They hardly ever actually go wrong



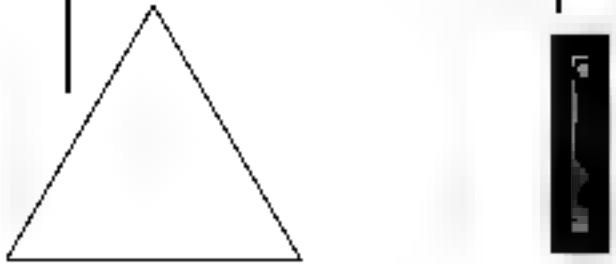
Your "uneventful" needs recalibrating.

It landed, and there was no question at any point that it might not. A few squirrels are negligible



They weren't even carnivorous. Is this the museum?

Yes. I let them know we were coming.

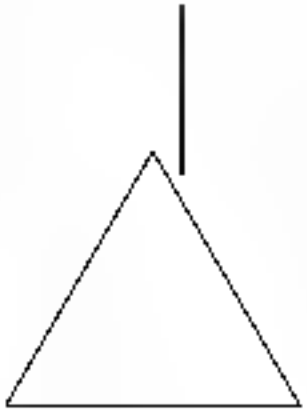


Triangle and Robert

What's our tactic? Play it close? Up front? Good cop/bad cop?

Try not to be the first ones to use violence excessively.

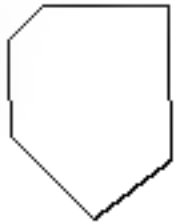
That'll work
This is a food thing, you're a Sentry, you take the lead



On it.

Hello I'm the curator, we spoke on the phone. I'm still not sure why the Sentries are suddenly interested after all this time
I can tell you myself, that zucchini was not magical.

I'm aware.

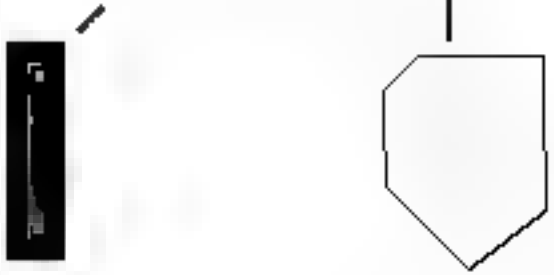


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

Yes. There would be no way to get the case out of the museum without disconnecting the power first.

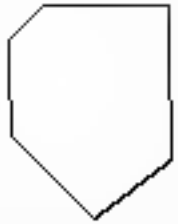
Or would there?



I assure you, there is not. Having been removed from the premises, the zucchini would soon rot.

Or was it?

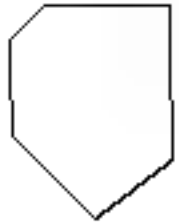
Don't you mean "or would it"?



Or do I?

I. . I'm not sure what your implying here

Or are you?



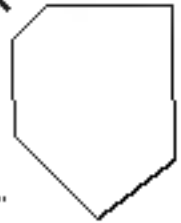
Triangle and Robert

I. . I. . Curses! Foiled by your Socratic detective method! There's a tunnel running from the museum basement to a shipyard half a mile away

That's where they kept the zucchini cool until the search ended. I don't know where they transported it from there

Or do you?

They must have made a lot of money from it, whatever they did. They spent a lot on the tunnel, and nearly as much for me to let them.



So what's the treasure?

Treasure?

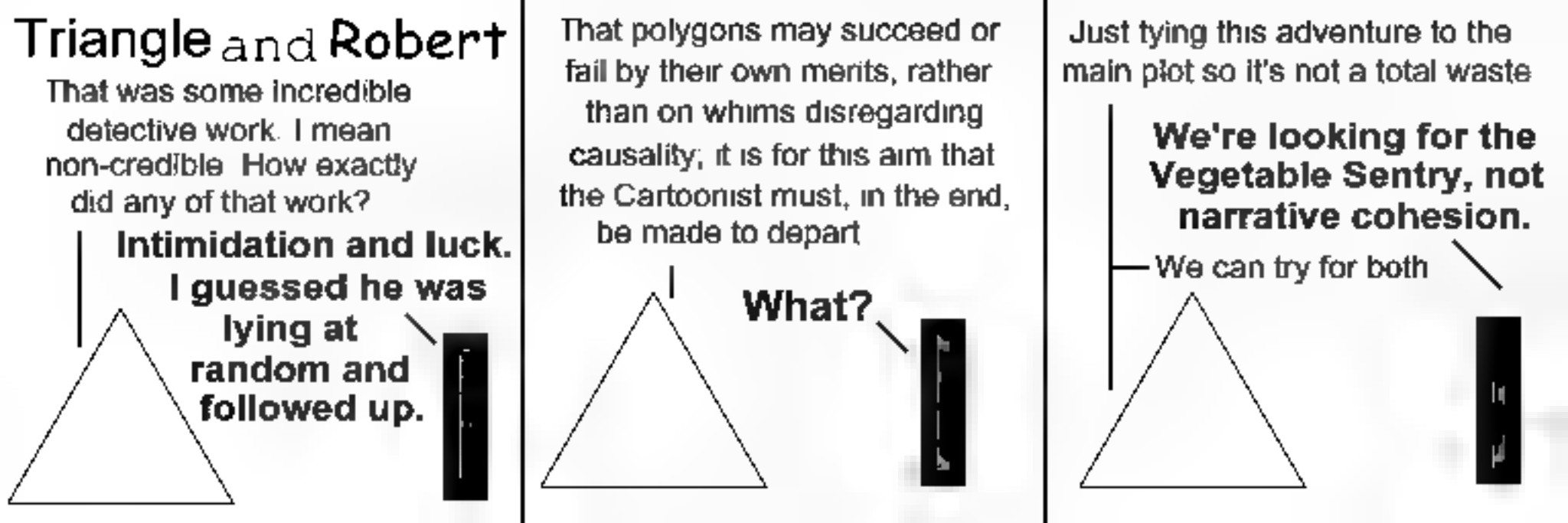
Yes, treasure.

This is the first I've heard about a treasure

Or... am... they?

What?

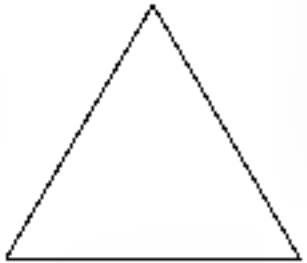
Never mind.


Triangle and Robert
That was some incredible detective work. I mean non-credible. How exactly did any of that work?
Intimidation and luck. I guessed he was lying at random and followed up.
That polygons may succeed or fail by their own merits, rather than on whims disregarding causality; it is for this aim that the Cartoonist must, in the end, be made to depart
What?
Just tying this adventure to the main plot so it's not a total waste
We're looking for the Vegetable Sentry, not narrative cohesion.
We can try for both

Triangle and Robert

Docks.

Thanks.



The simplest way to figure out which ship a smuggled refrigerated zucchini case would have gone out on is

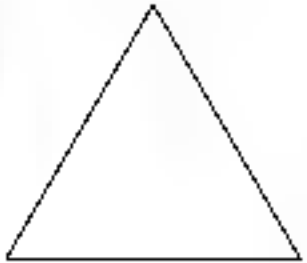
That sentence has no ending

We could narrow it down by looking at their records.

Triangle and Robert

We're trying to find the Vegetable Sentry, not just the zucchini. Are any of the locations to which the zucchini might have been shipped also locations of vegetative interest?

I have no idea. You look through them.

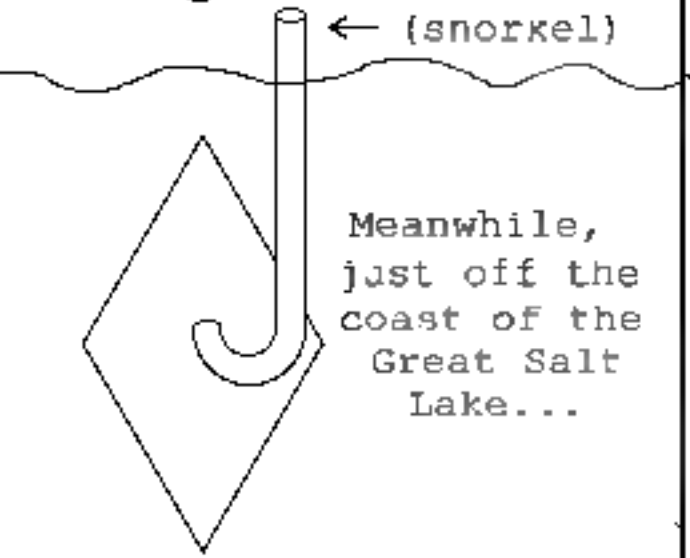


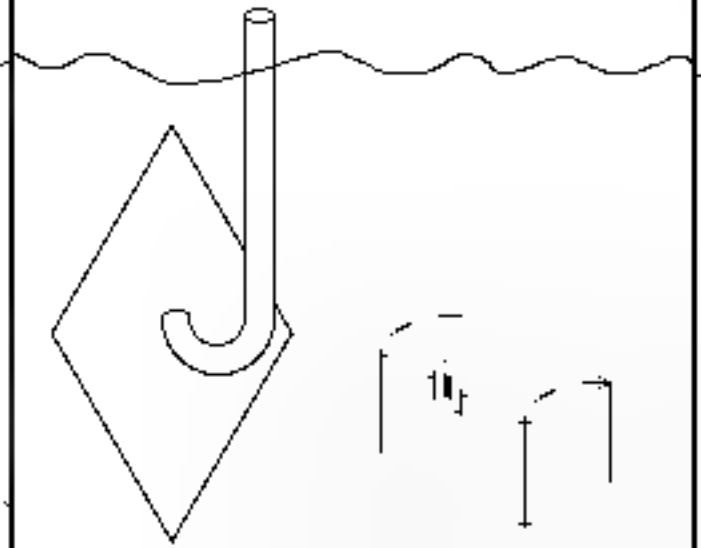
Linda?

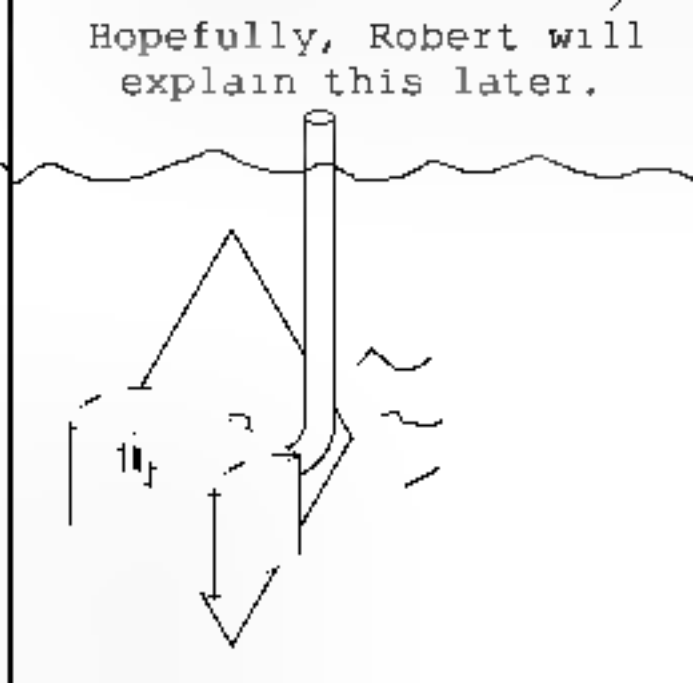
Triangle?

None of these seem like remotely good leads. We might as well use favorable randomness some more.

Triangle and Robert

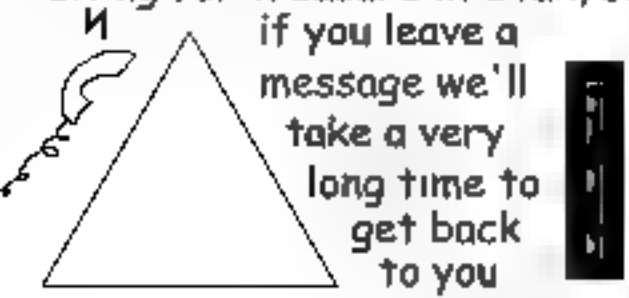






Triangle and Robert

Hello, you have reached Triangle and Robert Wacky Scheme Consultants. Triangle is currently on business and I'm diving for treasure in Utah, so if you leave a message we'll take a very long time to get back to you

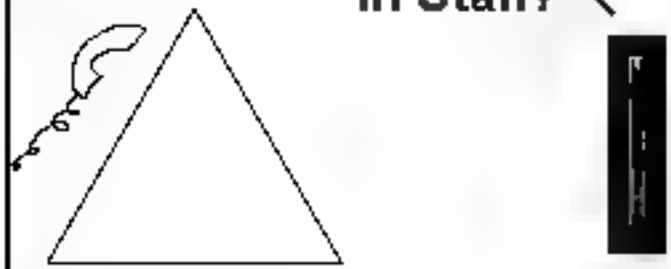


BEEEP

Utah? Uh... never mind

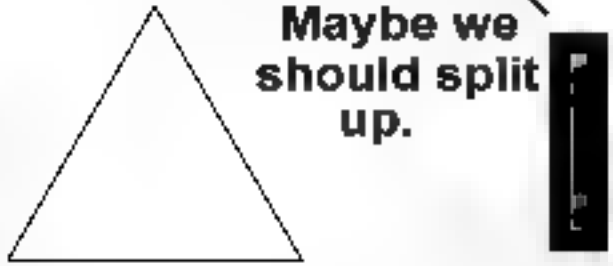
click

Diving for treasure in Utah?



It might be the same treasure we've been trying to track down It also might be something so unrelated as to cause tumors in laboratory rats

It might even be both. Maybe we should split up.



Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

We will be taking off shortly. Please turn off all cell phones and sausages.

Does this sausage turn off? I've never worked one of these. Since when do they even ask you to turn off sausages? Meat doesn't interfere with navigation instruments.

I hope that's off. We're taxiing now

Your meal choice, sir?

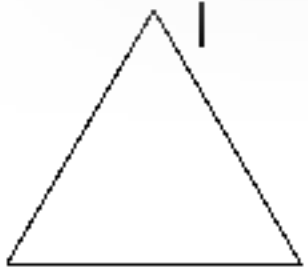
There's a meal? No, thank you

Something about this flight feels vaguely noteworthy. I'd better familiarize myself with exits and parachutes and that sort of thing. Noteworthy flights are bad

Triangle and Robert

Attention passengers, we've just hit what appears to be a rhombus with a snorke. We'll be making an emergency landing now

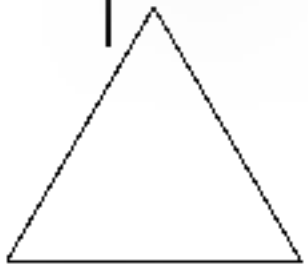
At cruising altitude?



Robert's explanation for this will doubtless be amusing

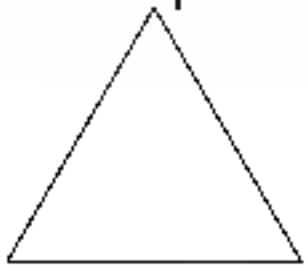
To him

I wonder if he'll need much hospitalization



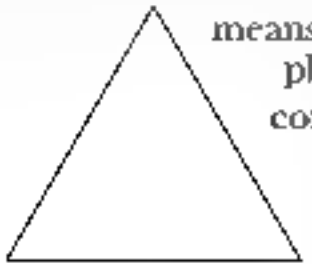
Attention passengers! Please fasten your seatbelts securely and contain any loose objects. We seem to be experiencing some... thing.

This sounds like a me-having-to-save-people

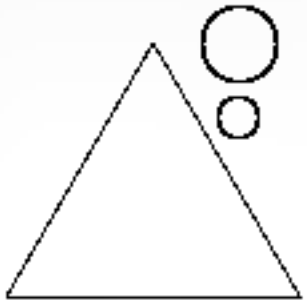


Triangle and Robert

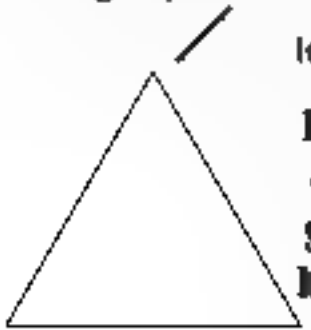
Passengers on the right side of the plane, if you look out your windows you'll see a swirling mass of darkness from which the plane seems unable to escape. Would all passengers with cell phones or other means of communication please attempt to contact their next of kin?



I'm on the left side. Is it polite to just go across the aisle to the other side of the plane?



Excuse me Does anyone else here have any experience stopping incomprehensible magical menaces? If not, mind if I switch seats with someone on the right please?



Is that Triangle?

It must be after him!

Should we throw him off the plane?

Triangle and Robert

That vortex looks more atmospheric than spatial Maybe Linda can fly in and take care of it

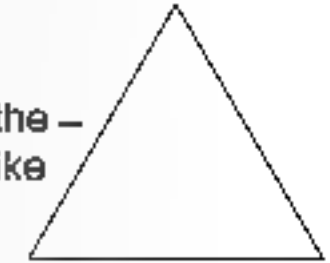
Am I holding this sausage right?

Linda?

Can you hear me?

Is there any way you can fly out here and take a look at

No, I'm still on the – plane It looks like some kind of evil weather

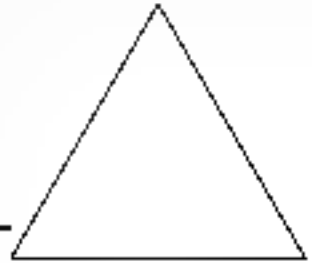


Right, you can only use the mount for Valkyrie pickups, I know Any other way you could get here? I'm almost positive we need weather magic to save the plane

I can only do cuisine magic

No, I suppose I never have tried

This sounds — unlikely

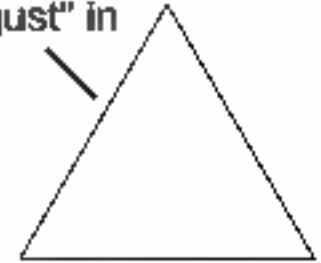


Triangle and Robert

Feel the what force?

How do I know when I'm feeling it?

I was hoping you wouldn't use the word "just" in that manner

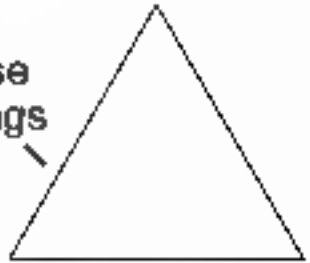


The Beforings instilled in me mastery of cuisine magic

I've never had to learn a magical discipline from scratch, let alone on an otherwise-doomed aeroplane

"Aeroplane"

Sometimes I use alternate spelings



Go on.

How is that a "better idea"?

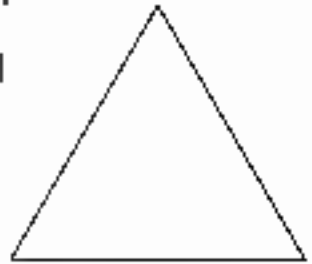
Does this involve me dying?

I was hoping for the other answer

How dead do I have to get?

That dead, huh

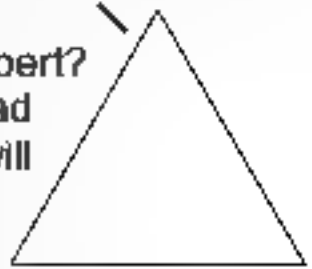
What if it doesn't work?



Triangle and Robert

If I jump out of the plane and die bravely so you're allowed to come in as a Valkyrie to collect me, and then you can't also save the plane, then I'll have died uselessly

How about Robert? If he's not dead already, he will be soon



If being hit by a plane doesn't count as battle, why would being torn to shreds by a cloud?

I know it's a good point.

Look, can't you fly here some other way?

Make a hang glider out of proscuitto, then switch from meat to weather magic to fly it?

It's only sort of combining It's less likely to fail than the me-dying plan

Okay, I'll keep the kielbasa open for you to home in on

The glider just needs to hold together a little longer. I see the plane. Is that a rhombus smeared across its windshield? Robert, probably.

So that's the dark sucking cloud the plane can't get away from.

And there goes the glider. Hopefully that thing will suck me in and then I can weather-magic it somehow.

I don't recognize it, though. I hope it's actually weather-related.

Sucking is happening.

Triangle, can you hear me on the kielbasa? I'm going in, but I'm not sure I'll be able to...

You?

Triangle, it's—

Triangle and Robert
If I explain that it's not what it looks like, will you maul me anyway?
I don't even know what it looks like.
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
Sort of a flying submarine with lots of outward pointing fog generators.
But it's not that?
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP
I suppose it's that, but the context isn't what it looks like. I really did not mean to interfere with air traffic.
What possible other reason could this thing have?
INSERT SUPERHINTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Triangle and Robert

I've been keeping the MSG entity from reappearing on Earth by catching atmospheric seasonings as they enter from space.

This vessel tracks seasoning concentrations, takes them in, and burns them to culinarily inert smoke. I sort of overdid the automation.

Something on that plane is broadcasting a seasoning signature resembling MSG, and I, um.

So you won't mind if I blow up your engines?

Triangle and Robert

Could you blow up the collection intakes instead of the engines?

Why should I?

It's a non-crashing alternative. I should be able to get manual control back and land.

You could be trying to trick me. I'm gonna do the engines.

Can I bail out first?

No.

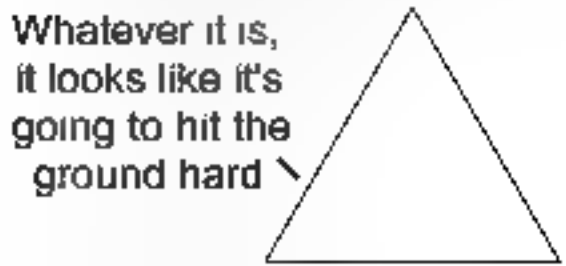
Why not?

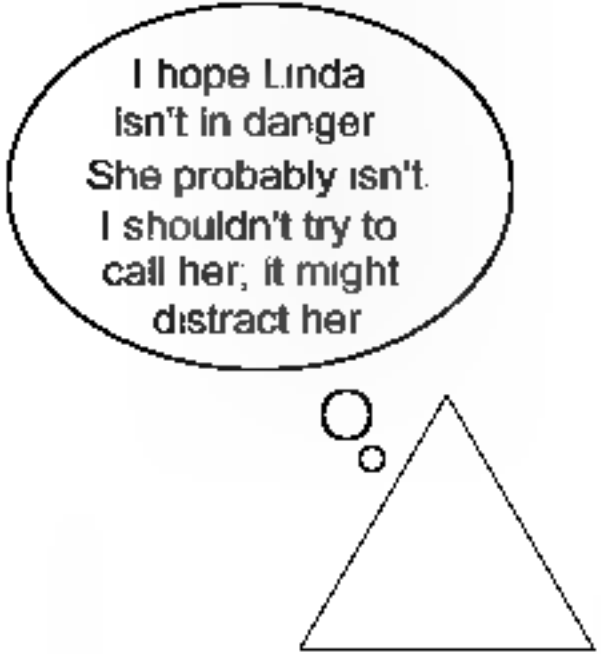
You tried to conquer the world.

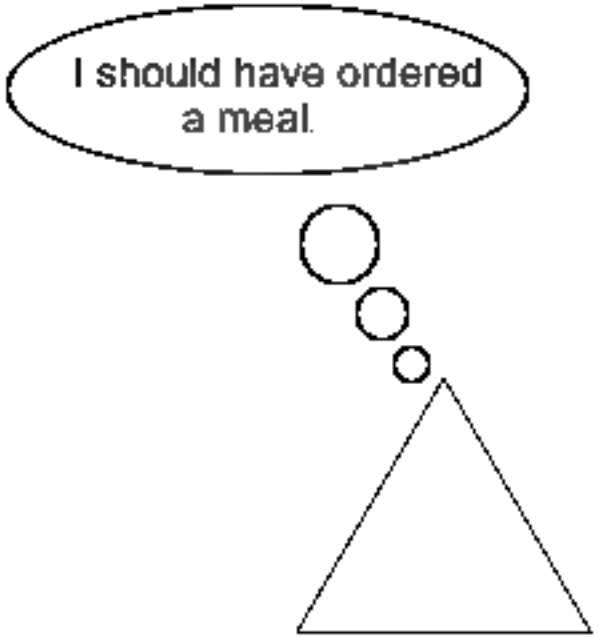
Right. That.

Triangle and Robert

Passengers, we appear to have broken away from the disturbance and will be making an unscheduled stopover in Seattle to refuel. I apologize for the delay and for Seattle.

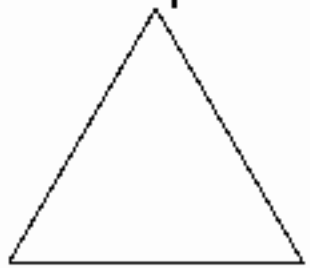


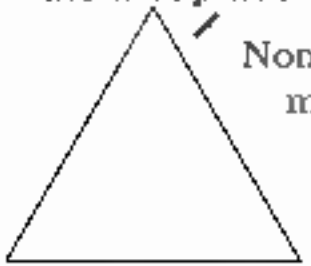


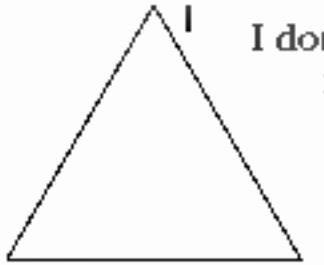


Triangle and Robert

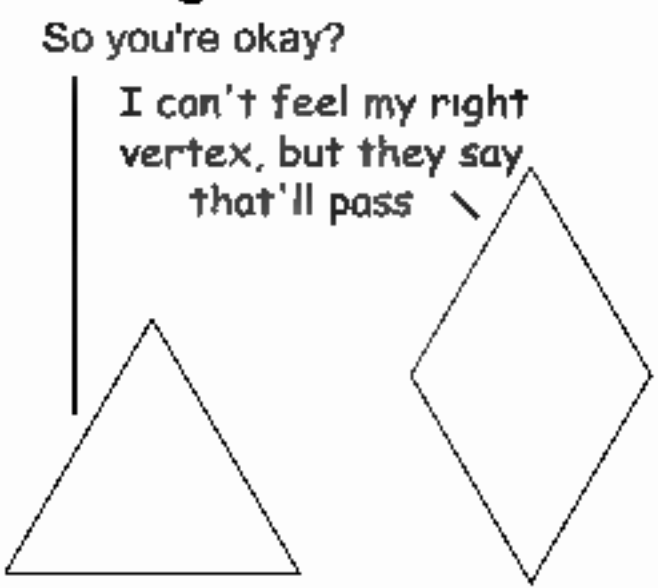
After the plane lands:

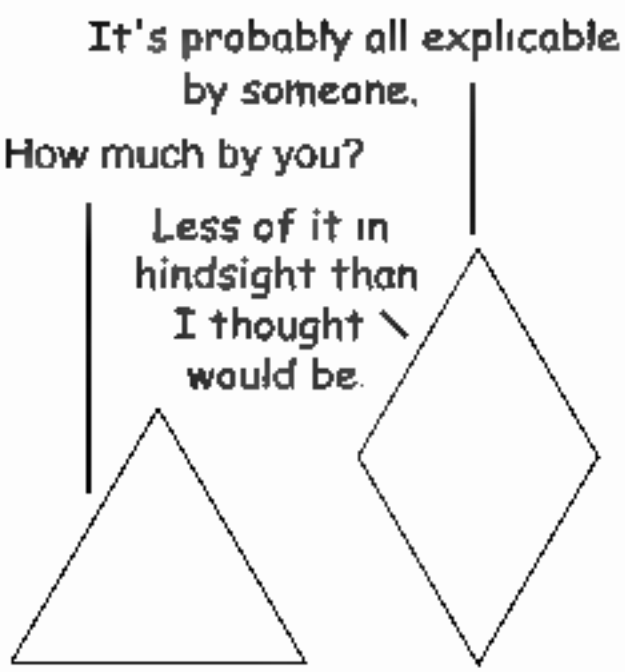






Triangle and Robert

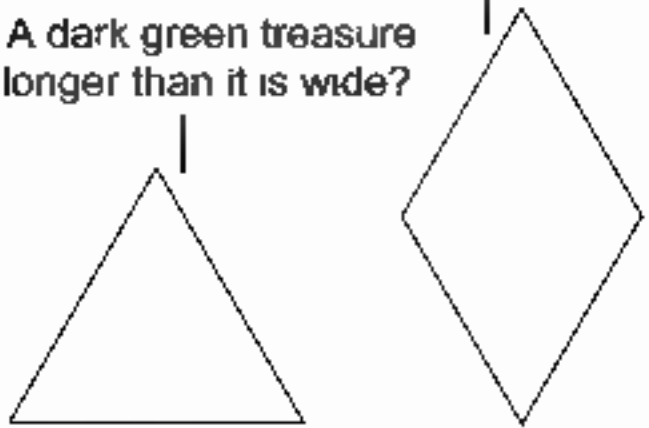




Triangle and Robert

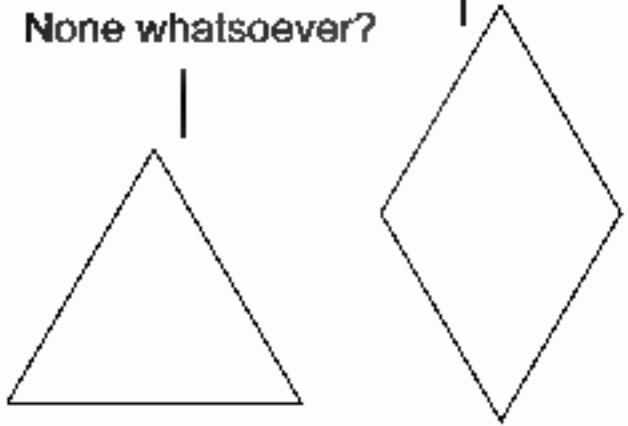
What kind of treasure would you hide inside a large zucchini?

A dark green treasure longer than it is wide?



And what treasures can you think of that meet that description?

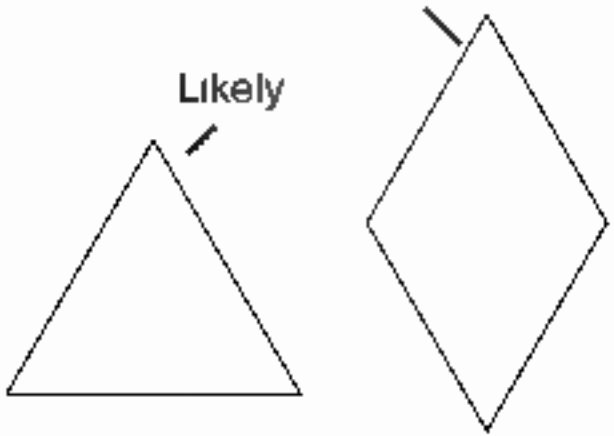
None whatsoever?



And that's why I came to Utah

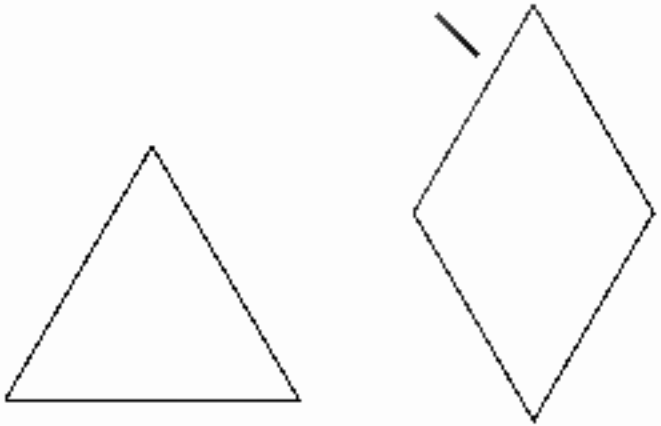
Hold on, I wasn't really paying attention. I think you answered the questions wrong

Likely



Triangle and Robert

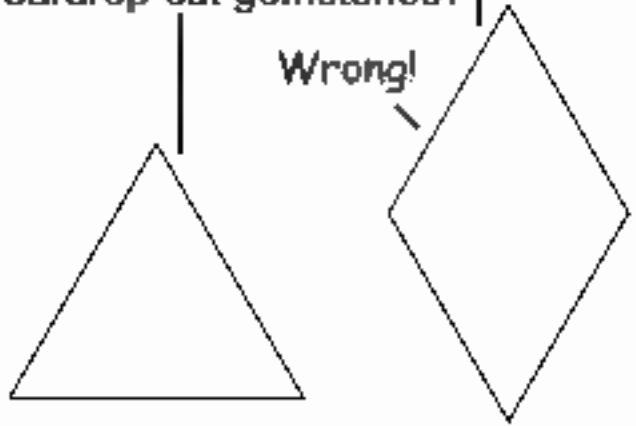
What kind of treasure would you hide inside a large zucchini?
Answer: seed like treasure.



And what treasures can you think of that meet that description?

Teardrop-cut gemstones?

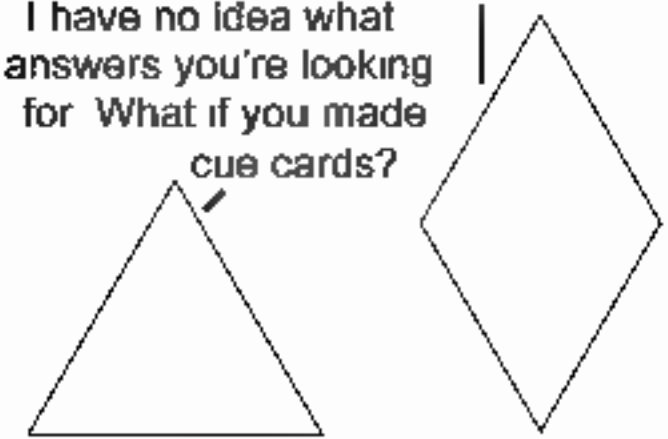
Wrong!



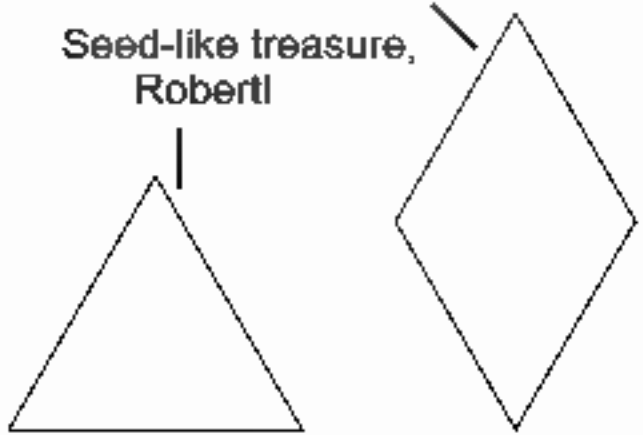
Then stop giving your exposition in the form of questions!

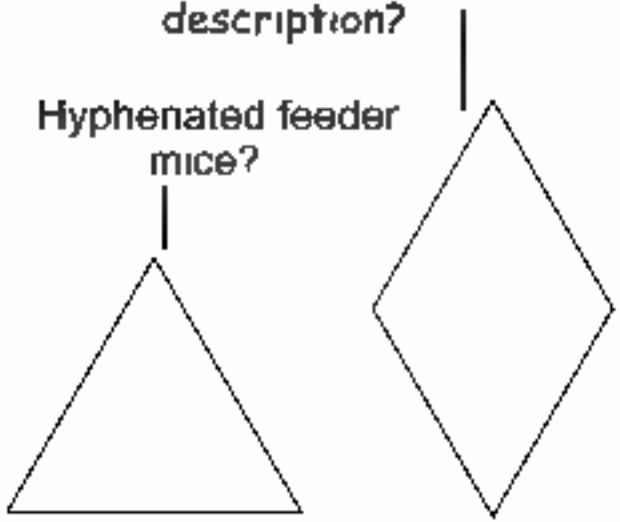
Just answer them the right way!

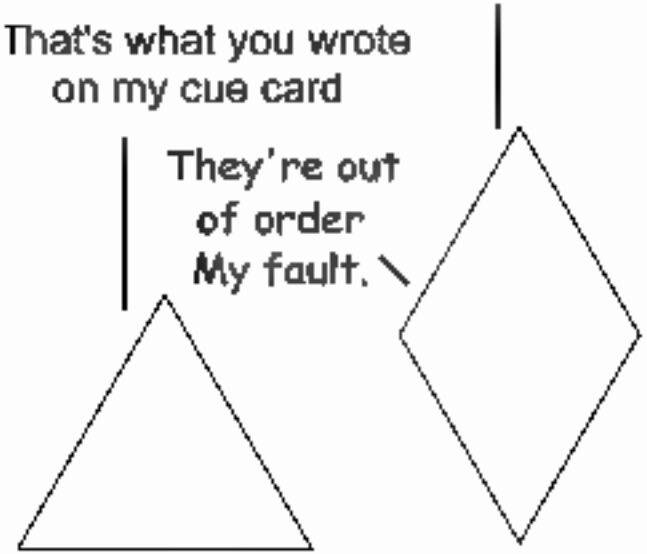
I have no idea what answers you're looking for. What if you made cue cards?



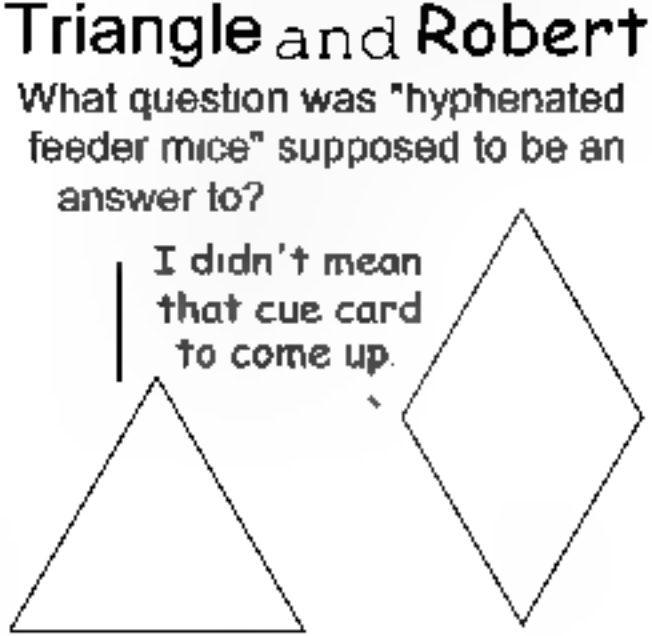
Triangle and Robert

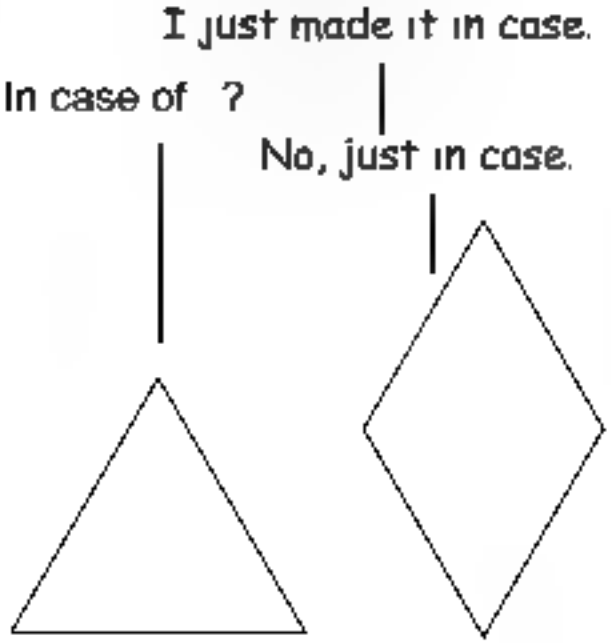


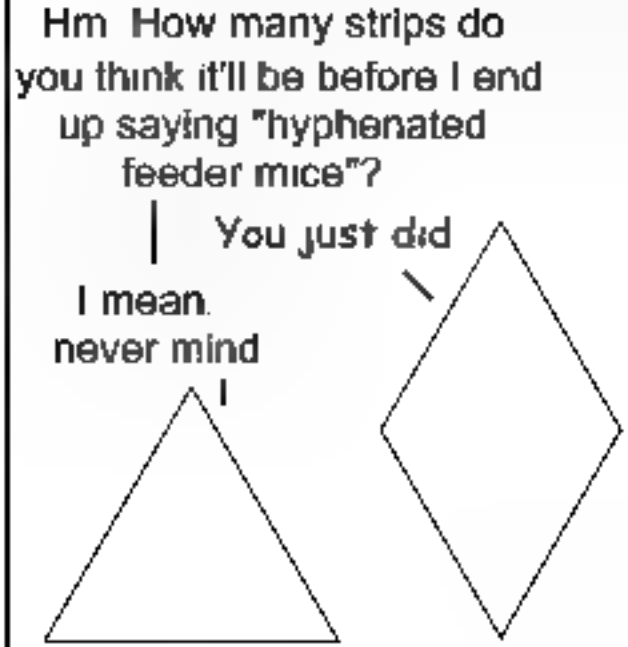




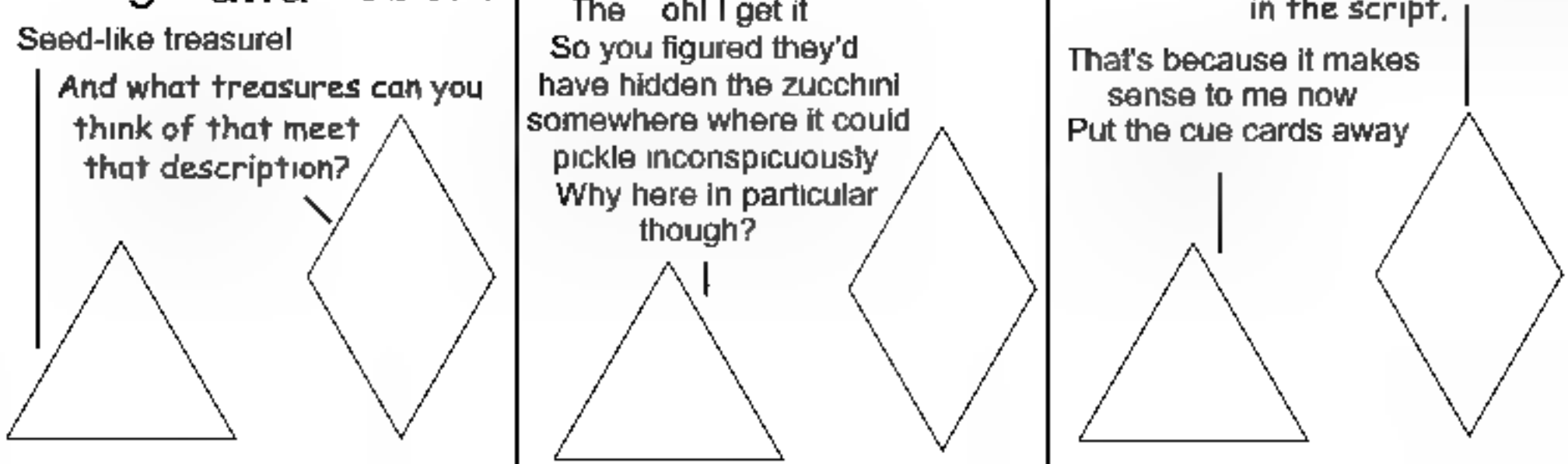
Triangle and Robert



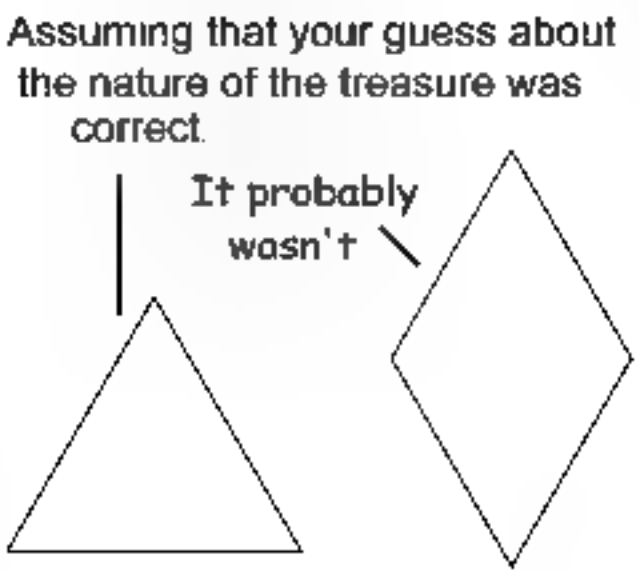


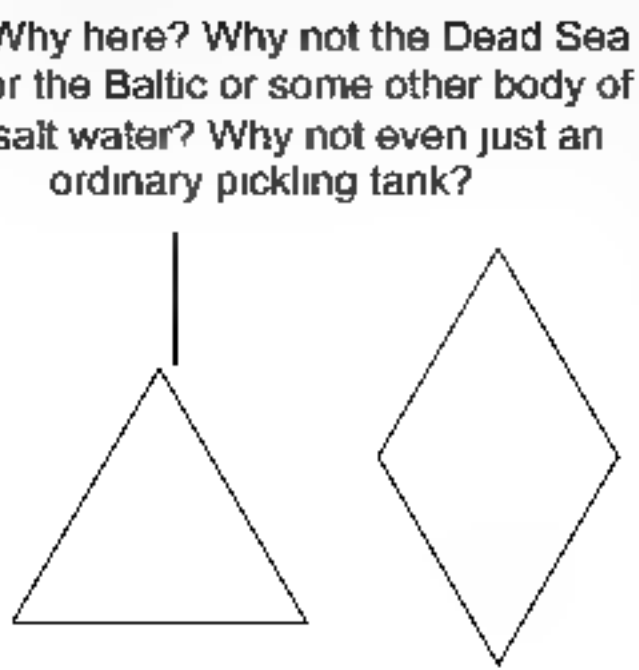


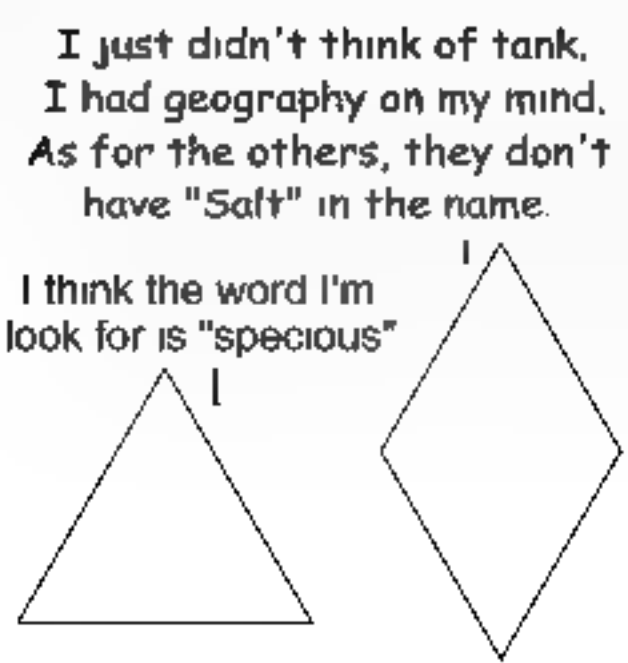
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert



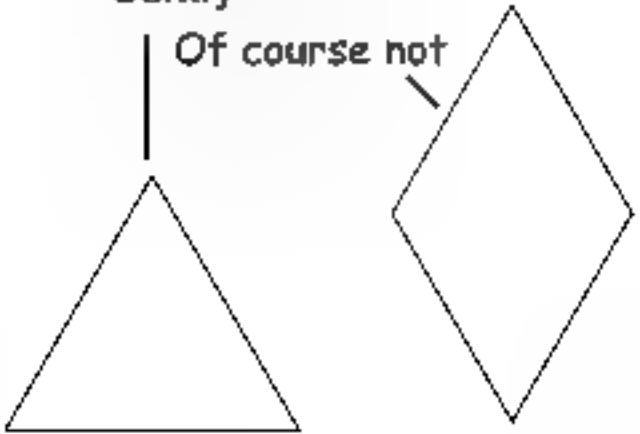




Triangle and Robert

But you didn't find a zucchini or any sign of the Vegetable Sentry

Of course not



So, while snorkeling in the Great Salt Lake, you were hit by a plane at cruising altitude

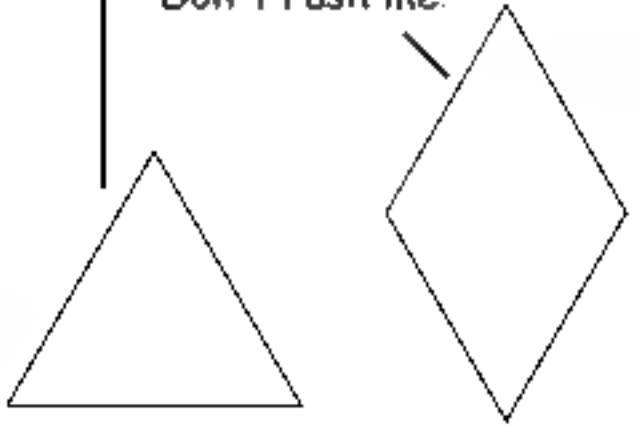
There might have been more steps

I'm waiting

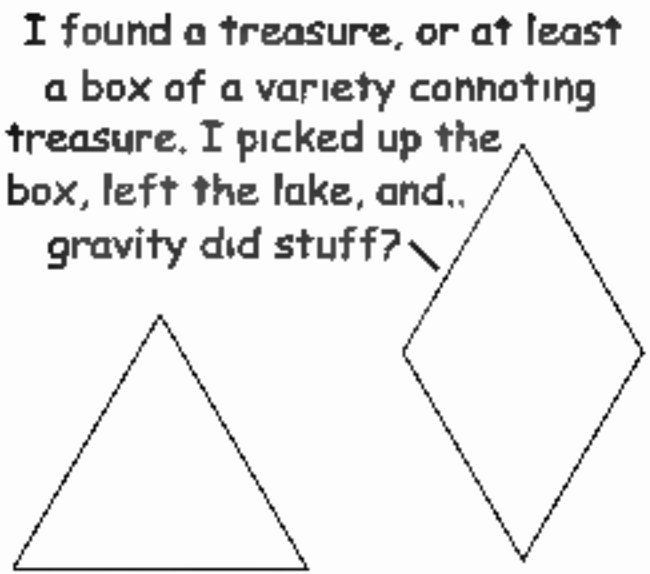
What?

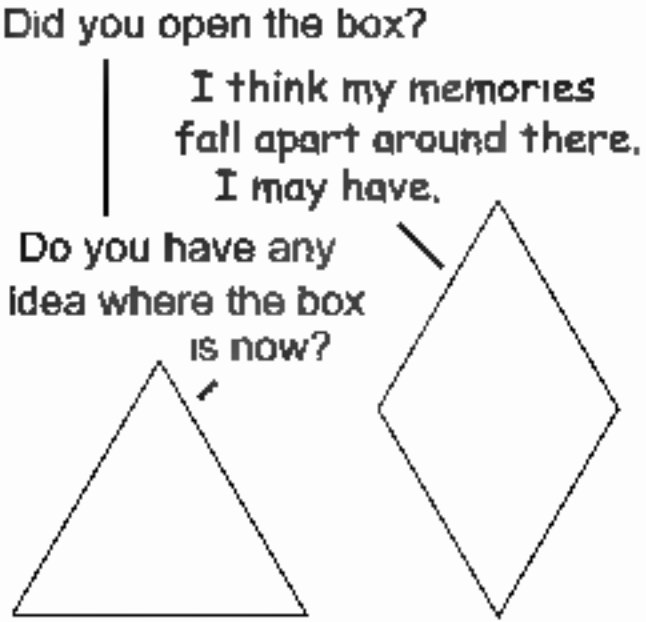
Me too

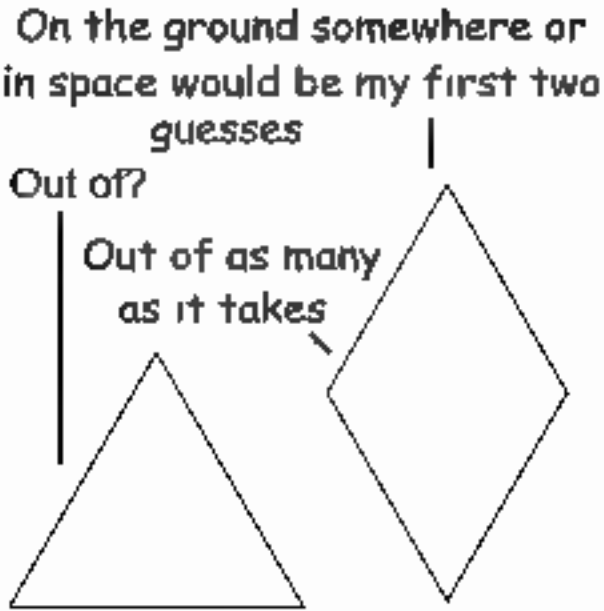
Don't rush me.



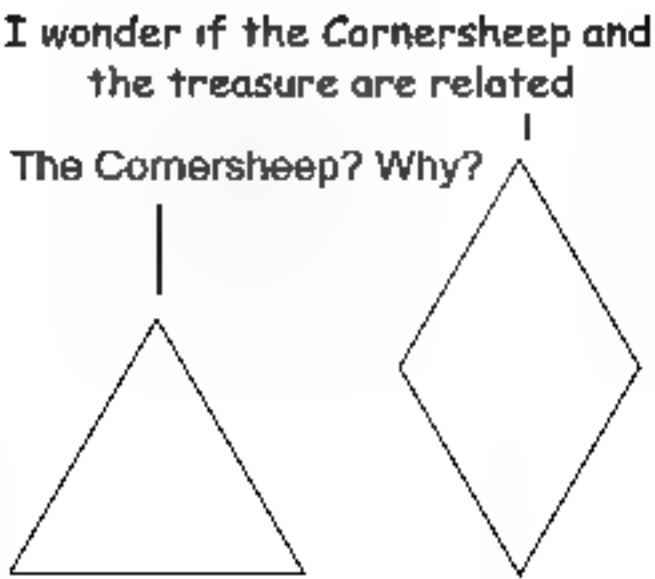
Triangle and Robert

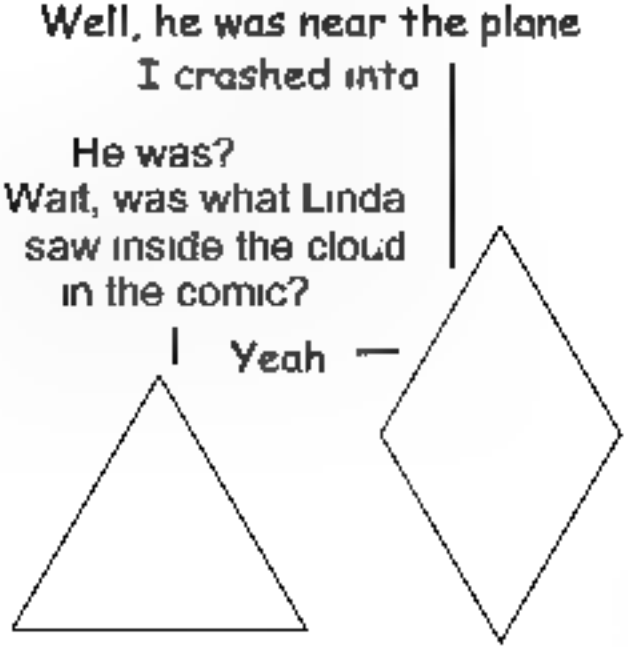


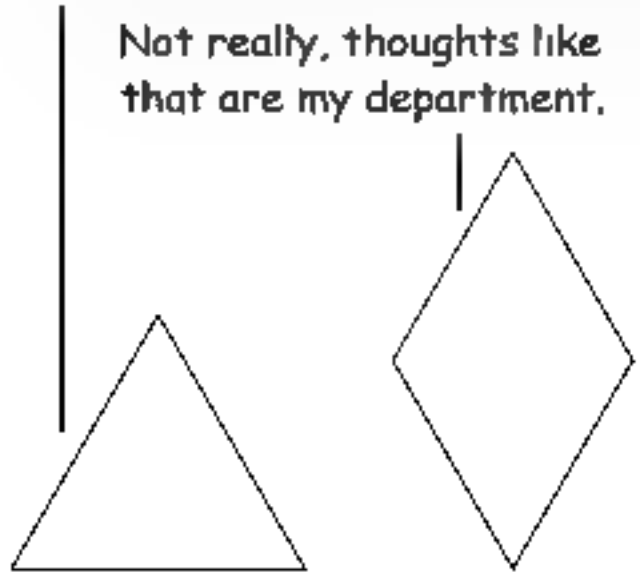




Triangle and Robert

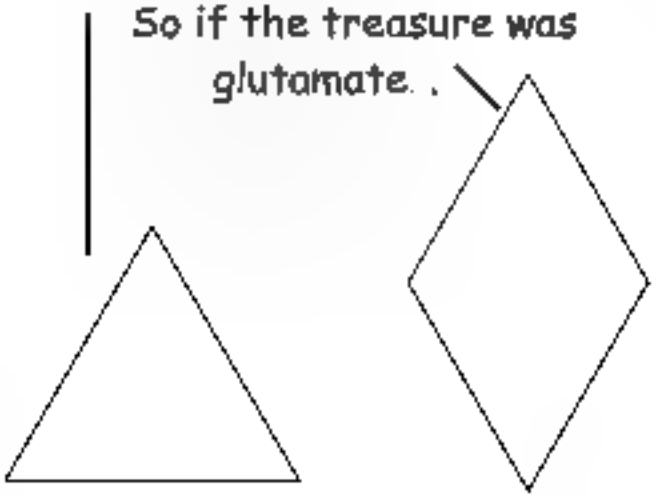


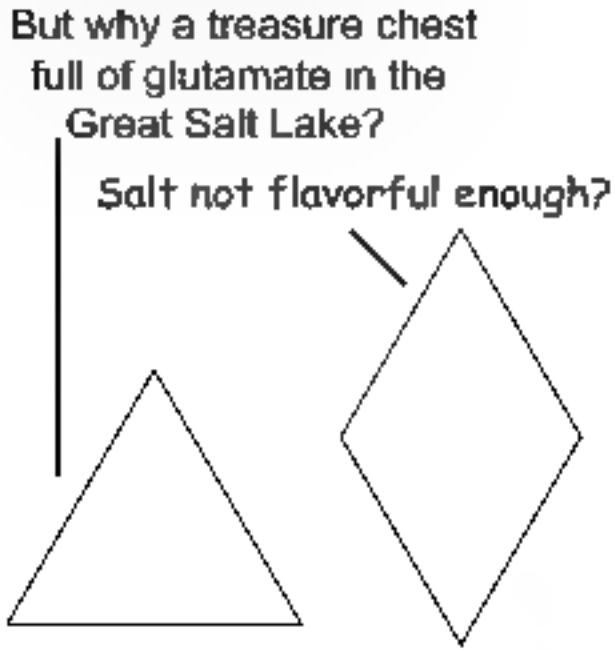


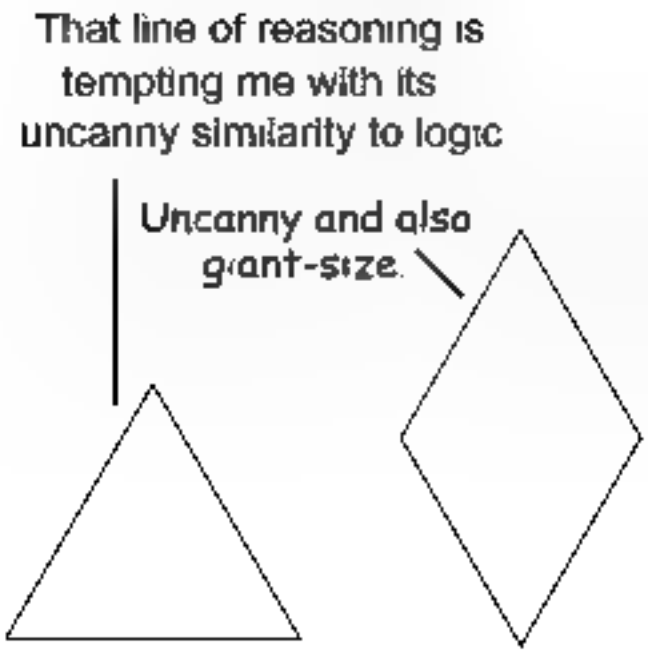


Triangle and Robert

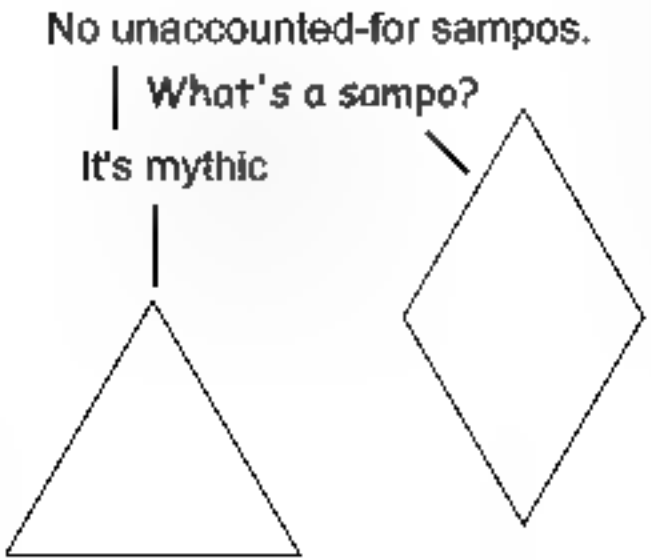
Glutamate-sucking devices

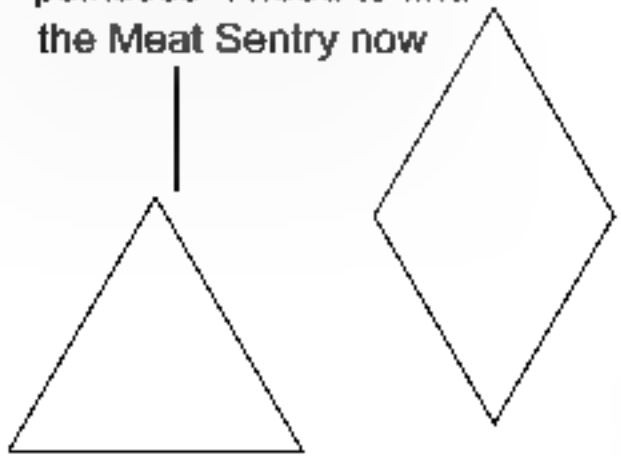


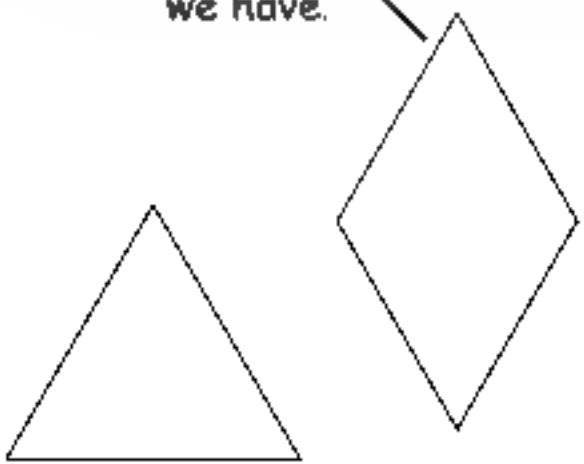




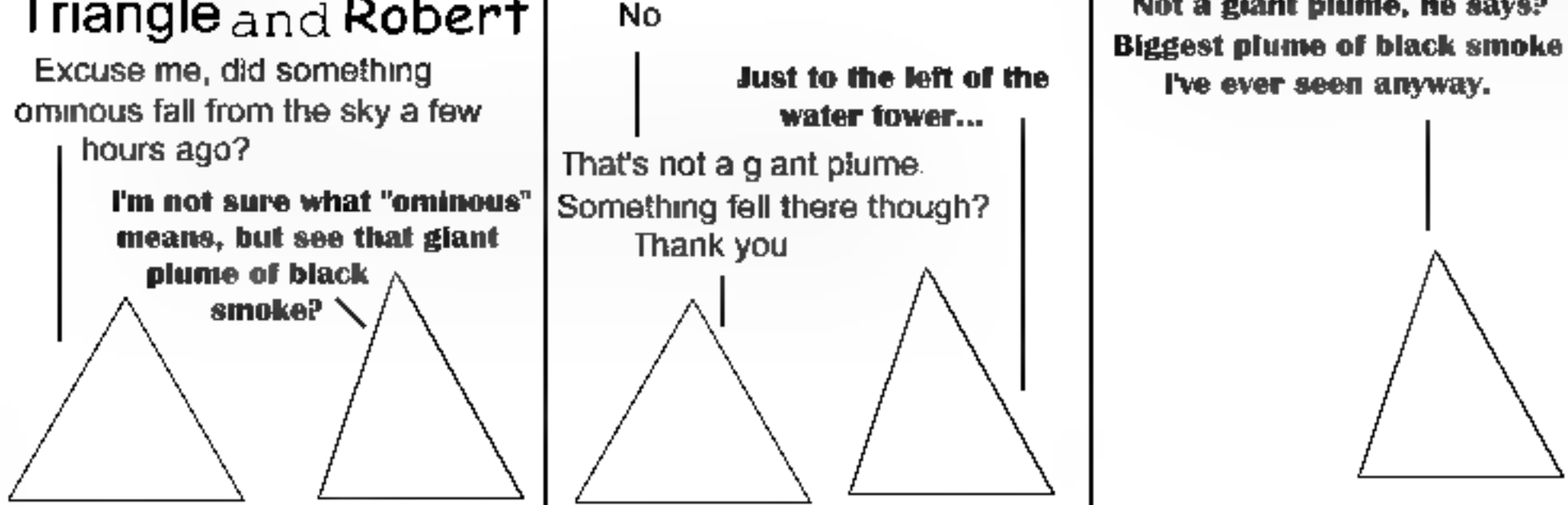
Triangle and Robert





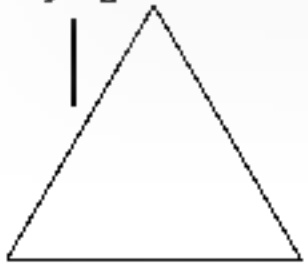


Triangle and Robert



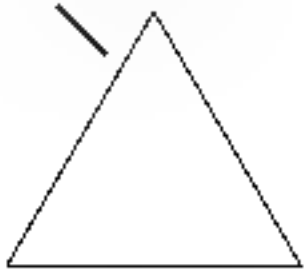
Triangle and Robert

I thought I was heading towards the water tower
Why is it necessary that I always get lost in cities?



Repetition is a means of providing continuity which requires relatively little skill on the part of the writer.

Of providing boring continuity

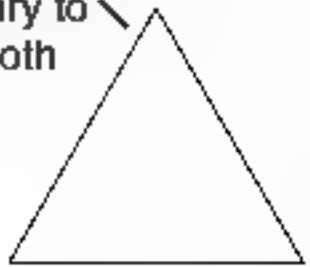


Well, yes. Any continuity that hinges on an unchanging cycle is going to become pointless after a small number of iterations.

Wait. This scene actually means something, doesn't it
With the cycles.

Triangle and Robert

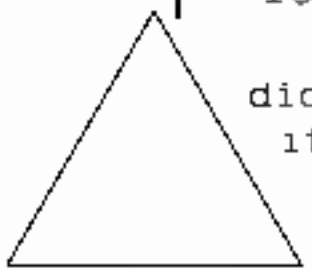
The cycles of my life as protagonist, instituted by your incompetence The cycles of this Earth and its Races, instituted by the Beforings' incompetence To break either cycle, it will be necessary to break both



Uh... that last part.... I wasn't expecting you to draw that conclusion, at least not yet.

You basically led me directly to it.

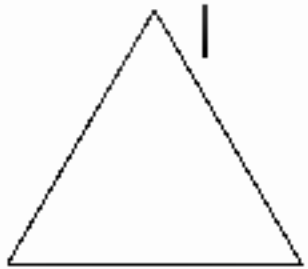
I was sort of foreshadowing it, but I didn't mean for it to be that obvious.



So cut to the chase What's the answer to this riddle?

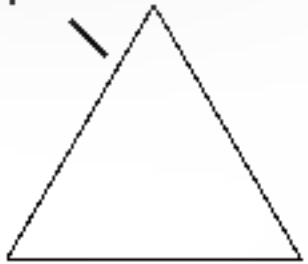
I'm not ready for the chase yet.

Ah, there's the black smoke again I guess I'll keep moving



Triangle and Robert

It looks like the wreckage of some sort of flying machine, but it smells like a condemned sausage factory. This is exactly the sort of thing I'm prepared to handle

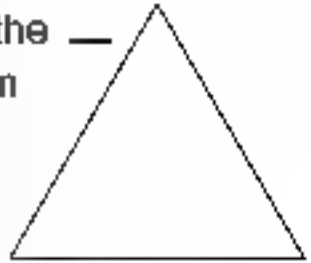


Uh...

Either a capital U and lower-case H snuck up on me or this is very bad

Is that you, Triangle? I'm sorry. I tried to stop it from coming back.

This is exactly the sort of thing I'm prepared to whimper about ineffectually



Triangle and Robert

Triangle? Does this form work better?

Better for what?

I think we need to talk

I d dn't mean to return to Earth but space wasn t shaped ike I thought it was By the time I realized bits of my mass had been sprinkl ng into the atmosphere it was too late to change course

I

I'm still mostly in space but more of my MSG s fa ling to Earth every day I don't think I can hold myse f back much longer

Hold back from what?

I think I might destroy a l po ygons in a massive final growth spurt

Would destroying Beta Tapiocus prevent that?

If doing so were even remotely conce vable

Triangle and Robert

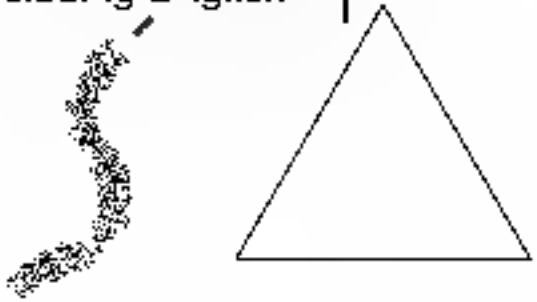
Destroying Beta Tapiocus is more than remotely conceivable, it's downright contemplable

Is that a word?

I have no ideal

Because sometimes thinking the unthinkable takes speaking the unparseable The only way to change the rules of this universe starts with ignoring the ones we don't like

Including English?



As necessary, yes
Leaving our destiny to higher powers only makes us victims of those powers' incompetence
Making up our own destiny, however badly, puts it in the hands of our own incompetence and our own incompetence is finite

Was that supposed to be a logical argument?

I'll use logic when logic works.
Not today.

Triangle and Robert

The Meat Sentry

will be fine Her magic's stronger with me nearby

Good

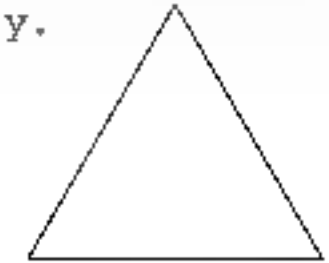
We still need to find the Vegetable Sentry, and the others as well Then it's time to end things and to keep other things from ending and to make some things that were already ending end differently

I might know where Orpuddex is Once Linda recovers 'll try to get him for you

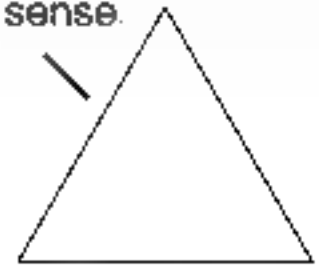
We could start without the Dairy Sentry if necessary, but it'd be a bad omen

Triangle and Robert

So you've pieced it together, including the fact that pieces you don't actually have can be glossed over as long as the result fits the story.



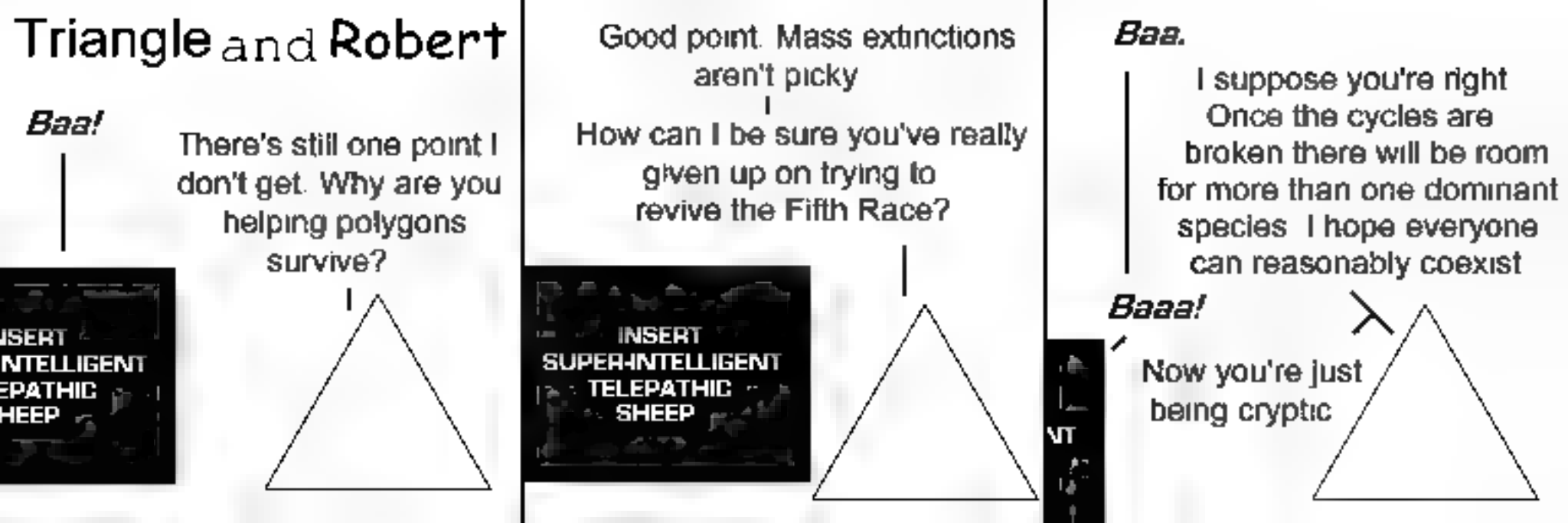
I want it all to fit together. I know that's not what I'm going to get, but it's still what I want. We're going to find the Vegetable Sentry and the Dairy Sentry, and they're going to explain their absence, and it will at least *try* to make sense.



Then we'll all go into space and make a new, underdetermined destiny for this universe. Do I sound confident enough?

You did until that last sentence.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Robert found a box. right, you're telepathic, no need for me to tell you So any idea what it was or where it is now?

Baaa.

I like this kind of dialogue. It saves a lot of work.

So what was Robert doing in the air? Did you have anything to do with that?

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Baa... Baa?

It's a lake Why would a lake have pirates?

Baa, baa!

Zeppelin pirates over Utah? I'm confused now

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

Zeppelin Pirates Over Utah

Ja, it be many a long year since last we flew ye skies. 'Twas a long time ago indeed ze curse befell us.

Achtung! Ve need more grog!

Belay that, I be ye cap'n and I be sayin' when the grog be needed, dummkopf! I be considerin' me log. Now that wizard, he were a wily one indeed.

We stole his precious chest, we did, but at such a cost!

What good be a stein with naught in it?

Himmel... Shut up about ze grog or ve'll keelhaul dich!

Zeppelin Pirates Over Utah

The chest, she was as magical as ve'd been told, but zat magic came unexpected. Aye, 'twas a shock to find our very ship becomin' smaller an' smaller, an' us on it too.

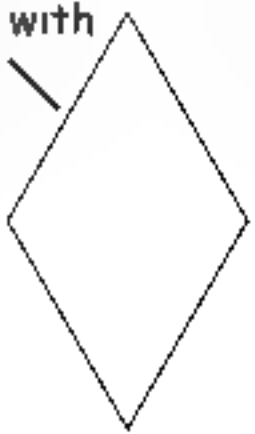
Then into the briny deep the wily wizard threw the chest, after it'd swallowed us up mit its strange shrinking magic. And so beneath the seas ve slumbered für years and years, until a treasure-seeker braved the waters and hauled us out as his catch.

An' when that chest were opened, out came our ship, good as the day she was made, and off we flew, to continue our piratin' ways, however distant a future this may be.

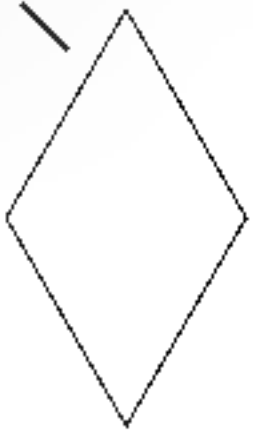
I be done talkin' now, break open ye grog.

Triangle and Robert

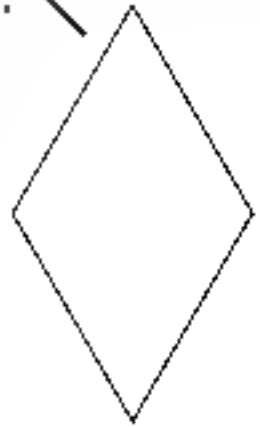
That's right. I think I remember now Who'd expect a treasure chest to be filled with tiny pirates?



And then I ended up on top of the expanding zeppelin and fell off. The odds of then subsequently hitting a plane are best left uncomputed.



I wonder whether zeppelin pirates can be successful in this modern age of jet planes and ubiquitous sorcery. Perhaps we haven't seen the last of that crew.



Triangle and Robert

Yes, I'm fine now. I think we've lost the trail of the world's largest zucchini, though.

Why were we looking for that?

Because the Vegetable Sentry mentioned it before disappearing. You know that.

So we just assumed that he'd also be looking for it and we'd cross paths

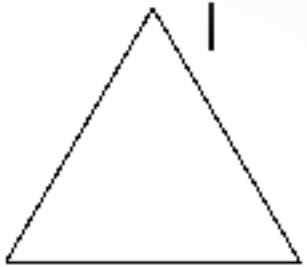
For lack of a single even remotely better idea! What else can we try?

Growing our own

Triangle and Robert

If the world's largest zucchini has a treasure in it, growing a zucchini ourselves will not...

We publicize it



We show a large zucchini We claim it's the world's largest We wait for treasure hunters.

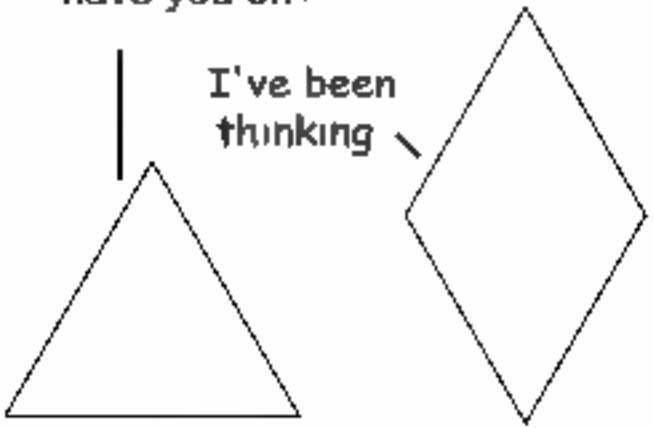
And then maybe they'll know what the treasure is!

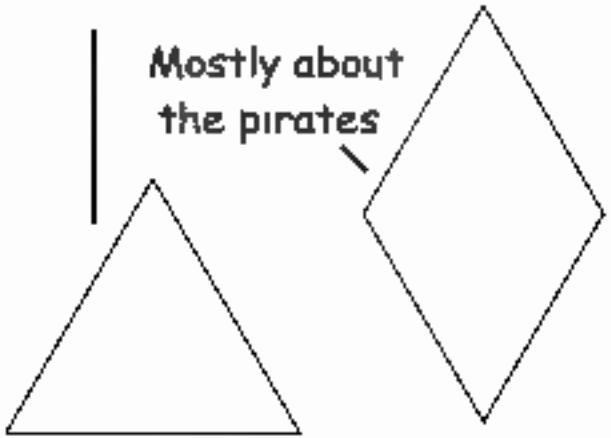
That sounds like the sort of plan that backfires horribly in an Umberto Eco novel, illustrating that employing untruth in the search for truth is inherently self defeating.

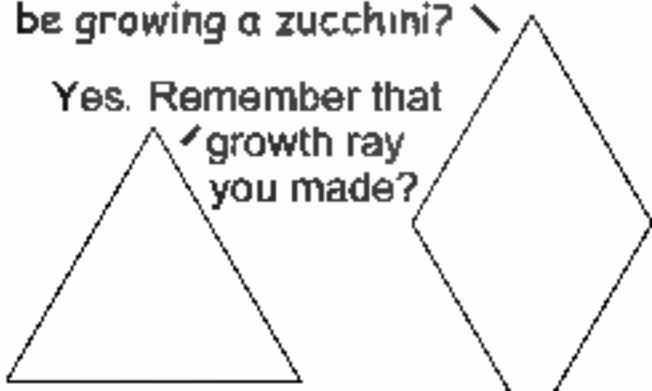
Umberto what?

I think it's a fish or something, from a Sega game.

Triangle and Robert



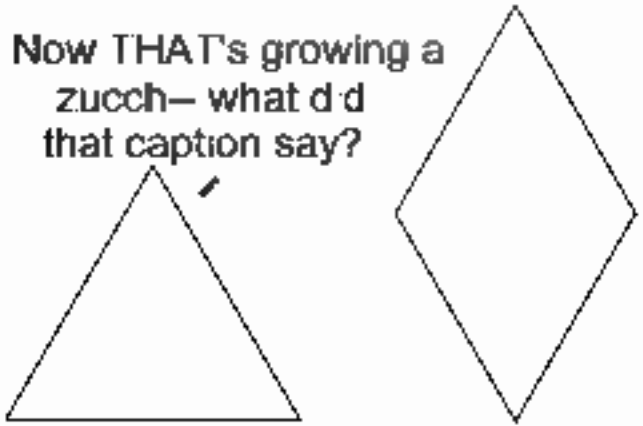




Triangle and Robert

Later, at the Greenhouse of Mystery:

Now THAT's growing a zucch– what did that caption say?



"Later, at the Greenhouse of Mystery:".

I didn't ask for mystery I asked for a greenhouse

It's just a name.

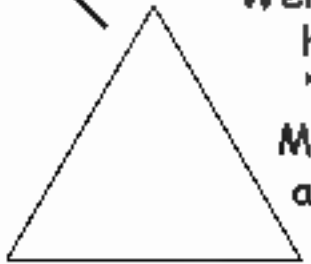
Why is it named that?

It's eponymous We're renting it from Zachariah Mystery.

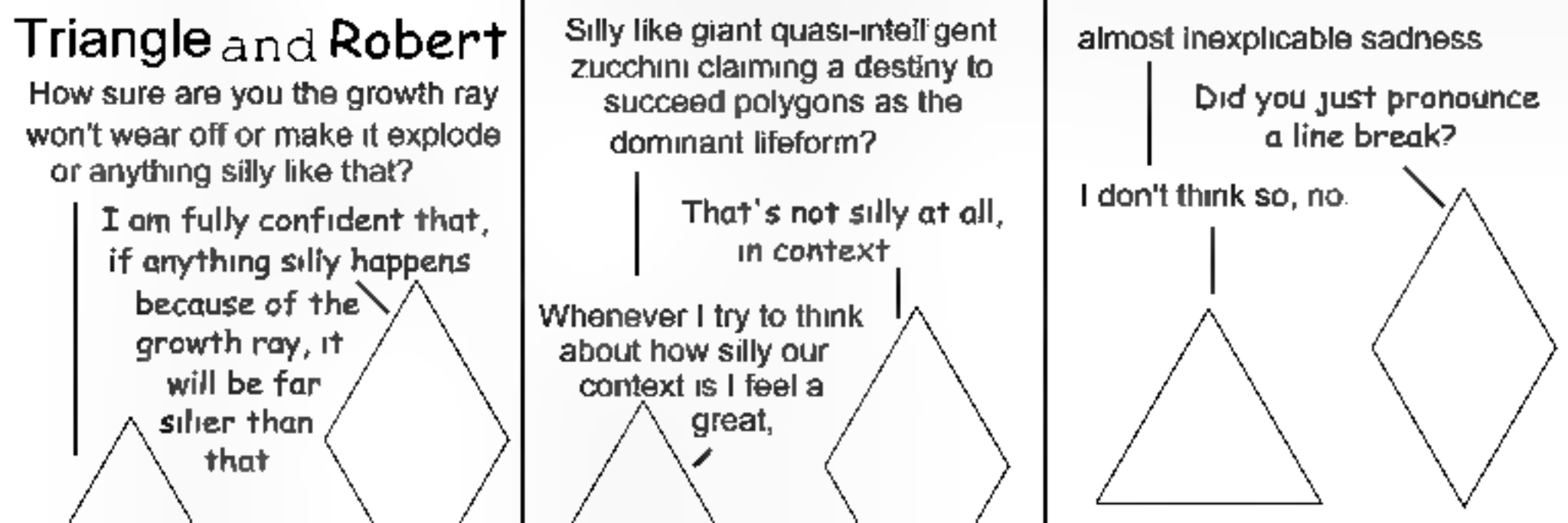
And this raised no questions in your mind at all

Well, I wondered how to spell "Zachariah"

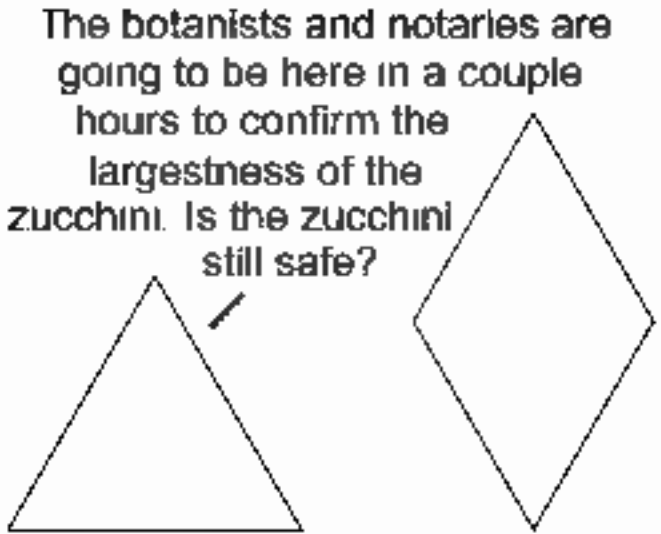
My. That is quite a zucchini there.

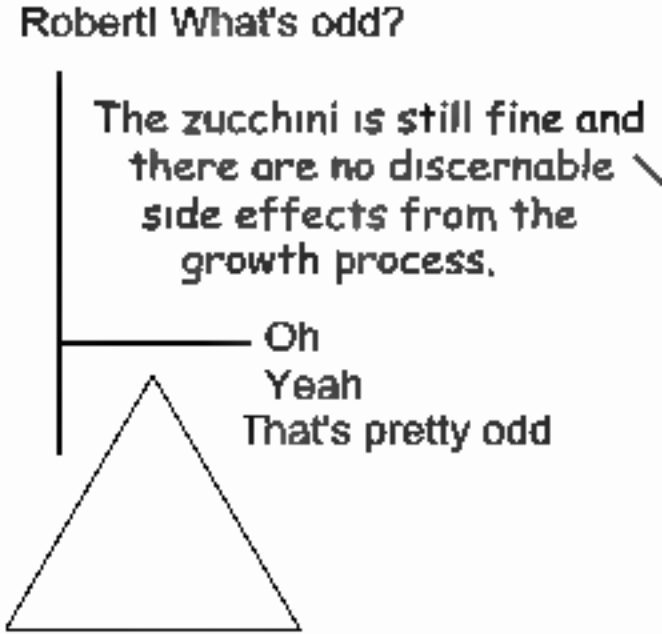


Triangle and Robert



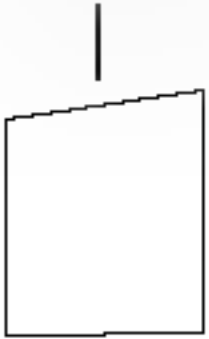
Triangle and Robert





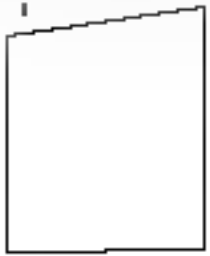
Triangle and Robert

with notorious protagonists Robert and Triangle, who claim to possess the world's largest zucchini



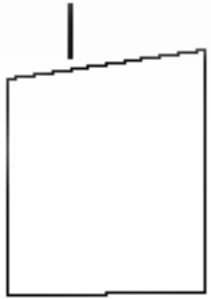
"Claim"? Look at the thing!

Given their tendency to perform various hoaxes on behalf of wacky scheme" clients, the claim is of course questionable, however can say that it certainly looks like a very large zucchini

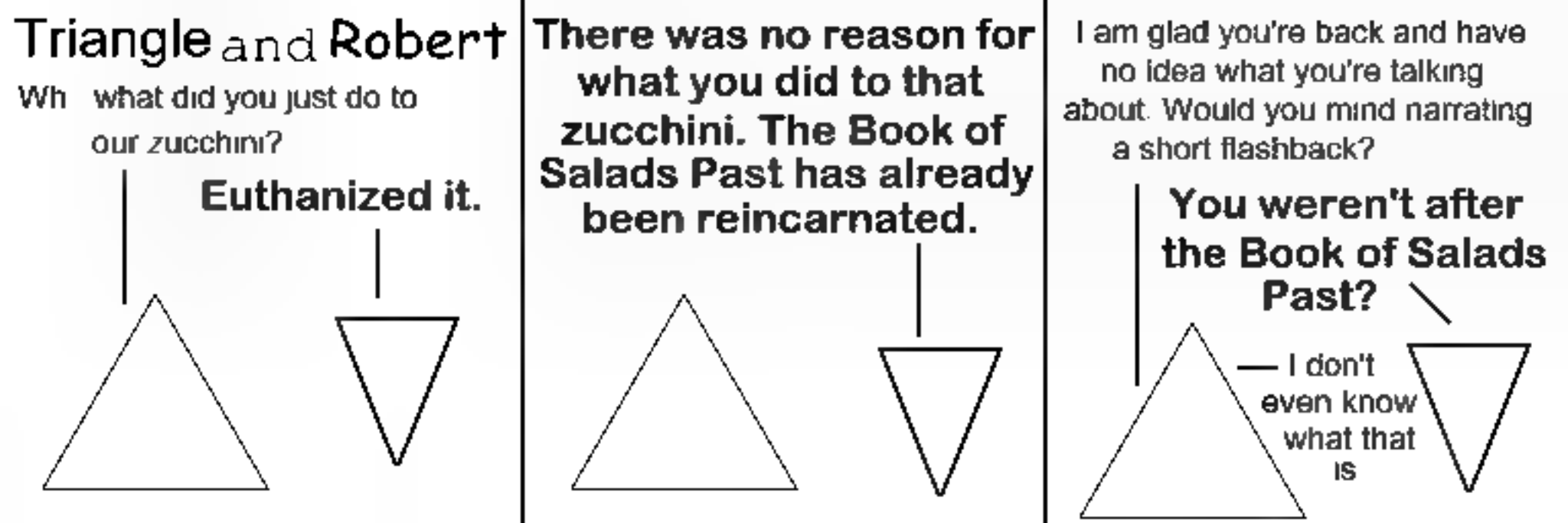


Apparently there is a treasure connected to this zucchini in some fashion, but Robert and Triangle have refused to elaborate

Someone else appears to be approaching the greenhouse now

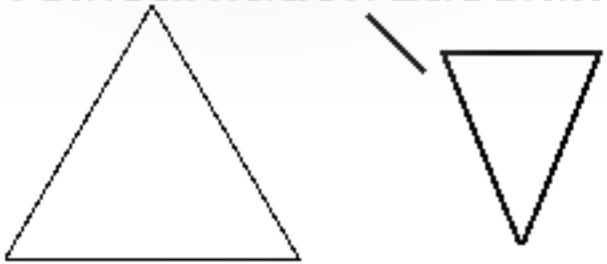


Triangle and Rabert


Triangle and Robert
Wh what did you just do to our zucchini?
Euthanized it.
There was no reason for what you did to that zucchini. The Book of Salads Past has already been reincarnated.
I am glad you're back and have no idea what you're talking about. Would you mind narrating a short flashback?
You weren't after the Book of Salads Past?
— I don't even know what that is

Triangle and Robert

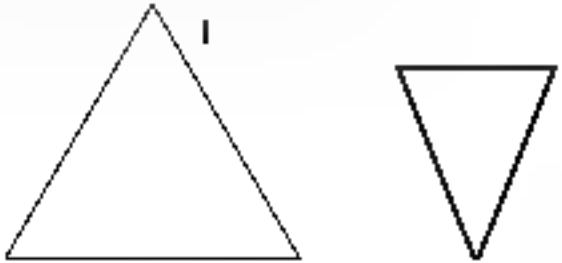
If you weren't trying to recreate the Book of Salads Past, why were you growing a reincarnation zucchini?



Uh. Robert, do you want to field that one?

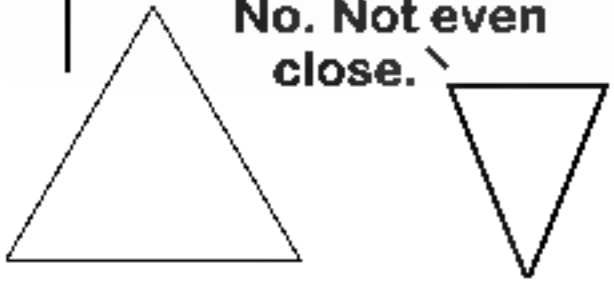
No!

Well, first of all, I have no clear notion of what you mean by a reincarnation zucchini



We were growing a very large zucchini because we'd heard you were looking for a treasure hidden in the world's largest zucchini and wanted to attract your attention

A hidden treasure? No. Not even close.

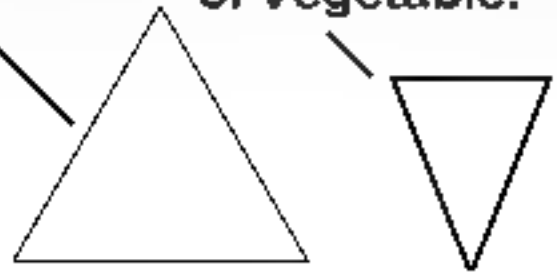


Triangle and Robert

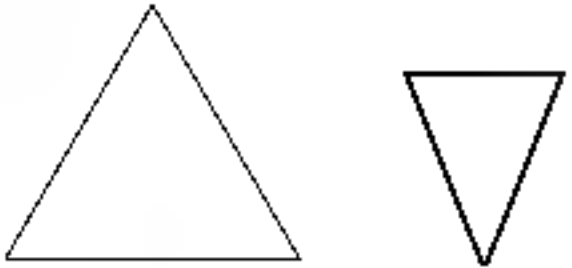
I was part of the team growing the reincarnation zucchini for the Book of Salads Past.

I think I know what some words in that sentence mean

The Book of Salads Past is a moderately ancient tome of recipes which hints at the Godfood of Vegetable.



Remind me what a Godfood is



Triangle and Robert

Godfoods! Foods so powerful that their very recipes dimly possess universal consciousness!

Right!

Those. Like the Fondue and, apparently, the Starham

Yes. The Book of Salads Past was destroyed in the recent past, but could be brought back into being within a reincarnation zucchini.

That being a large squash that regrows a lost object inside of itself?

Yes. We had not considered that the zucchini would break a world's record and end up in a museum.

Hence stealing it

Triangle and Robert

I recovered the Book of Salads Past just before being captured by the... I never did get their name.

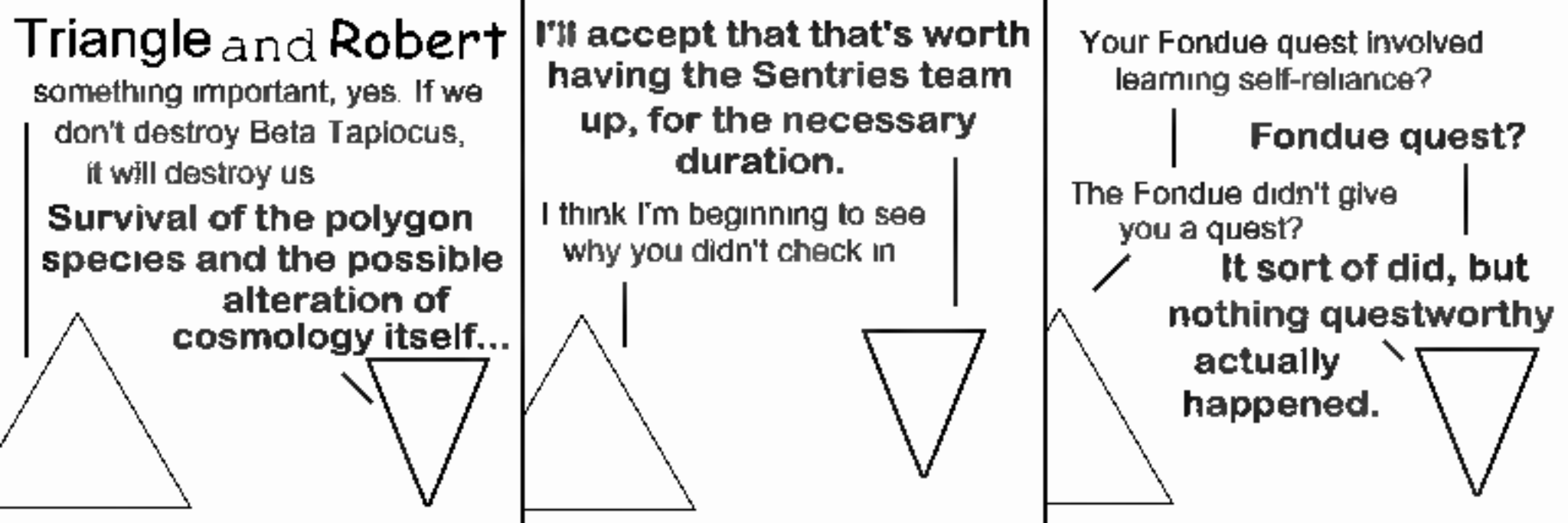
We're not sure about that either So you escaped, and the other prisoners had heard you talking about the book and completely misinterpreted it, resulting in. Right. This entire situation now makes sense

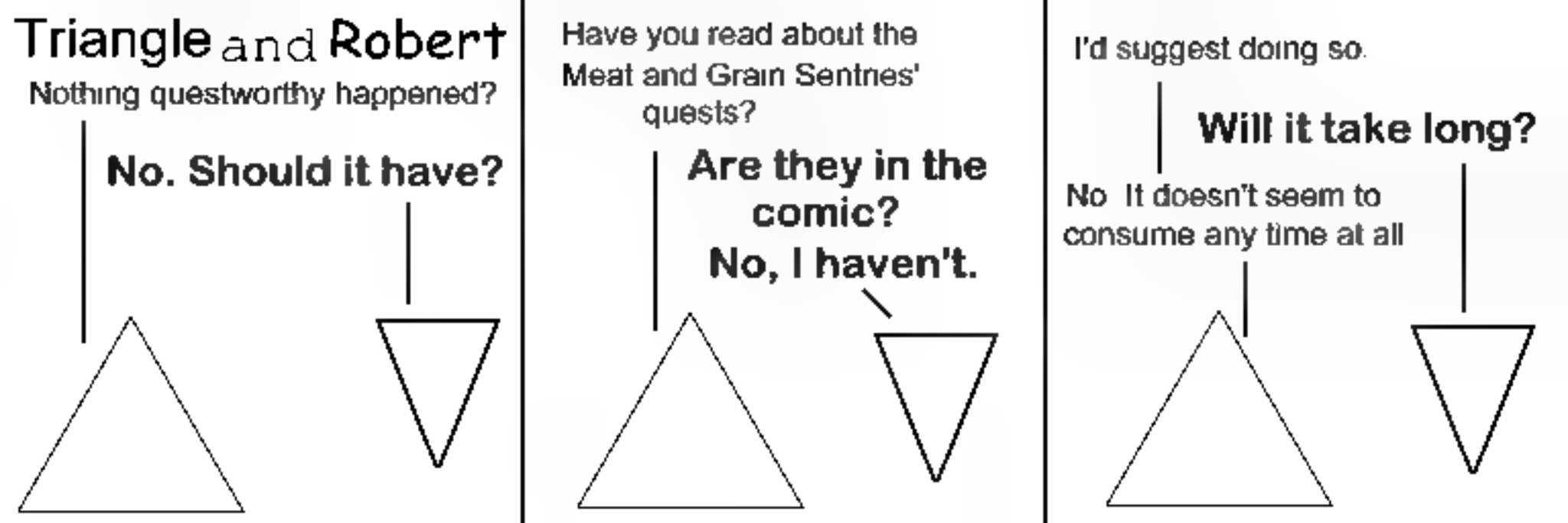
So what did you want me for?

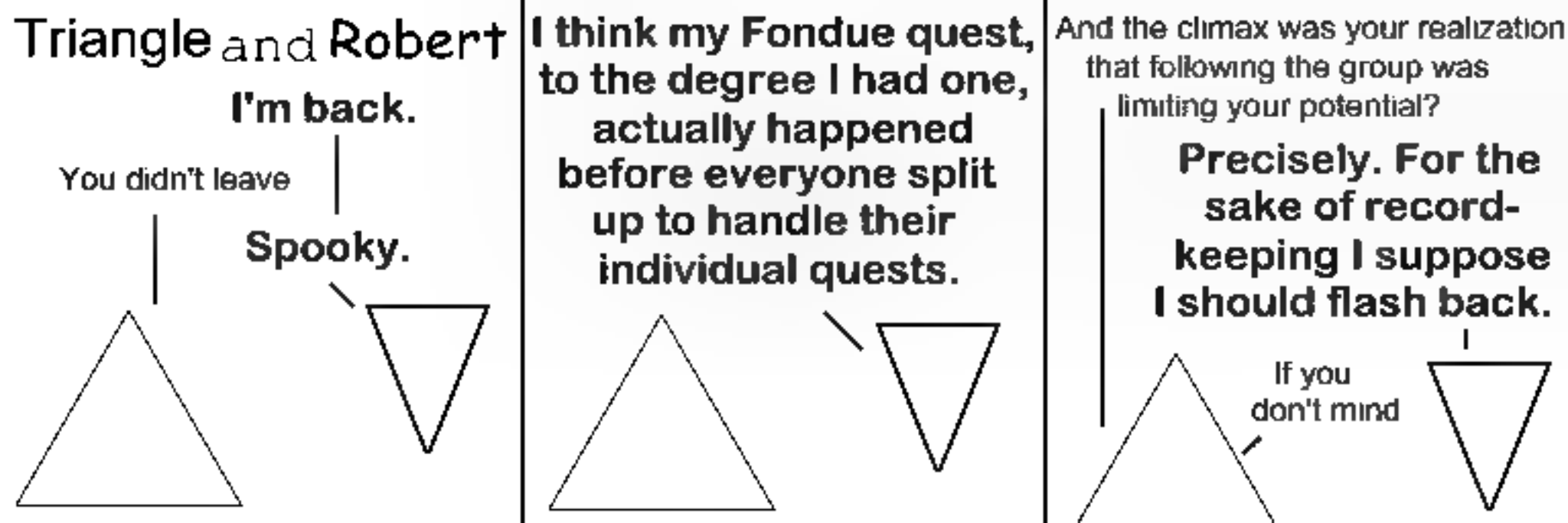
Is it important?

At first we myself, Robert, and the Meat and Grain Sentries just wanted to make sure you were okay But I think there is something important, yes.

Triangle and Robert

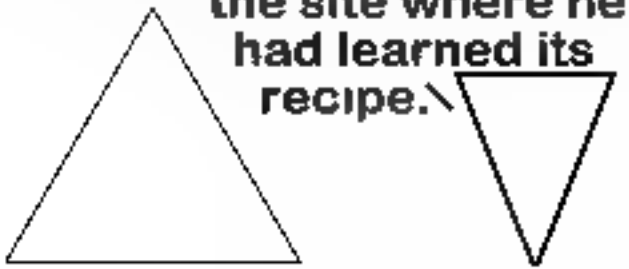



Triangle and Robert
Nothing questworthy happened?
No. Should it have?
Have you read about the Meat and Grain Sentries' quests?
Are they in the comic?
No, I haven't.
I'd suggest doing so.
Will it take long?
No. It doesn't seem to consume any time at all


Triangle and Robert
I'm back.
You didn't leave
Spooky.
I think my Fondue quest, to the degree I had one, actually happened before everyone split up to handle their individual quests.
And the climax was your realization that following the group was limiting your potential?
Precisely. For the sake of record-keeping I suppose I should flash back.
If you don't mind

Triangle and Robert

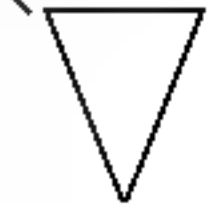
After using the remainder of the Fondue to heal the sick, we set out towards the Farm the Dairy Sentry was now remembering as the site where he had learned its recipe.



The Dairy Sentry was remembering a lot of things, but they probably belong in his flashaback and not mine.

So he will be able to give one?

I think so.



If he doesn't then the rest of us can fill in the gaps, but his story is his story. En route to the Dairy Sentry's old farm, we...

Triangle and Robert

If this is my flashback, where's the thing that wasn't broccoflower?

I'm trying to find a reasonable representative piece of clip art. I haven't had any luck yet.

"Trying to", progressive tense? I thought time didn't work like that between the strip and you.

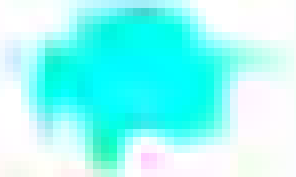
Eh. It varies.

I should probably stop the flashback, then. I don't want space-time to get more ruined.

Never mind, got one.

Triangle and Robert

I cut and pasted it from a larger appropriate-looking image of a fractal. I think it's approximately what you were fighting?



That sticky-up bit on the right doesn't match, but it's pretty close to what I remember otherwise.

The actual fractal you were fighting kept shifting around anyway. This is close enough for a still.

What's with the color?

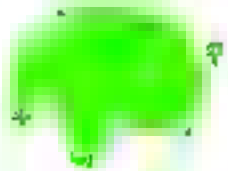
I know it was actually one color, but since no one can remember what color that was, I'll just vary it like an object in a dream, or something.

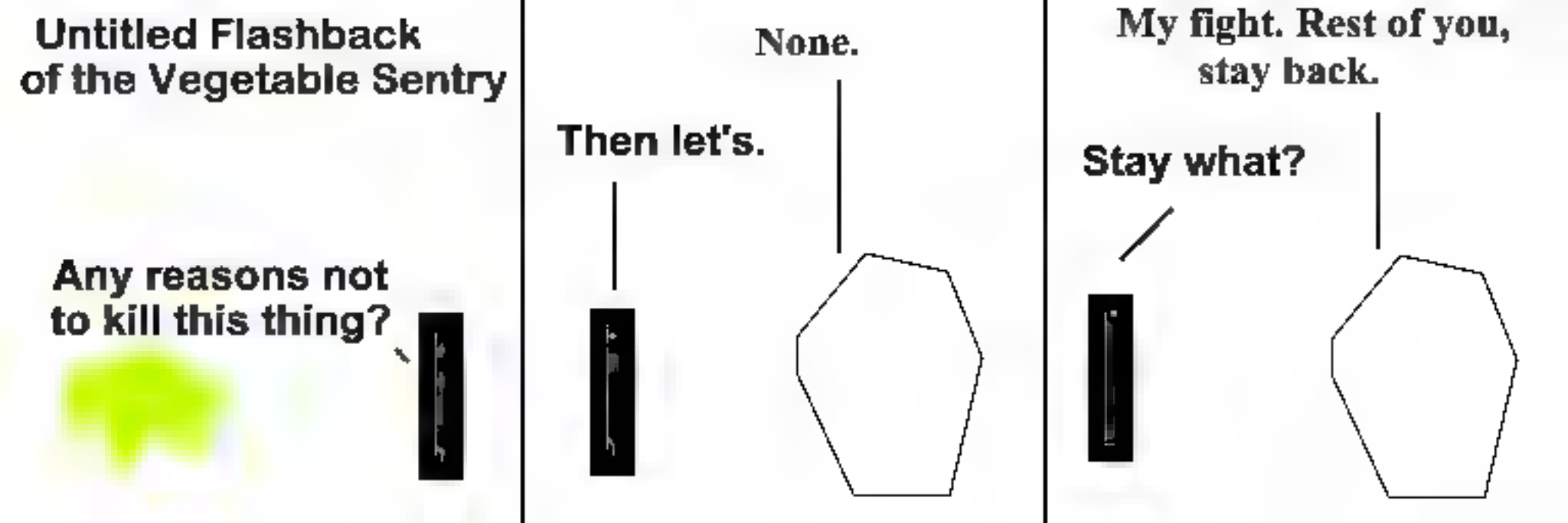
As we approached the Dairy Sentry's farm, we were engaged in battle by a spawn of the ancient evil which had...

The reasons are more the Dairy Sentry's story than mine. I'll just talk about the battle itself.

I'll just reiterate that it was no broccoflower. The danger it posed was real and substantial.

Any reasons not to kill this thing?




Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry
Any reasons not to kill this thing?
Then let's.
None.
My fight. Rest of you, stay back.
Stay what?

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

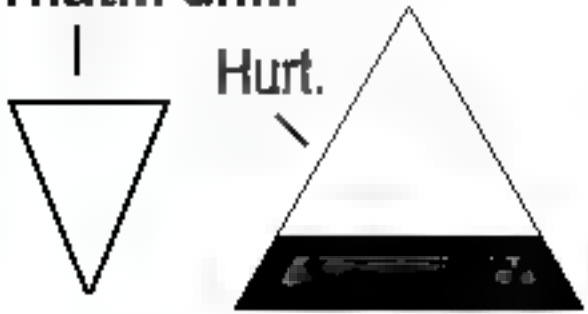
I said stay back! My fight!

It's all our fight!

She was energized with potential gravy. He was going into some sort of biscuit-making maneuver.

That... uh...

Hurt.

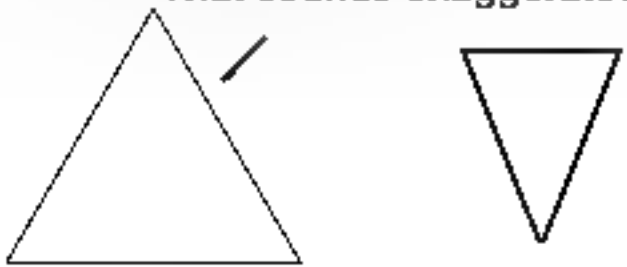


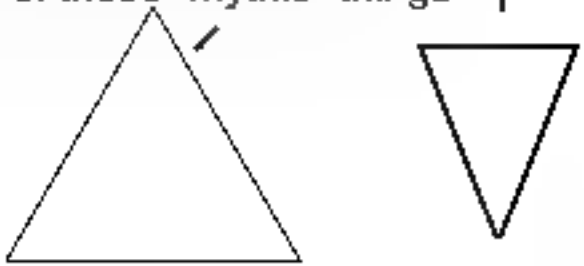
We need to coordinate.

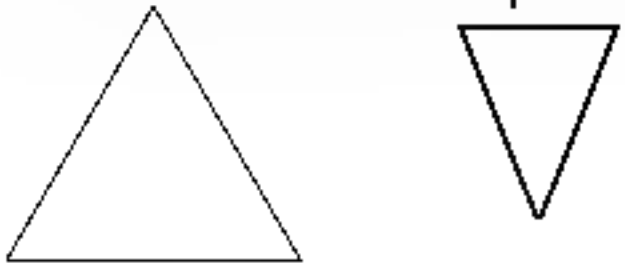
They need to calm down and let someone with some tactics do it.

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry
Can we stop arguing for one minute and just kill this fractal?
I have it under control! My fight!
It's growing! I think it's somehow feeding on us arguing!
Everyone shut up and attack!
No... I think we need to keep shouting and overfeed it.
I'm not so sure about that plan.

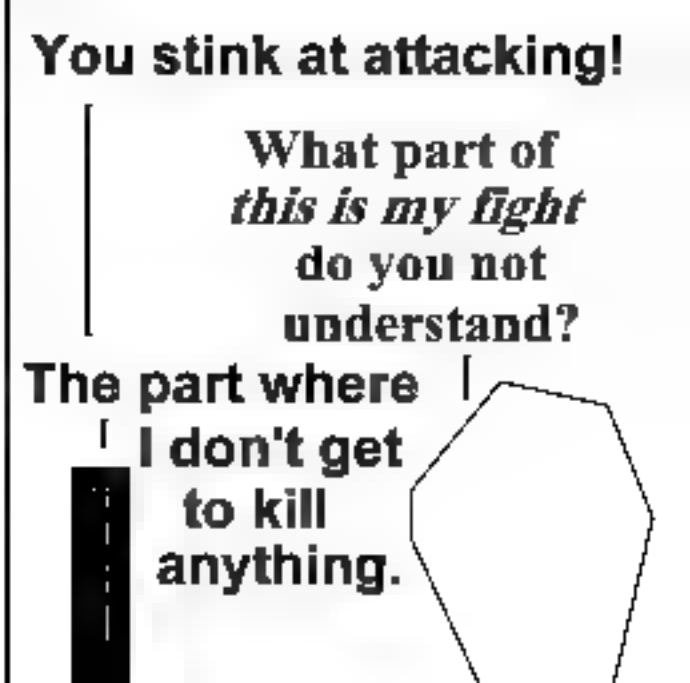
Triangle and Robert







Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry



Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry Although He Isn't in Any Panels of This One
You don't have to kill everything. This is a dairy job.
Fine! Go ahead and lose!
I will! I mean... No! Yes!
It got bigger.
I told you that!

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

I told you you'd lose.

...

We've taken one fourth a rout and you're wasting time to insult our fallen member? If we're going to be a team we should act like one!

No, we need to –

This isn't some kind of puzzle we need to study to find the clever hidden solution! We need to hit this fractal, as hard as possible, as coordinatedly as possible!

That isn't a word.

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

What?

"Coordinatedly." That isn't a word.

That moment was probably the turning point. There was no greater wisdom of the group to which I could defer. There really never was any. It had been wishful thinking.

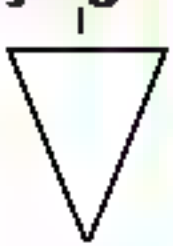
Whatever I was going to do next, I would be the one to do it.

I invoke... a border of lettuce...

Huh?

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

I am in no condition to fight this thing, but at least I'm paying attention.



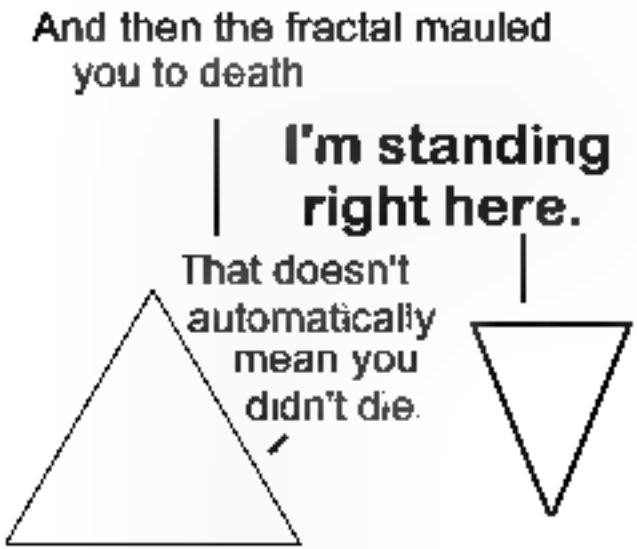
He sealed himself in with the monster.

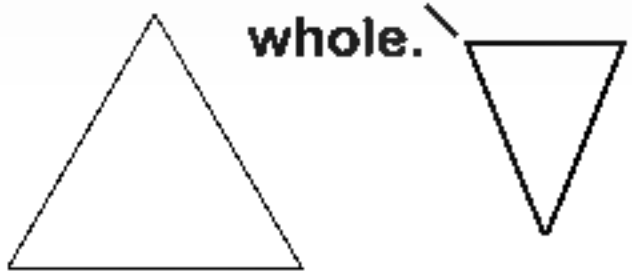
No, he sealed us out. The border would only stop us, not him or it.

What's he trying to accomplish?

I didn't hear the Grain Sentry's reply to that.

Triangle and Robert



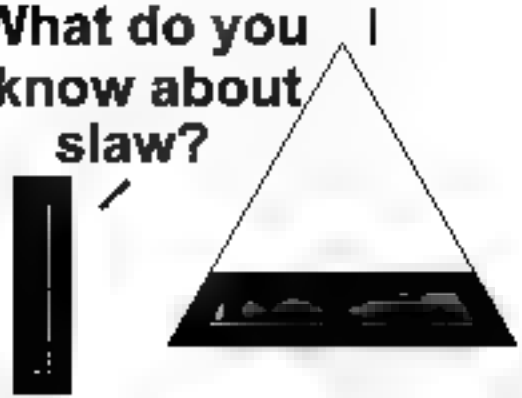


Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry
He's winning. He's turning the fractal into cole slaw.
That's impossible.
Fractals aren't cabbages. He's just covering it with cole slaw to suffocate it.
What makes you think it breathes?
To crush it, then. Or bury it. He's using cole slaw as a weapon, not transforming the enemy into it.
Says you.

Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

"Says you"? That's real mature.

What do you know about slaw?



Can't you stop arguing for long enough to... No. You can't. We all saw different things in the Fondue, right? Maybe we're not supposed to be together.

Let's tend to the wounded then go our separate ways. There's no way it could be any worse than this debacle.

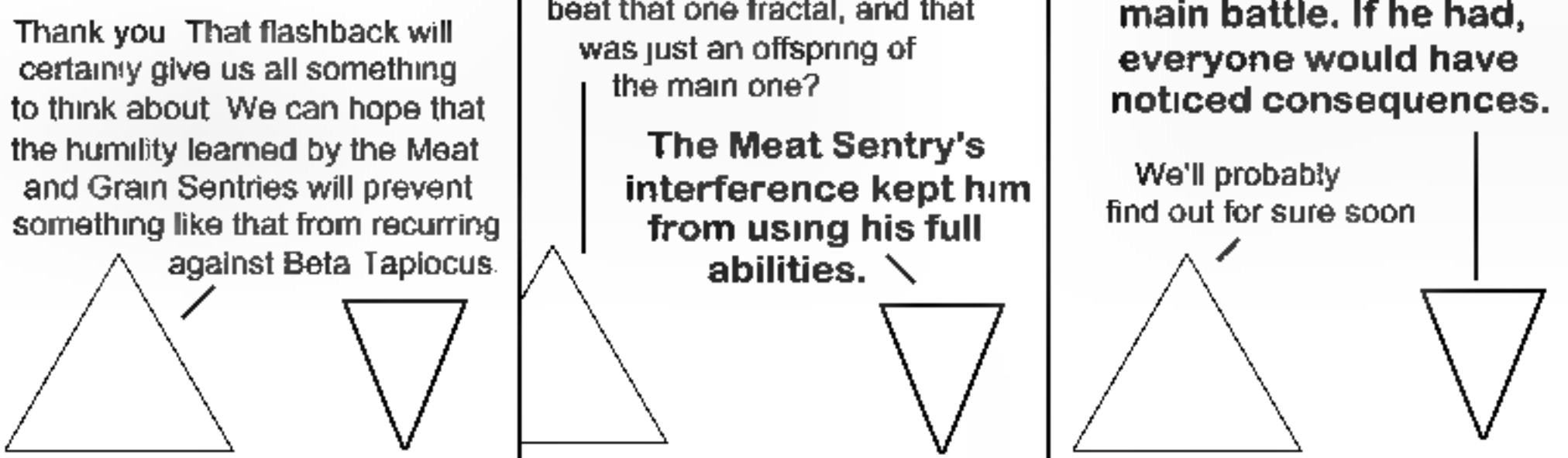
Untitled Flashback of the Vegetable Sentry

You had a battle without me? I told you to call me back if anything attacked and you just let me scout?

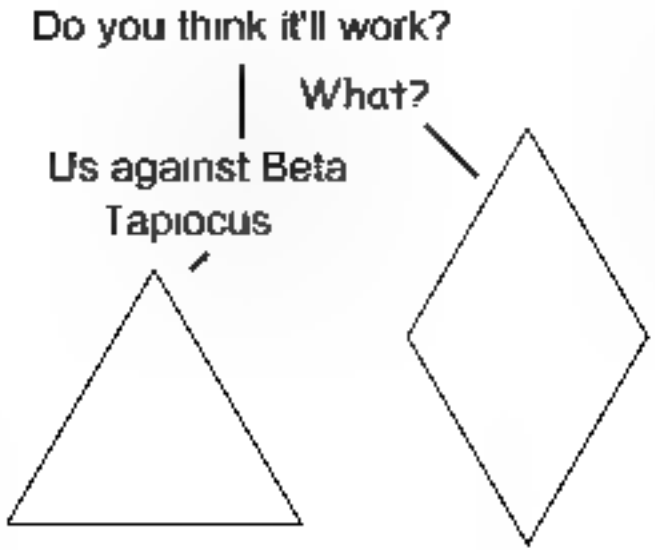
The wound is minor, as is the condition of the Dairy Sentry.

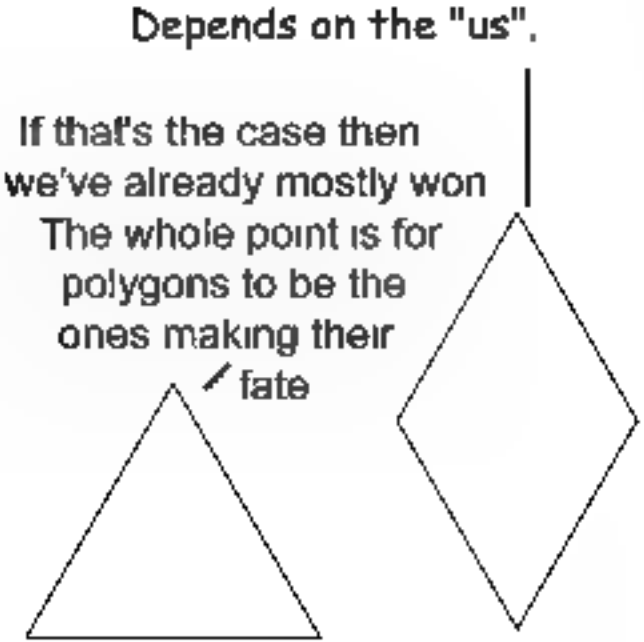
Then I lost consciousness. I came to in a motel room; everyone had agreed to split up and done so while I was still unconscious. They left me with the room bill.

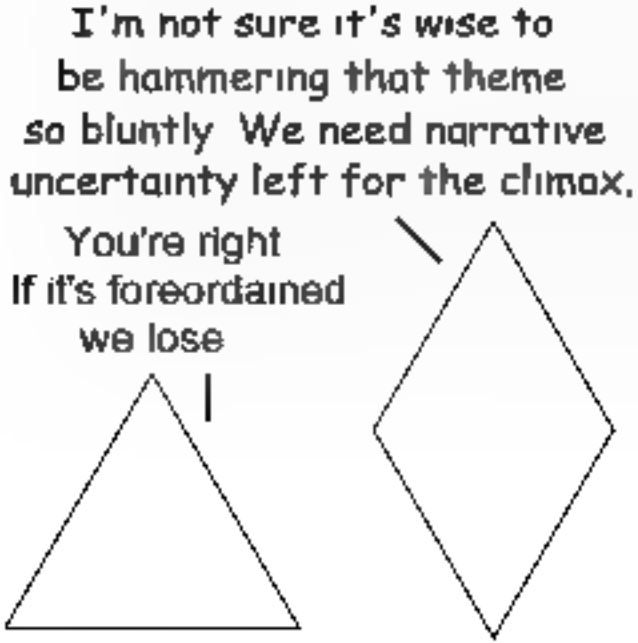
Triangle and Robert



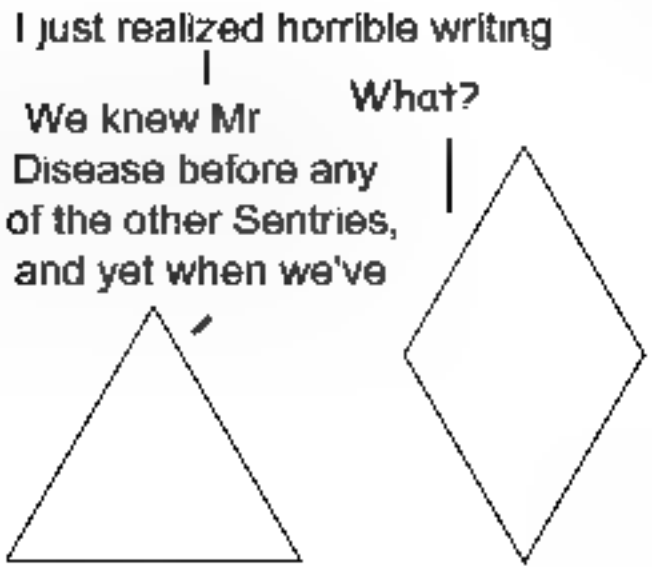
Triangle and Robert

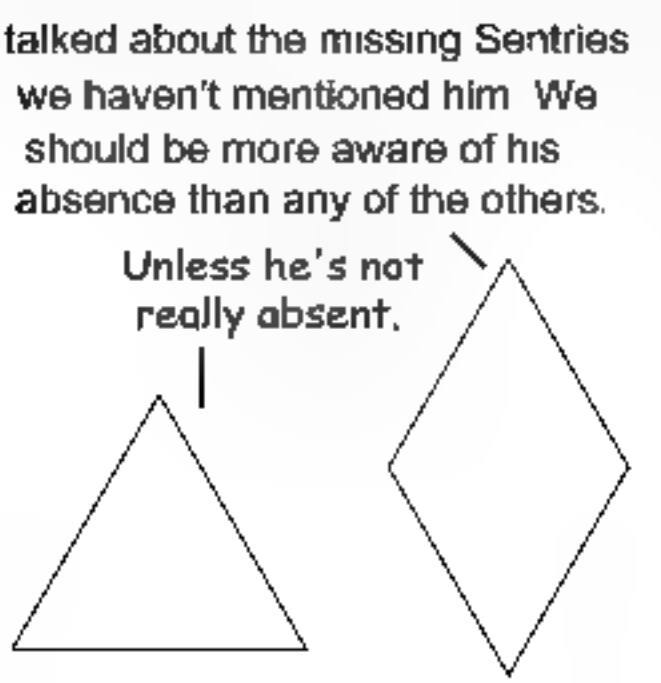


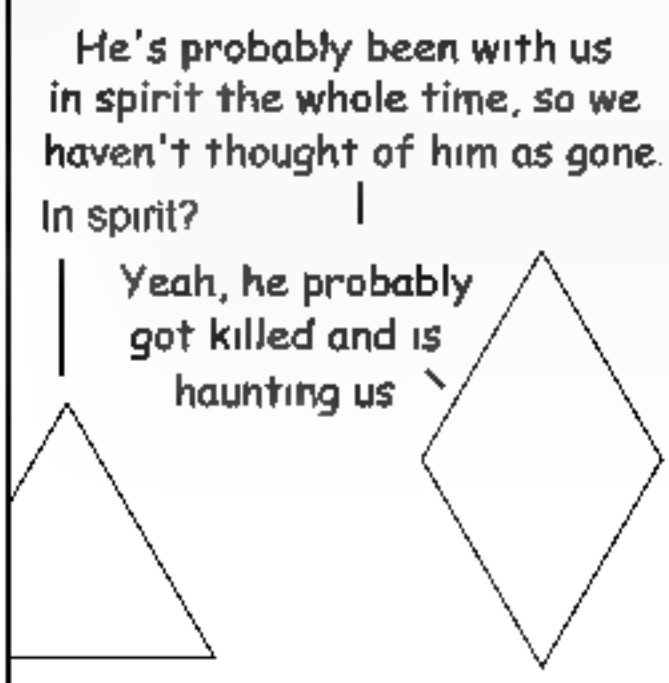




Triangle and Robert



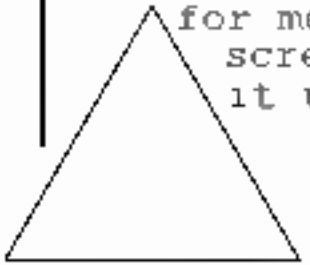


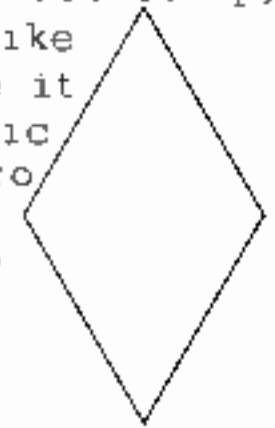


Triangle and Robert

Cartoonist!

If this is about your line mix up last strip, I kept it like that because it fit the topic for me to screw it up.

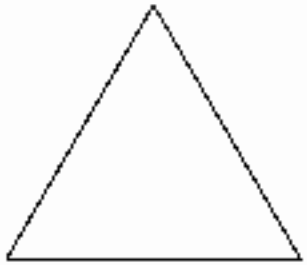


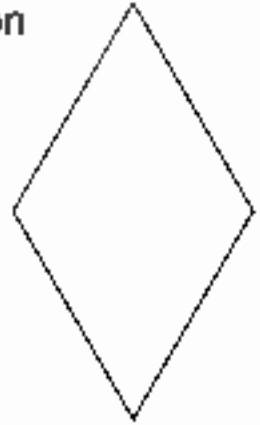


Why should I believe that?

Because it might be true. No reason other than that.

Okay Next question

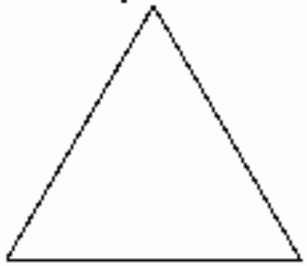


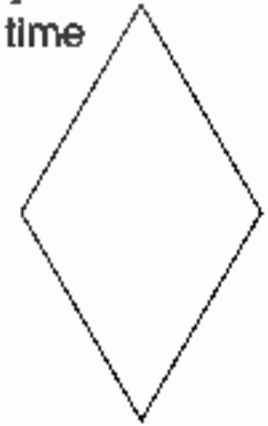


Can we do a seance?

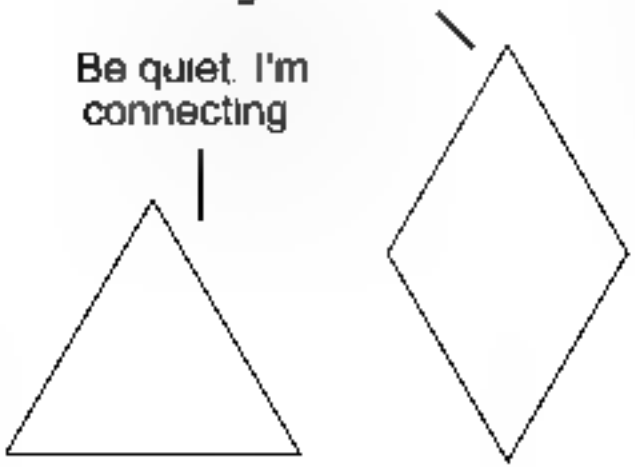
I can't yet come up with a reason why not.

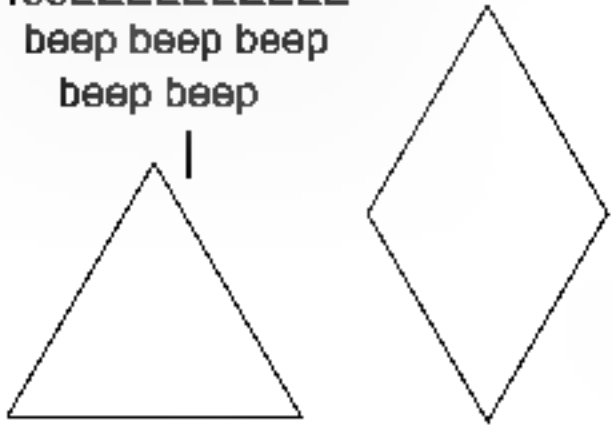
That was the least yes I've heard in a long time

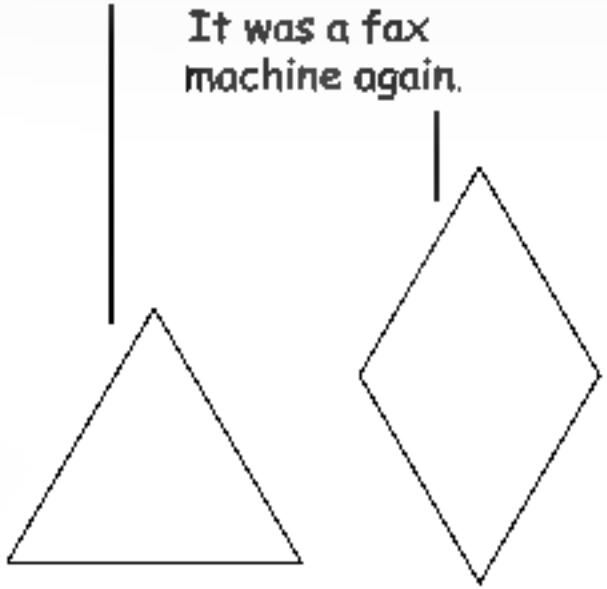




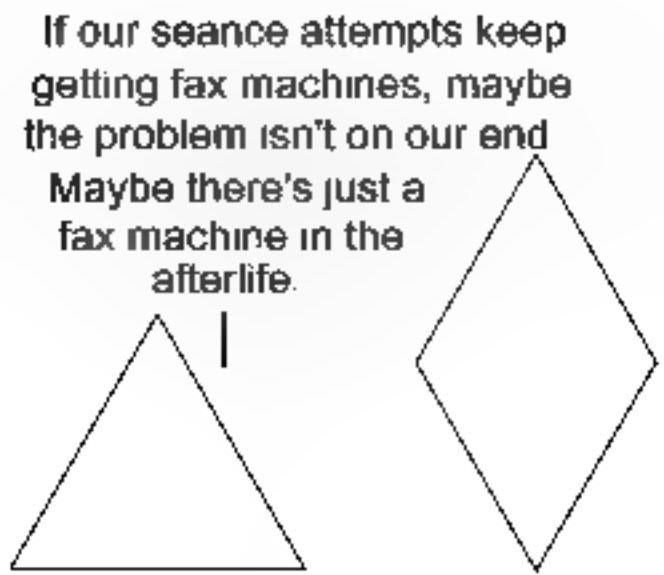
Triangle and Robert

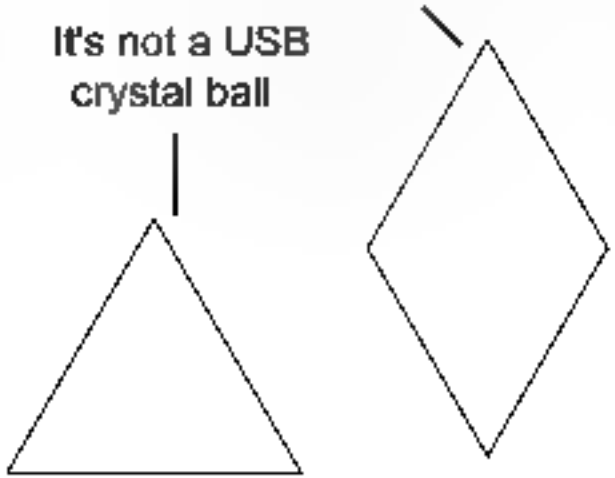


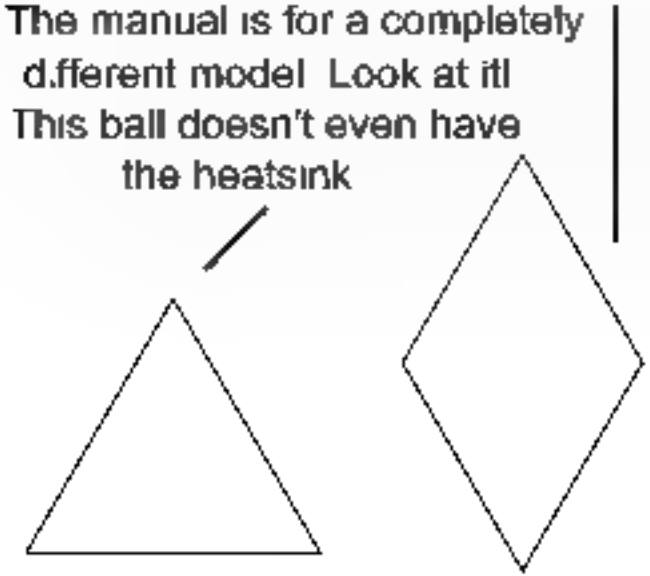




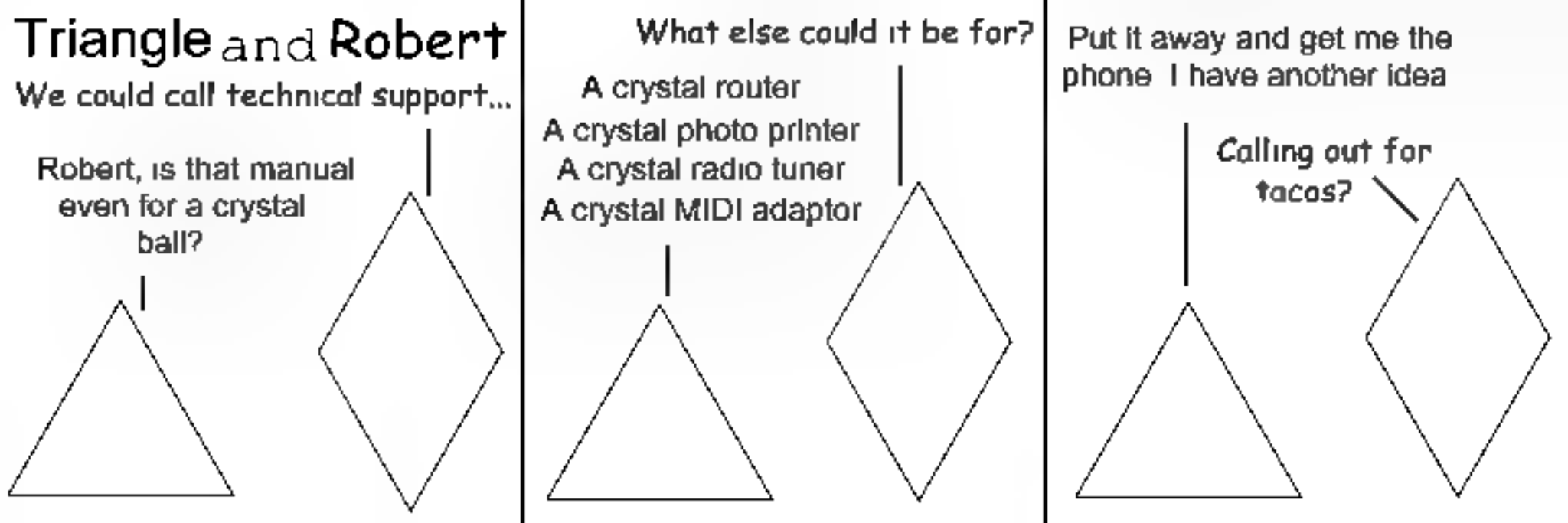
Triangle and Robert





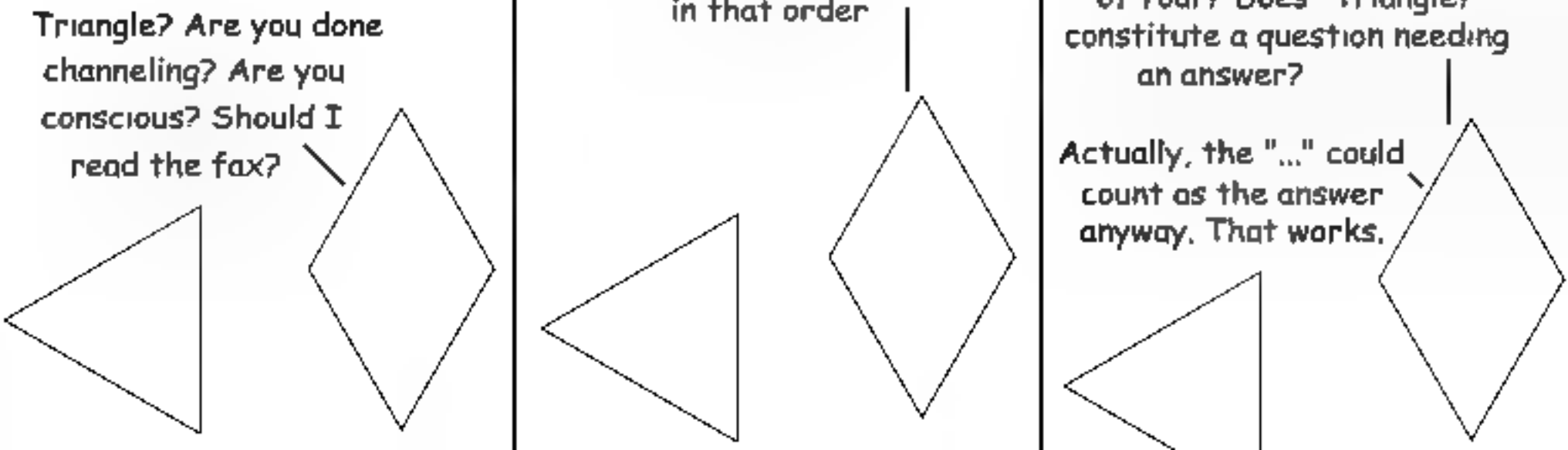


Triangle and Robert



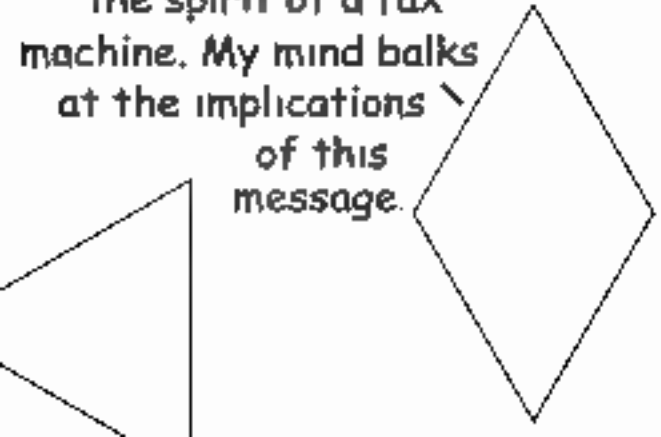
Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

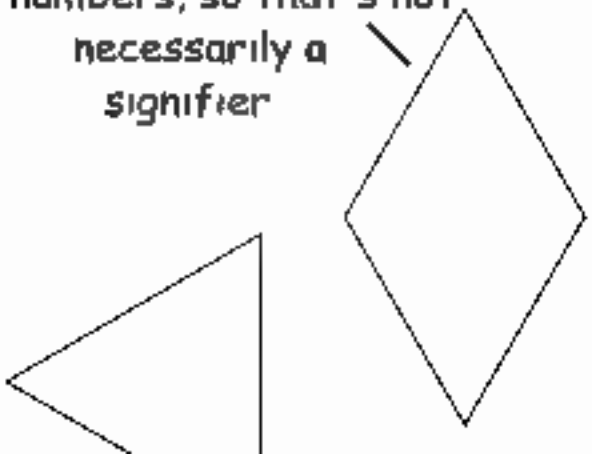


Triangle and Robert

The fax is a picture of Mr. Disease's spirit trying to work the spirit of a fax machine. My mind balks at the implications of this message.

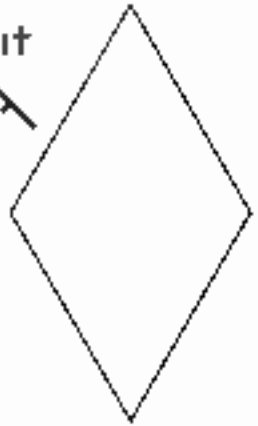


My mind also balks at the little blue crystals in cat litter and the countability of the rational numbers, so that's not necessarily a signifier

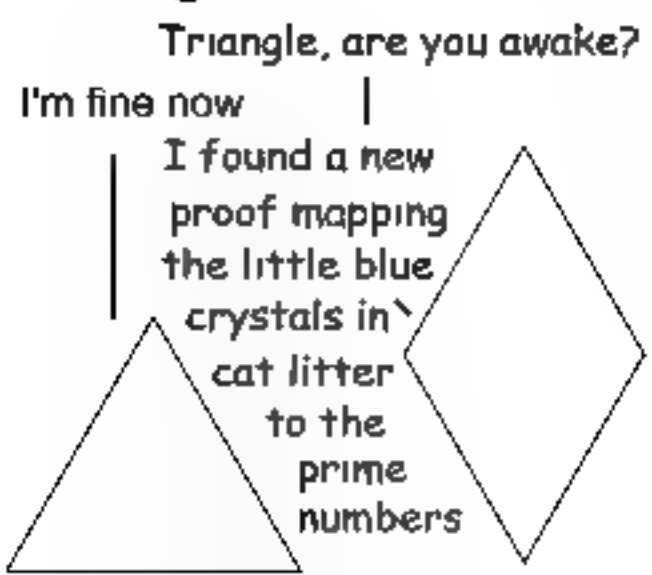


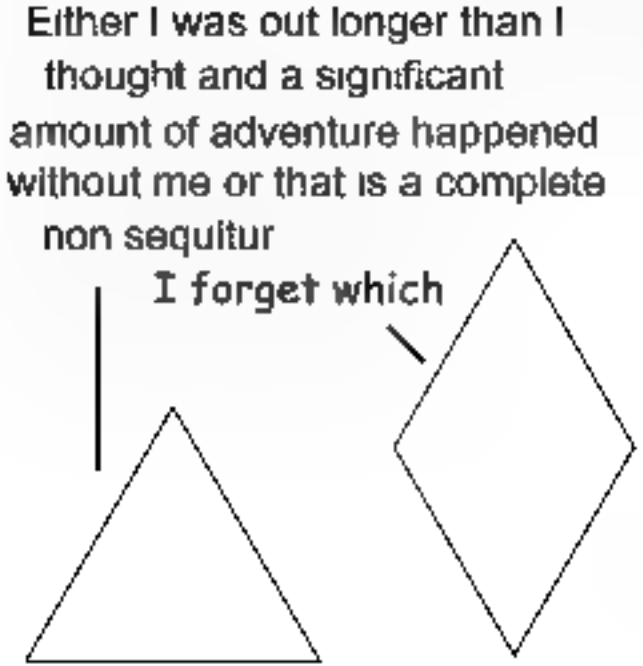
Yes, I know there's a simple mapping to the integers. Intellectually, I accept they're countably infinite. I just don't *feel* it

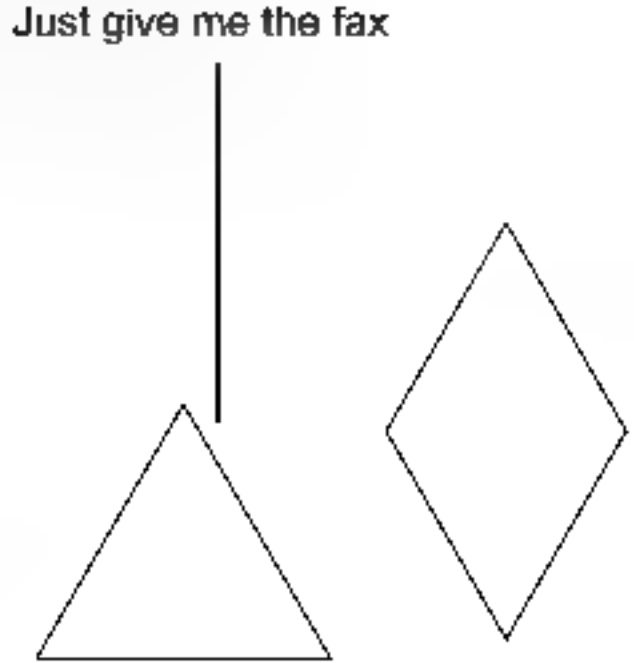
Yay, I sidetracked myself!



Triangle and Robert

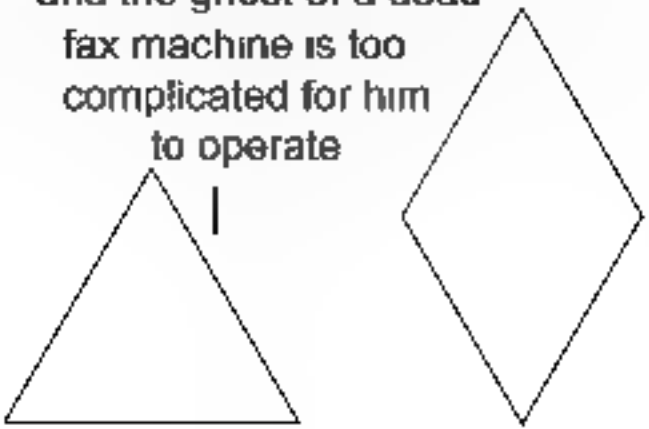






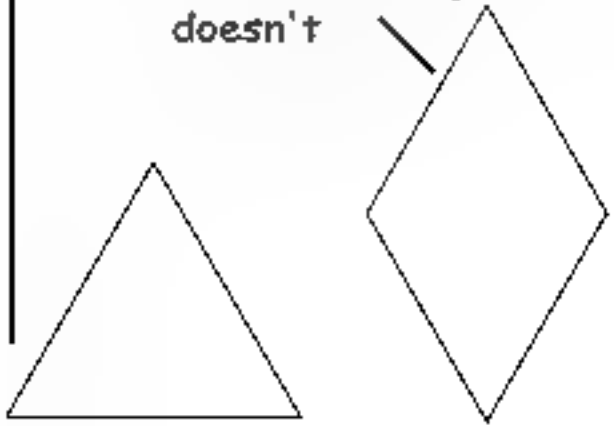
Triangle and Robert

He's dead, he's trying to reach us, he doesn't have a voice line, and the ghost of a dead fax machine is too complicated for him to operate



Does any of that make any sense?

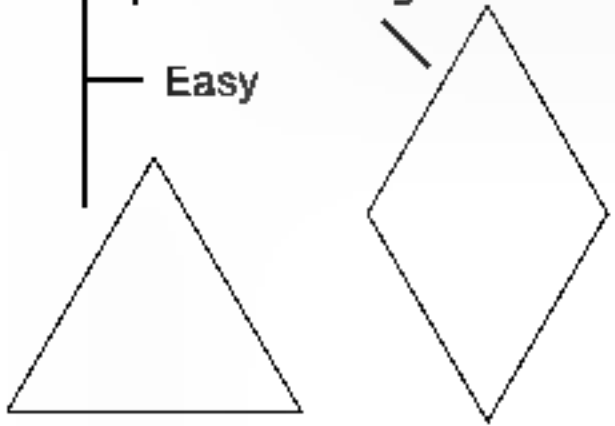
That would ultimately depend on what you mean by sense. But. . no, it basically doesn't



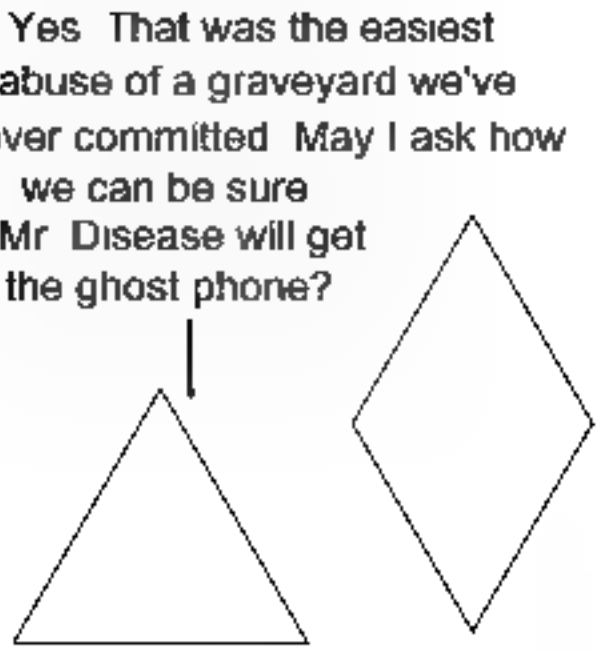
That makes it your job to solve

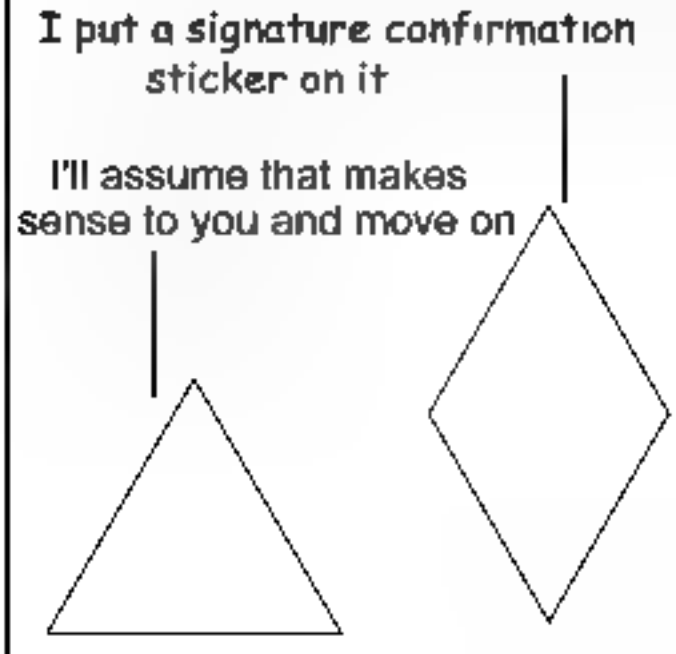
We need an unconsecrated burial ground and a cell phone with big buttons.

Easy

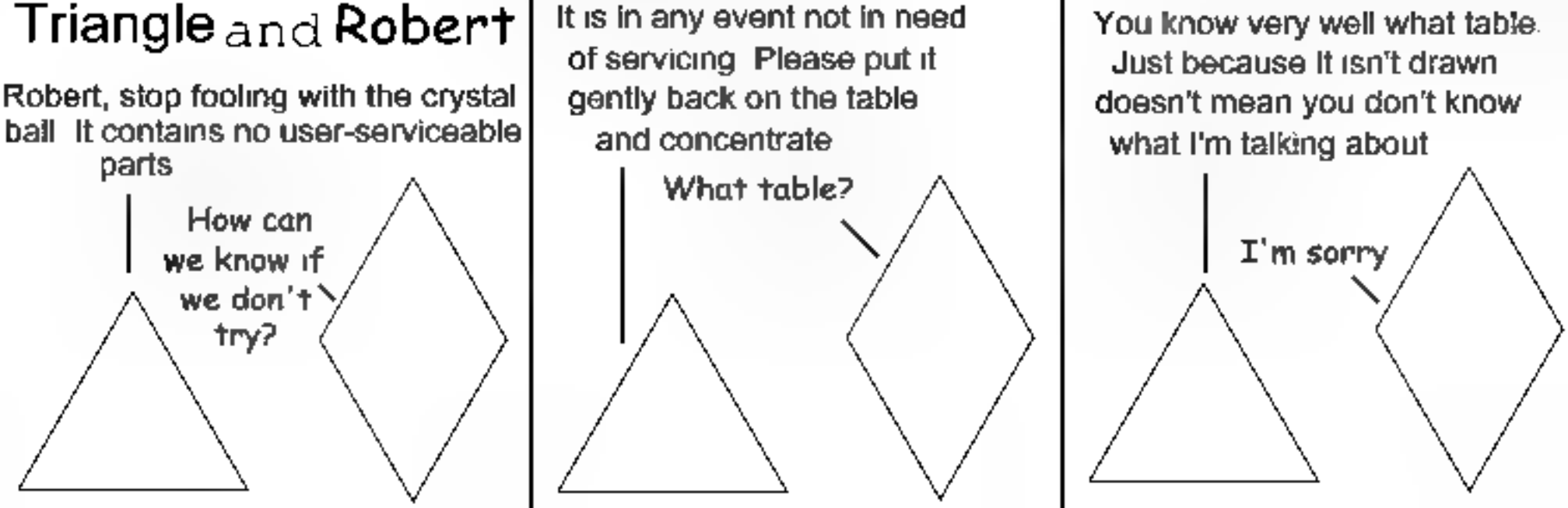


Triangle and Robert

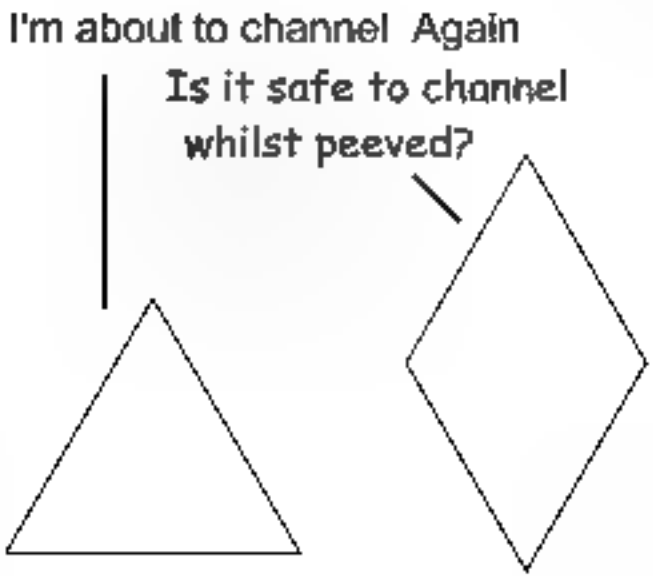


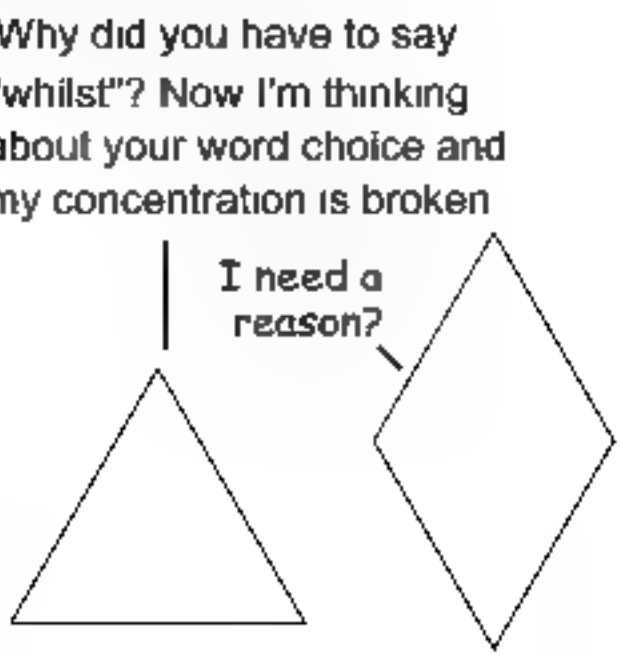


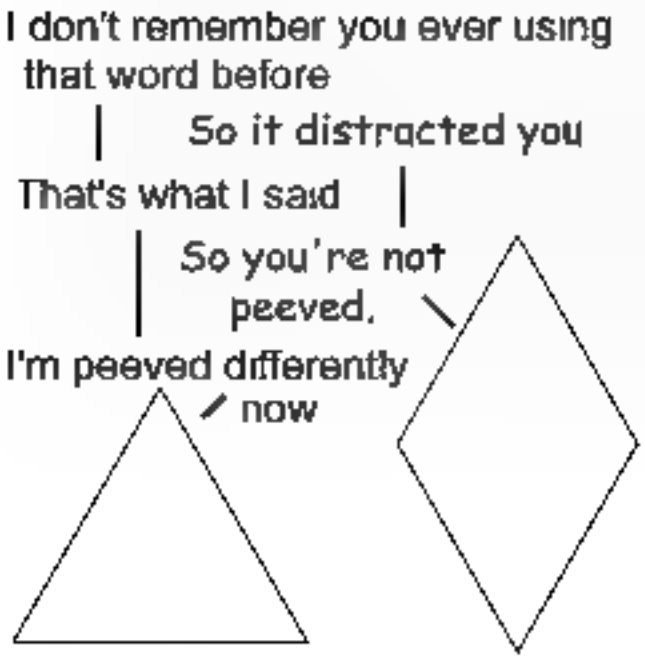
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







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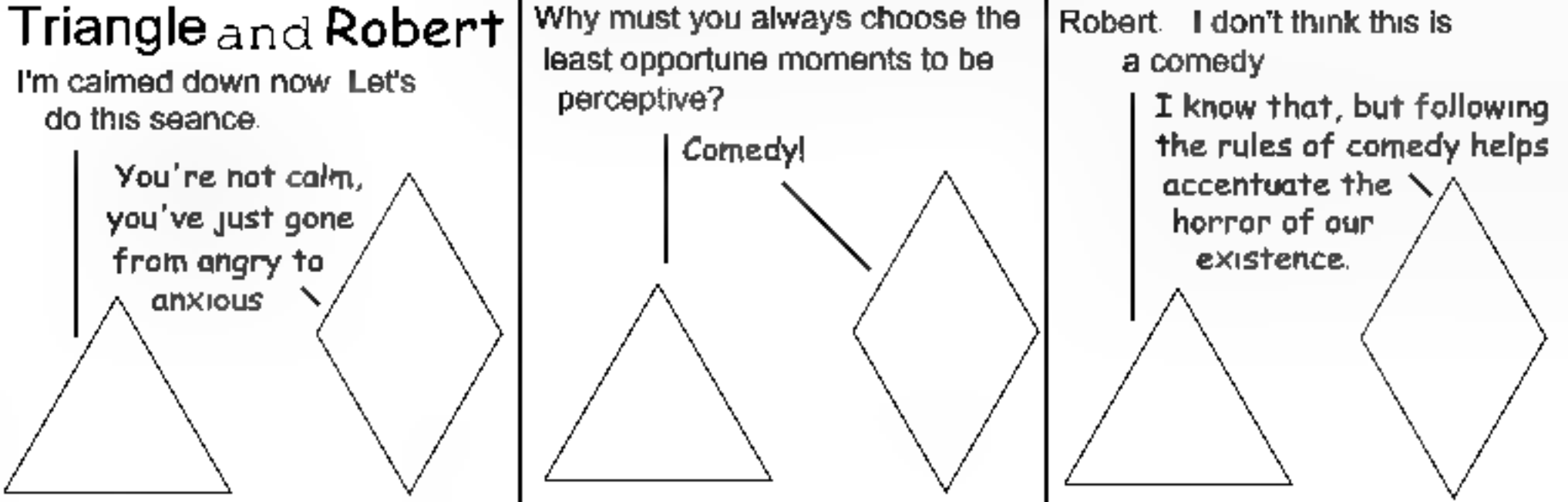

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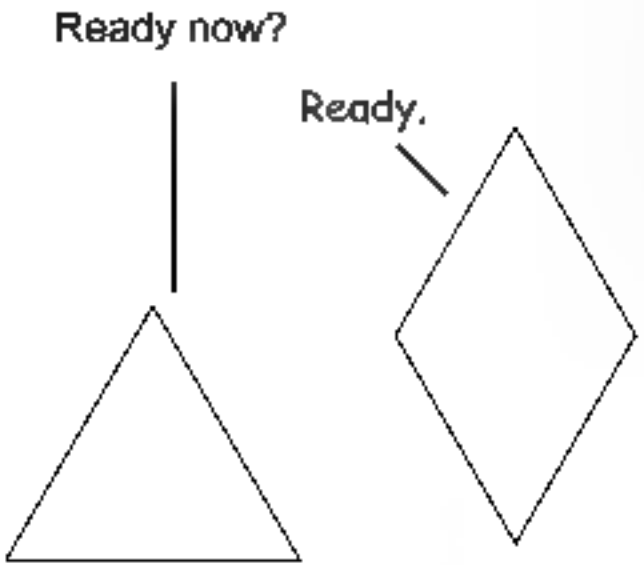
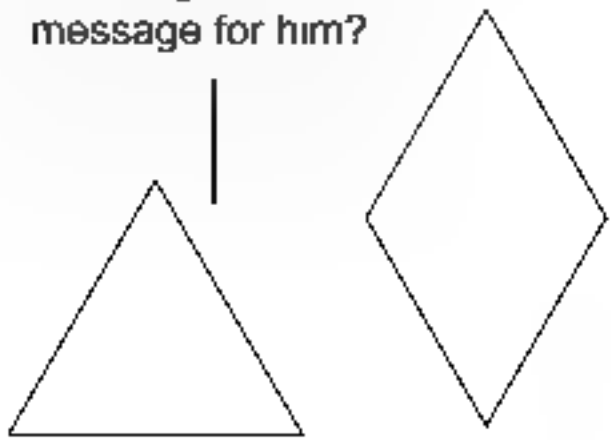
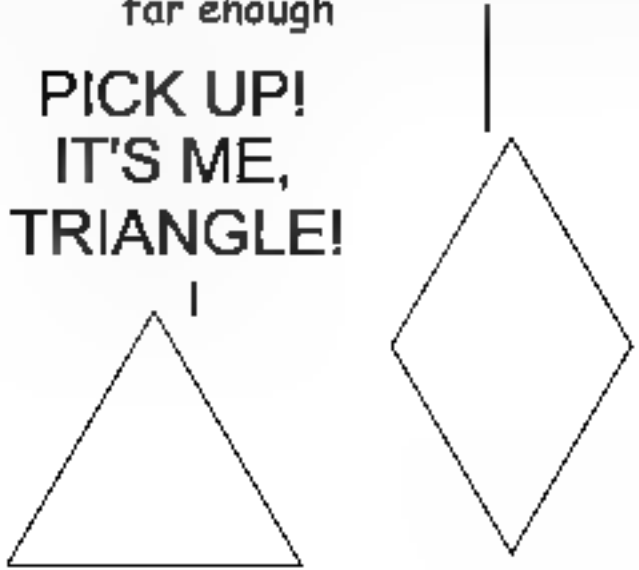




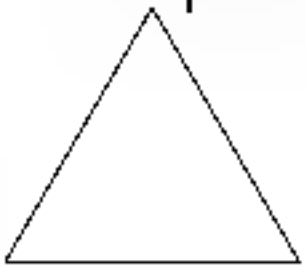


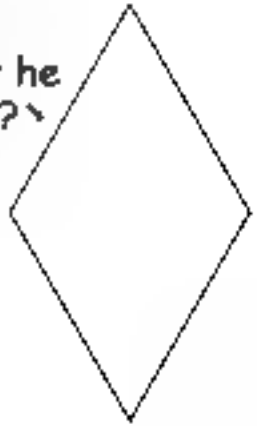
Triangle and Robert

Triangle... can you hear me...

Yes. We can hear you, Mr Disease

What's he saying?

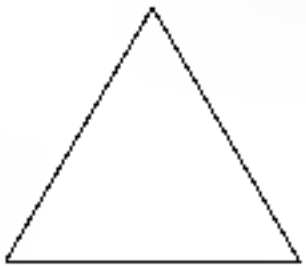


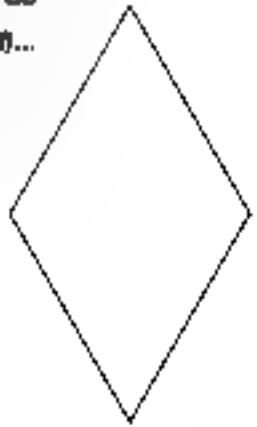


My restaurant... is it still standing...

The Locust Garden continues to do business

Then it was not in vain...

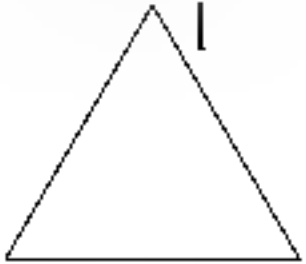


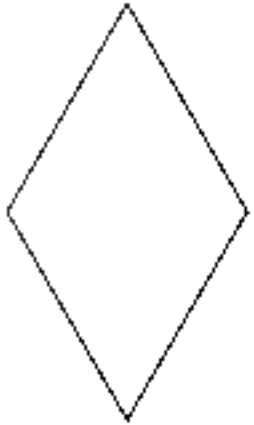


Mr Disease, we're going to try to resurrect you Can you tell us where your body is, and do you have any suggestions for a method?

click

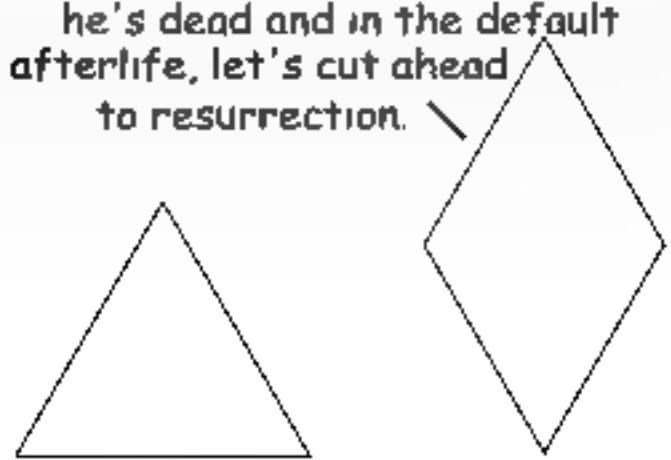
What? Hello?

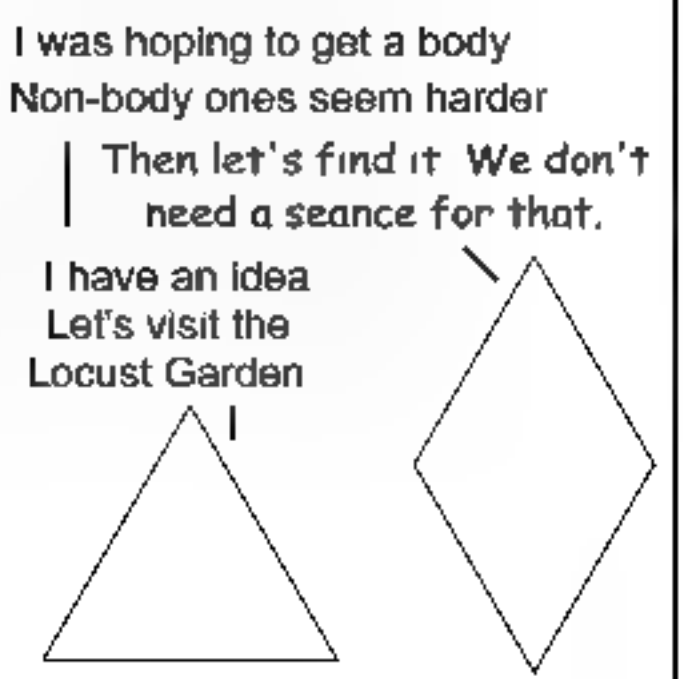


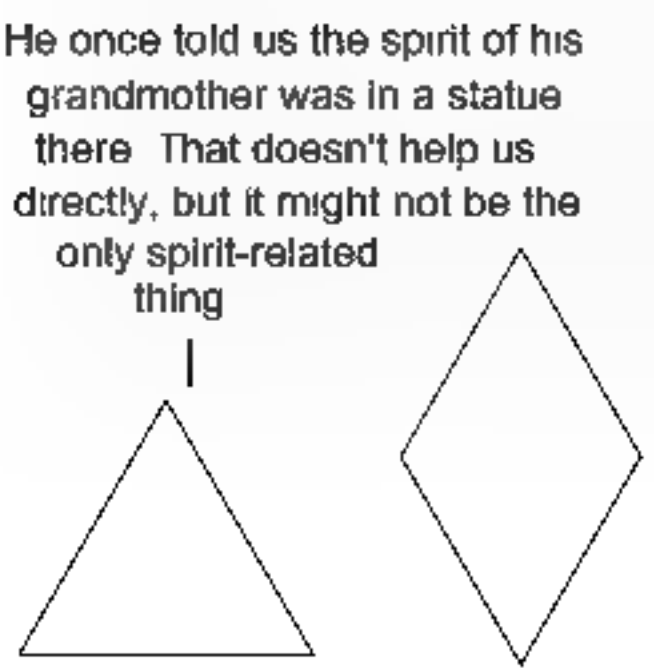


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert







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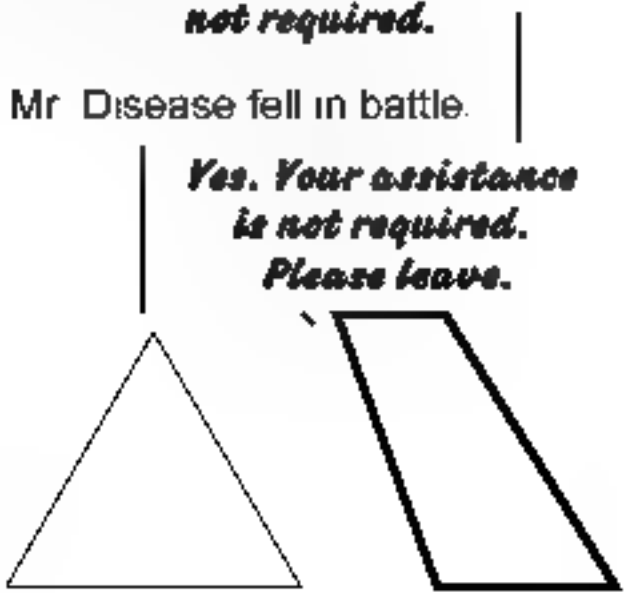

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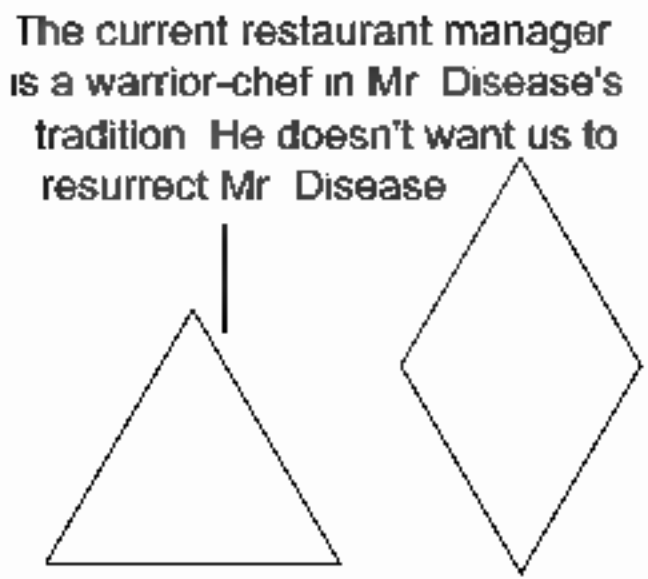

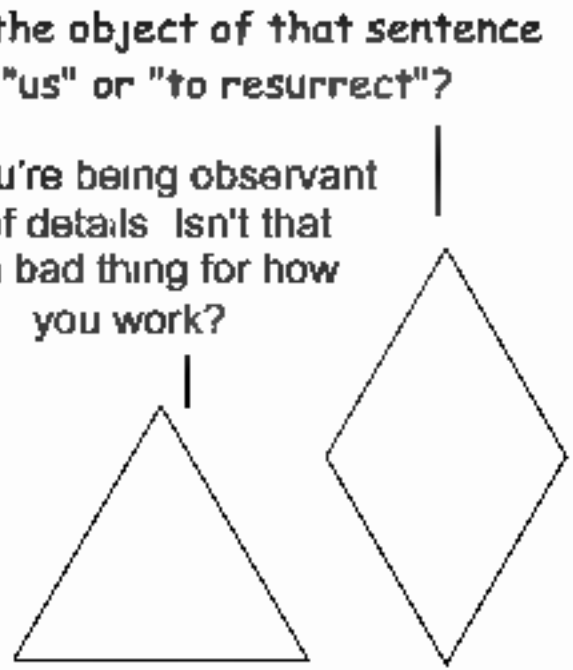

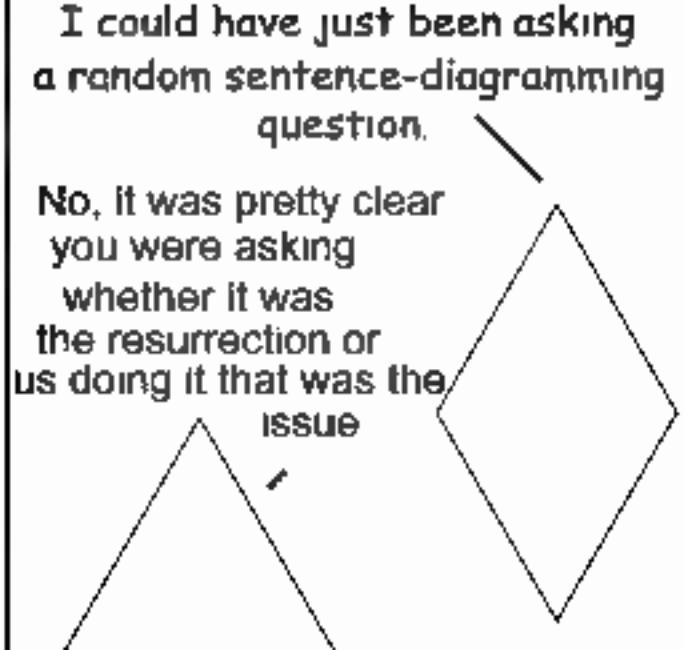

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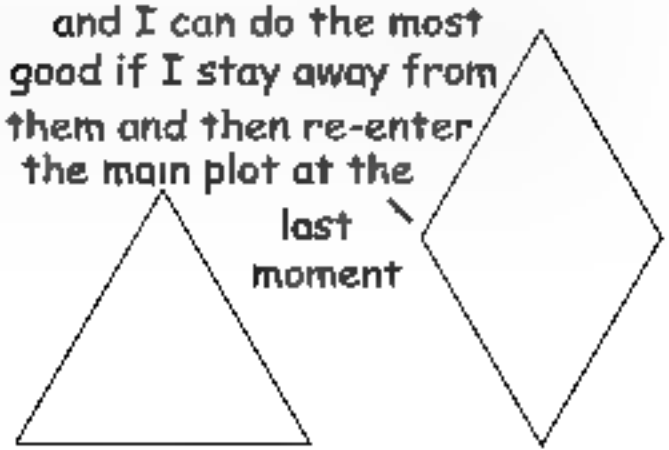

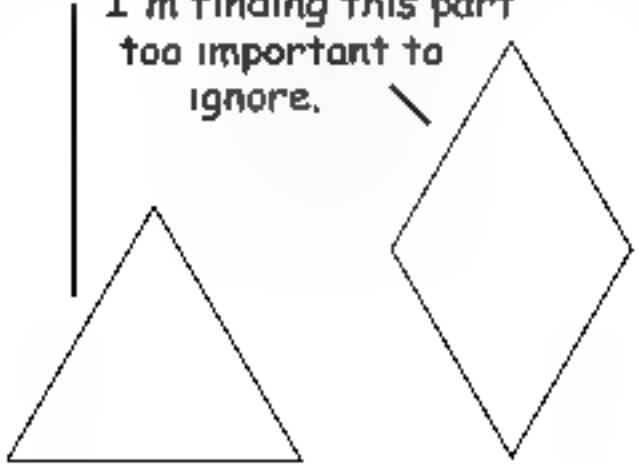

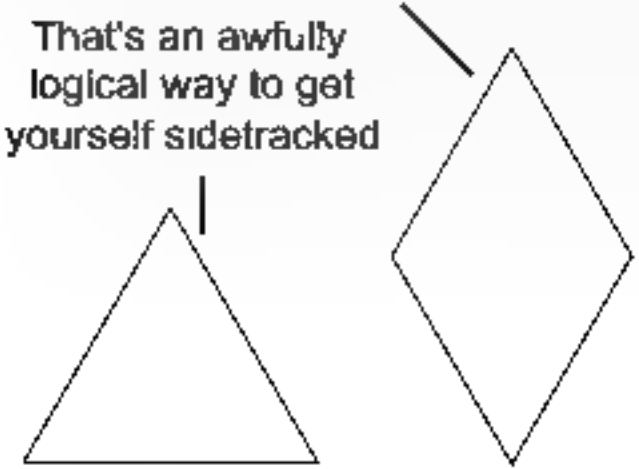

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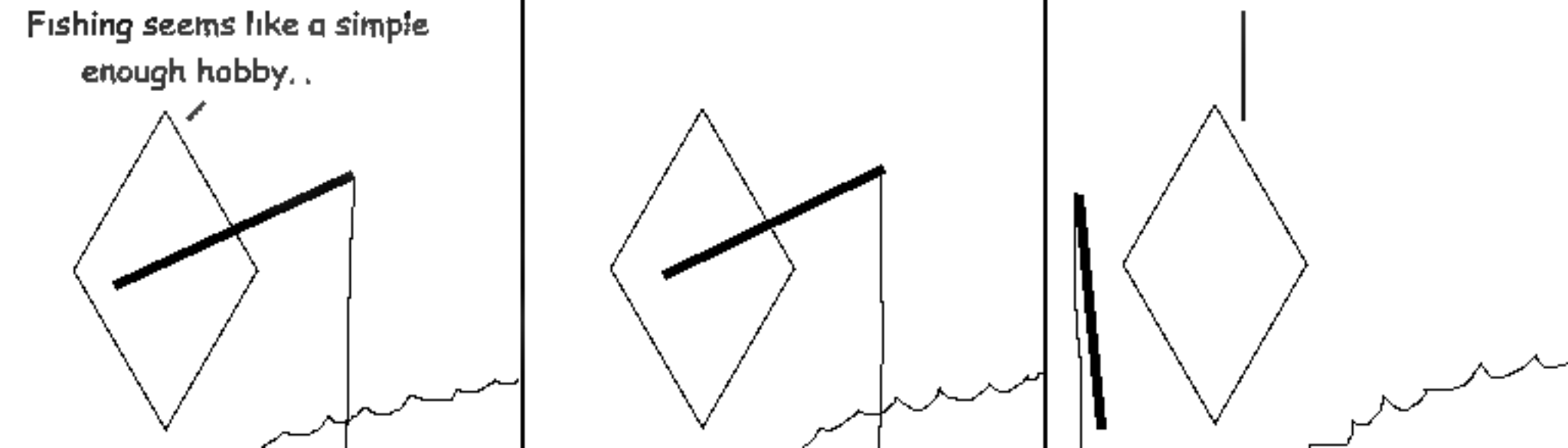

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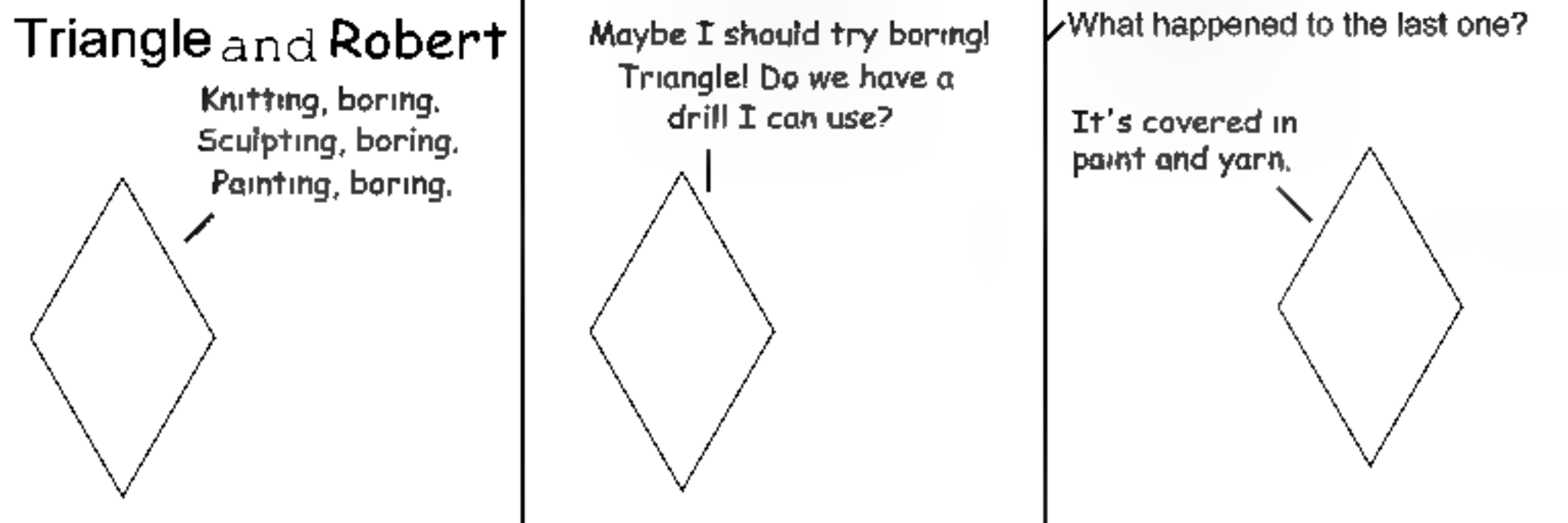
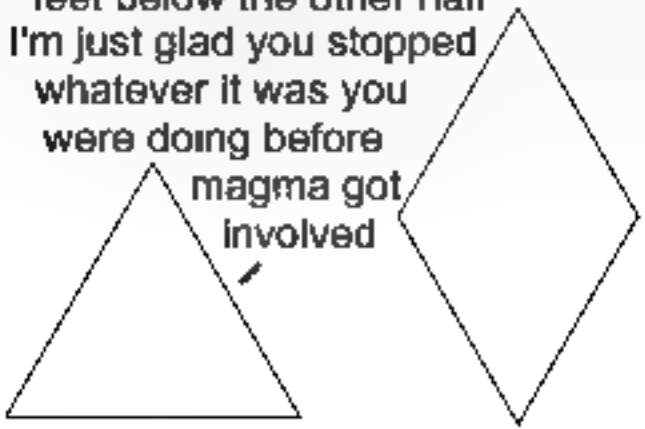
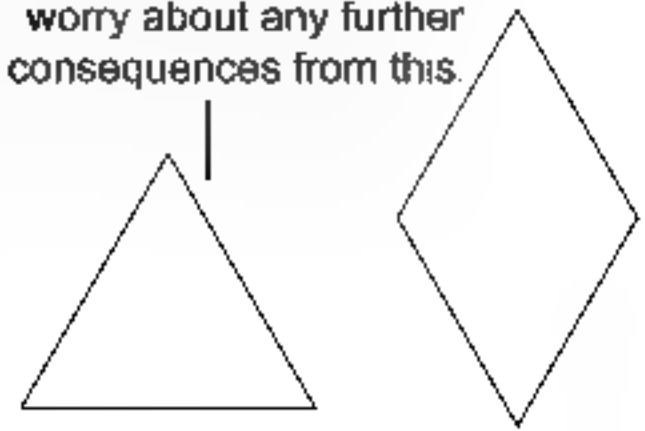
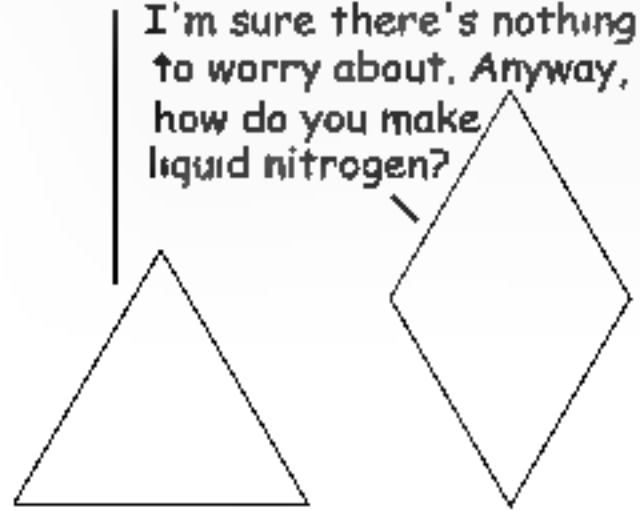


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert







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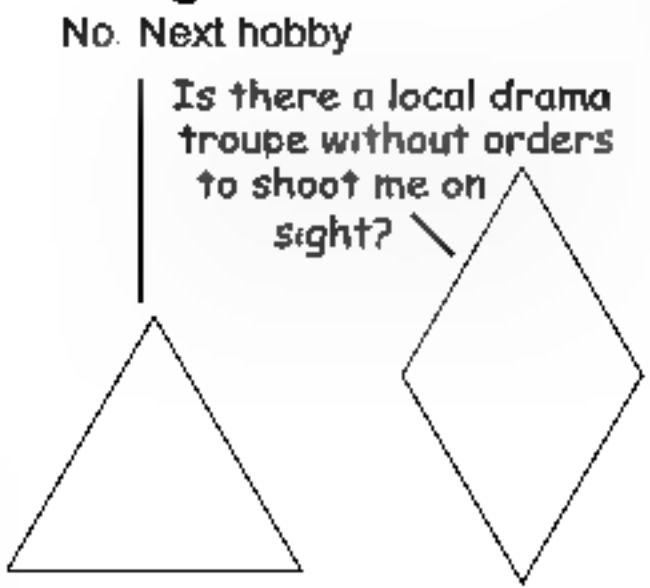

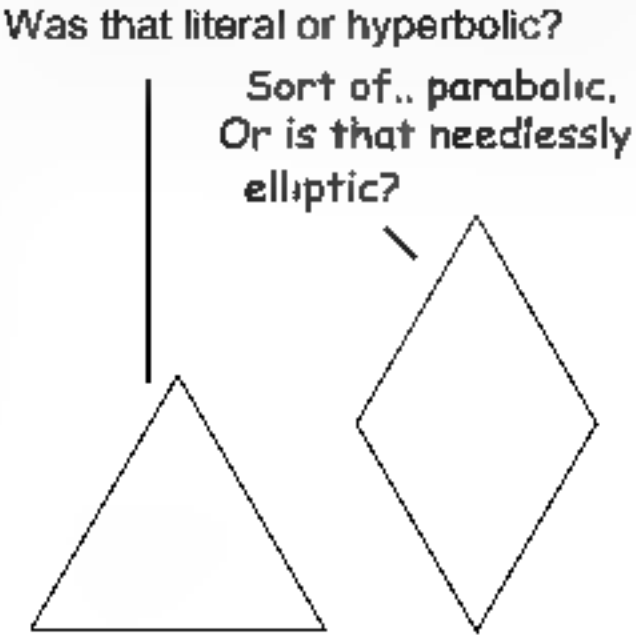

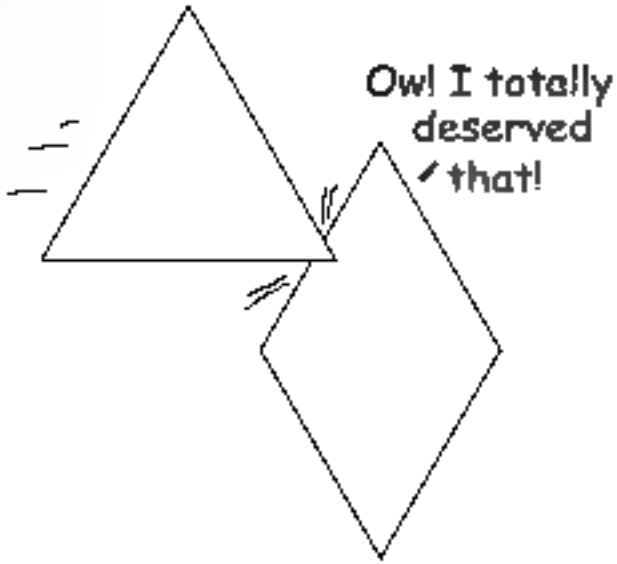

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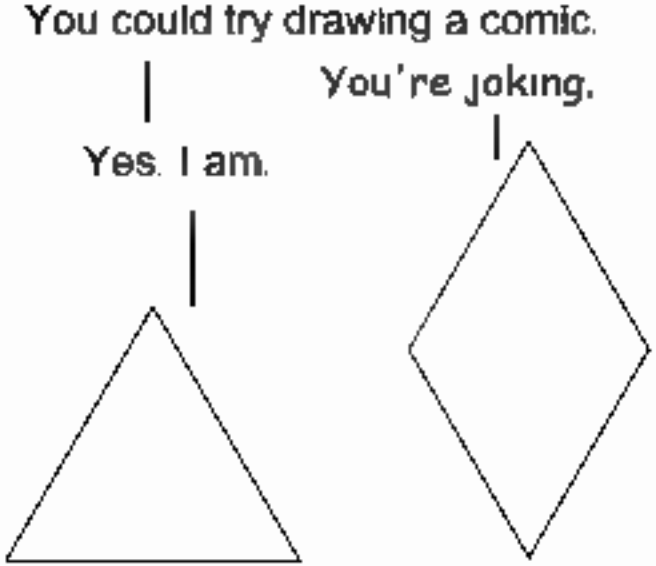

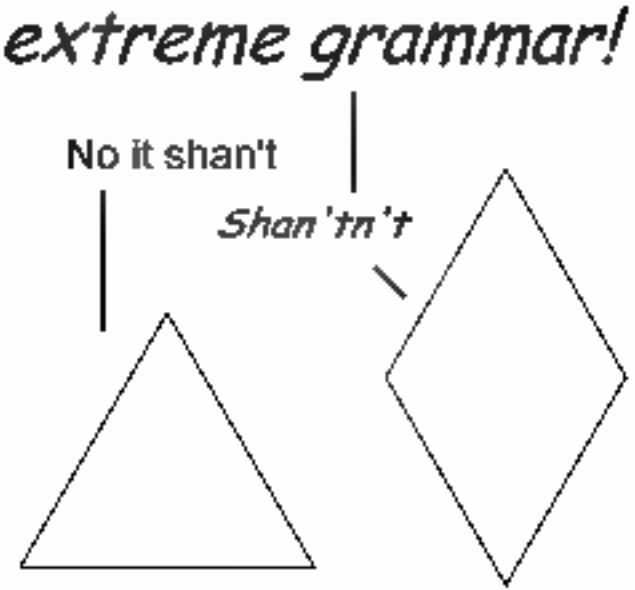

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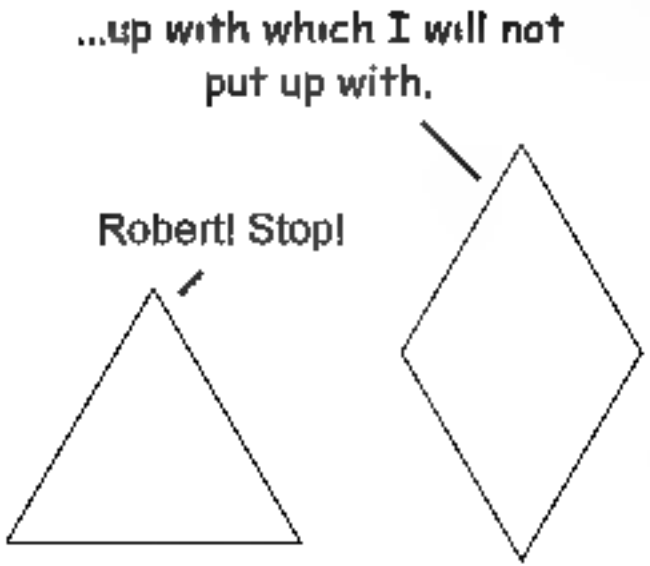

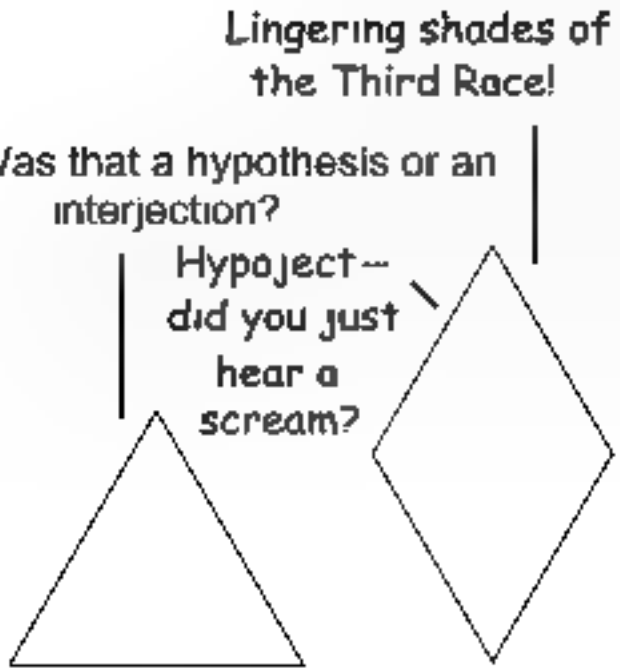

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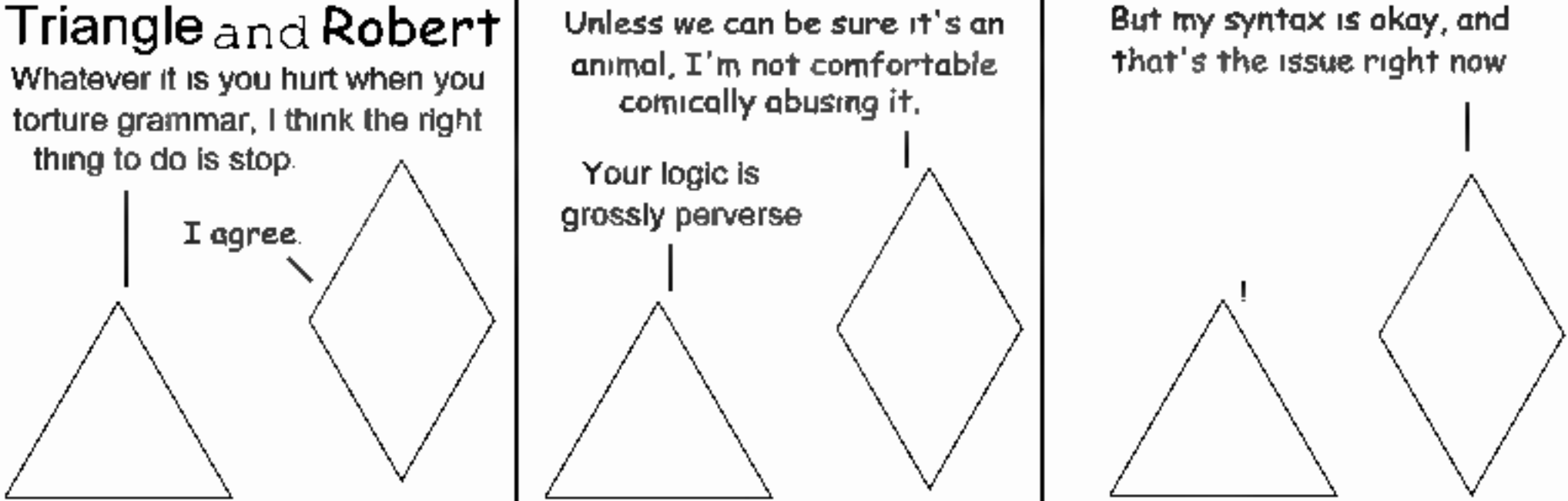

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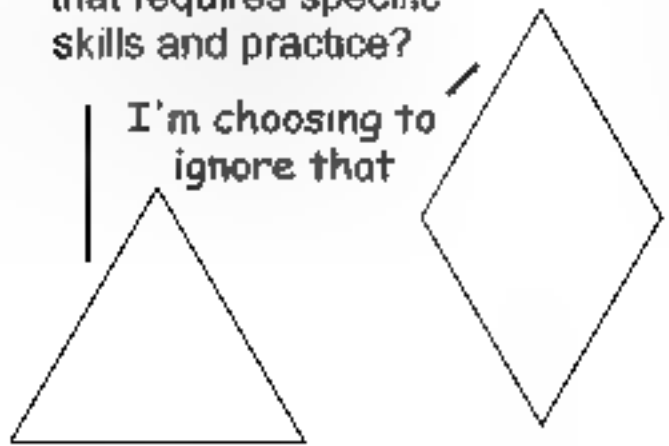
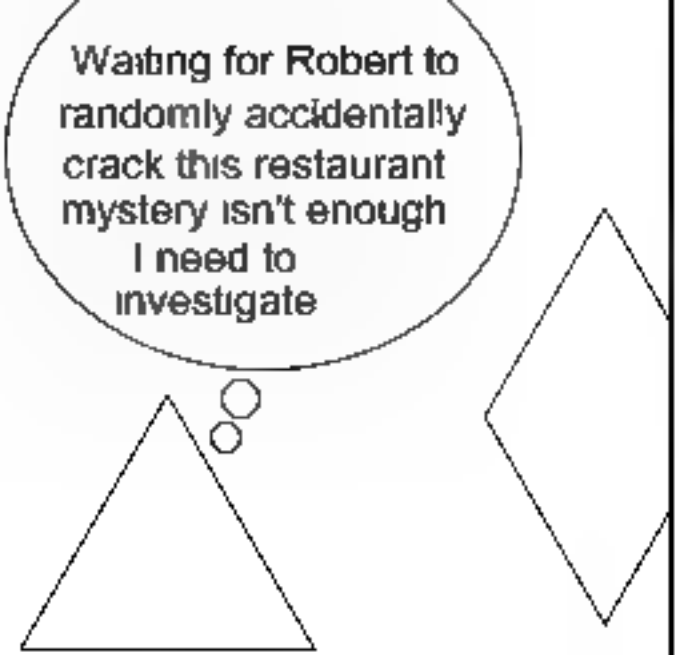
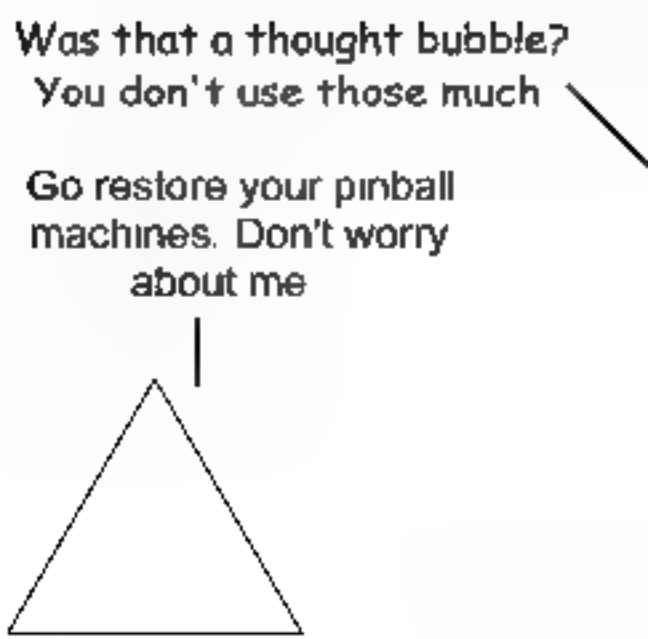
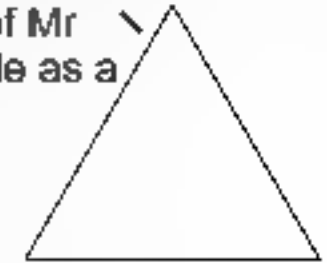




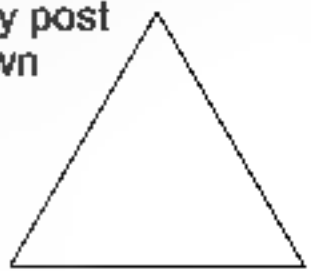


Triangle and Robert

I am honor-bound not to interfere with the Locust Garden itself, but I need to know what that new manager is up to He's not just a random chef, he clearly trained with Mr Disease and is aware of Mr Disease's role as a Sentry



Trained with a Sentry wanting control over when and if that Sentry comes back from the dead It could be a succession thing! If he wants to be the new Metamorphic Sentry, and thinks he's next in line but each Sentry post is passed down differently



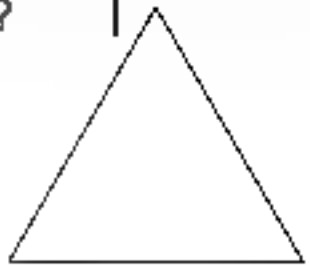
Mr Disease was the first Metamorphic Sentry, so what determines who's next? Perhaps he has to CHOOSE a successor from beyond the grave, and his spirit is being held captive until he does! I might be jumping to conclusions, but this seems far too plausible

Triangle and Robert

THRILL as Triangle CONTINUES TO DEDUCE!

Mr Disease didn't sound desperate to be resurrected during the seance Maybe he has something to accomplish in the vague comedy afterlife

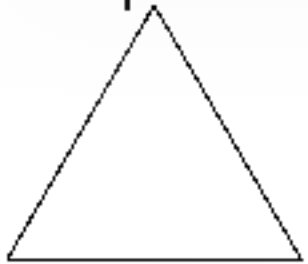
Then again, maybe he's being duped or maybe we were being duped! What if that seance was intercepted, and instead of the afterlife we just contacted some abandoned warehouse or something?
Is that possible?



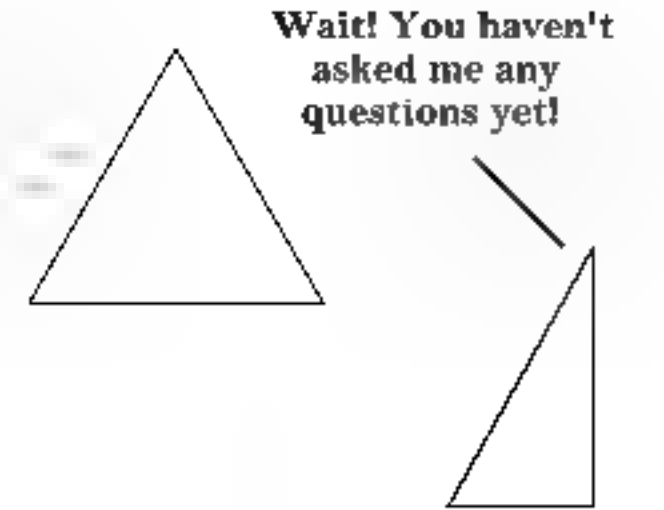
Ergo, I must beat up phone company personnel

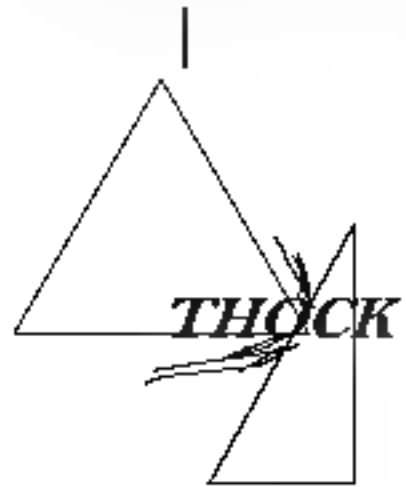
What?

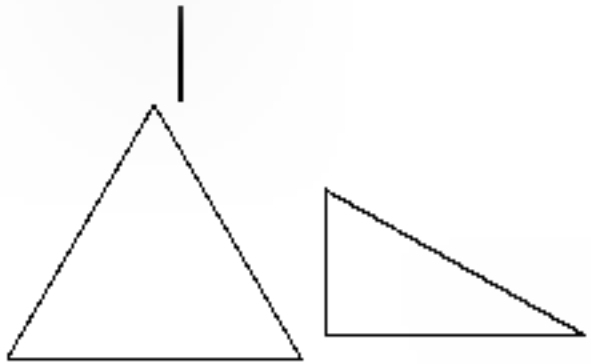
I don't have to do ALL my reasoning out loud

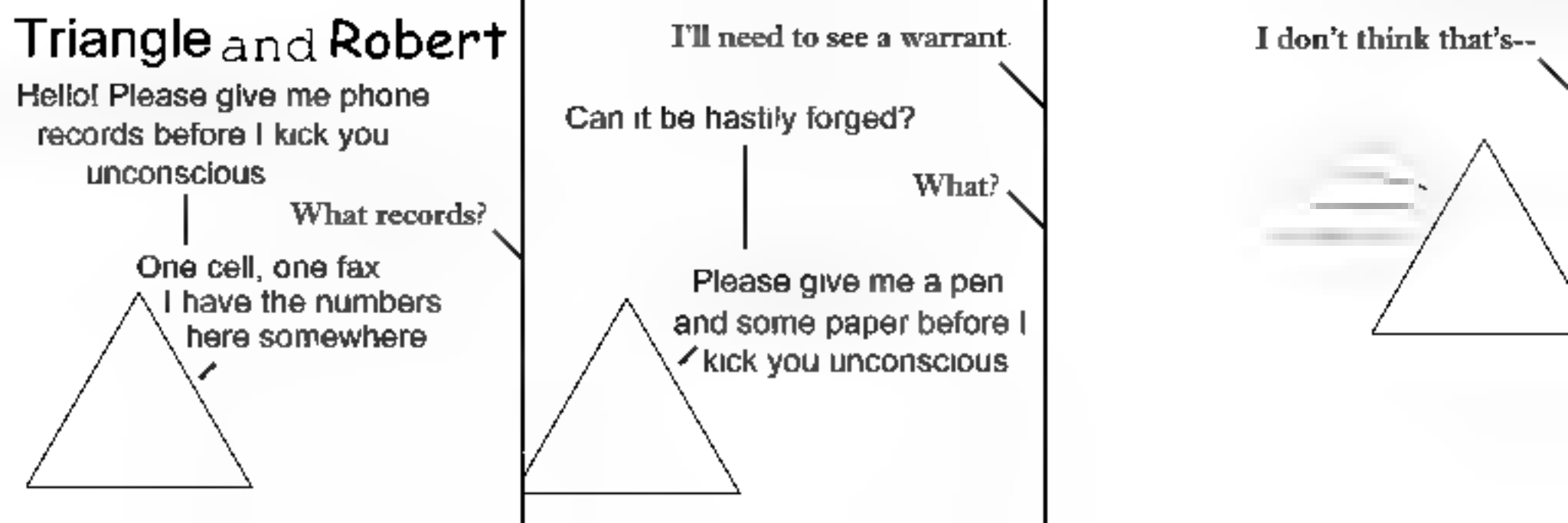


Triangle and Robert



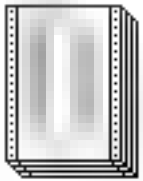


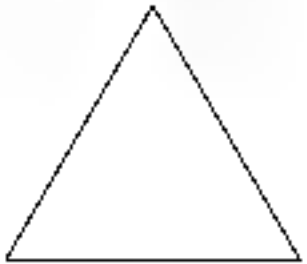



Triangle and Robert
Hello! Please give me phone records before I kick you unconscious
What records?
One cell, one fax I have the numbers here somewhere
I'll need to see a warrant.
Can it be hastily forged?
What?
Please give me a pen and some paper before I kick you unconscious
I don't think that's--

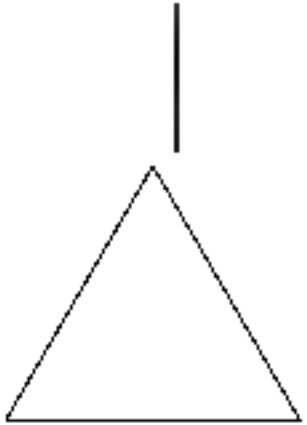
Triangle and Robert

You got PHONE COMPANY RECORDS x 1 and 500 GP!



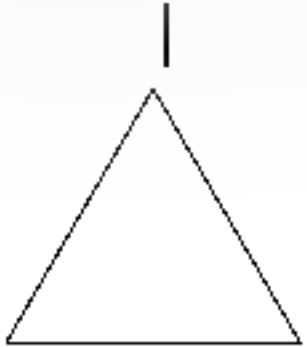


Why would phone company clerks be carrying so many gold coins?



Is that the thing that makes the least sense?

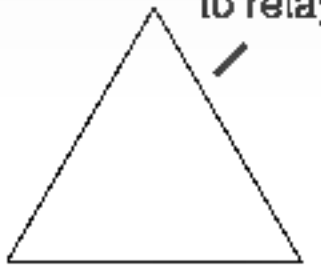
No, but it is something new the validity of which to question



Triangle and Robert

According to this, the fax was coming from INSIDE THE HOUSE!

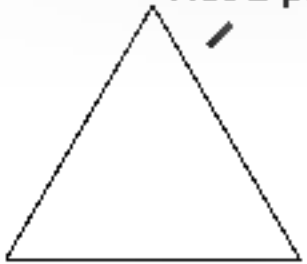
Which is perfectly logical, since we called our own fax machine to relay the signal



The ghostly cell phone do the records list

Yes. This is interesting The seance call is listed here, but I don't recognize the number for my end of it I wonder what that number goes to, exactly

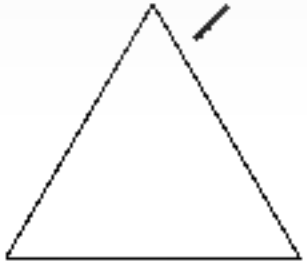
Not a phone, surely?



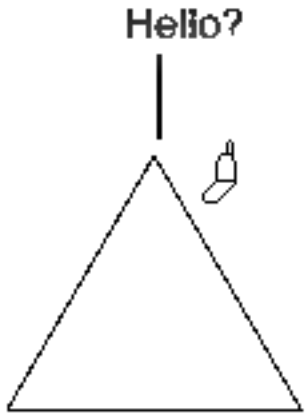
I said, "Not a phone, surely?"

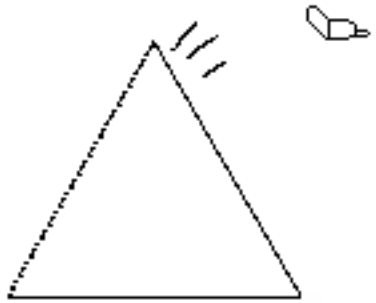
Yes, I heard you.

Okay If there was a needless stock punchline coming I wanted to be ready for it.



Triangle and Robert





Triangle and Robert

Triangle!

Triangle

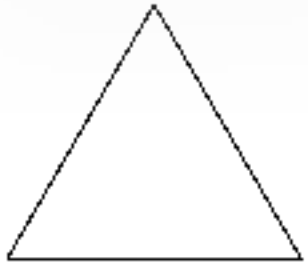
Triangle?

Triangle!

Triangle!

Malkovi

Triangle!



Triangle triangle!

Triangle smurf triangle!

Dial a phone number that connects to my own mind, this is what I get.

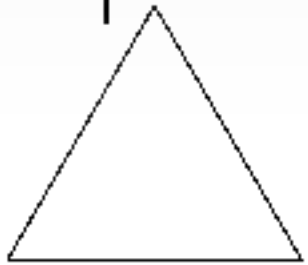
I should have foreseen it

Pika pikachu!

Malkovich!

Smurfing smurf?

That's not right. There shouldn't be external references in here



Triangle

Triangle!

Obviously, I haven't fallen into my own mind I've fallen into a stupid parody

Again

Triangle!

Cartoonist! What's the exit rule for this one?

Cartoonist! Cartoonist!

Triangle!

Triangle!

Constant repetition of one's own uh-oh I was hoping for horrible things not to happen more

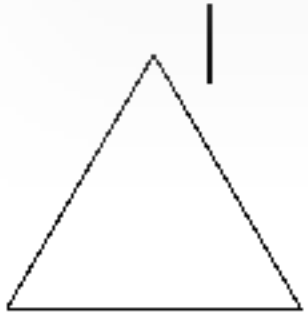
Why do I hope?

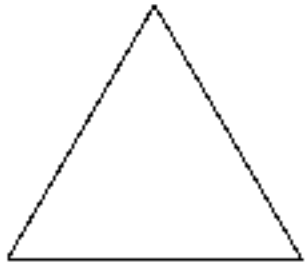
Buttafuoco!

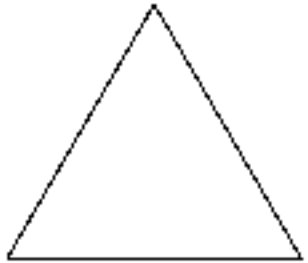
Triangle!

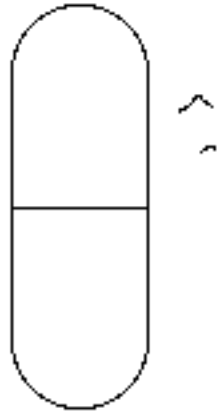
Triangle and Robert

It's quiet now Maybe if I don't say, do, or think anything it will stay quiet.

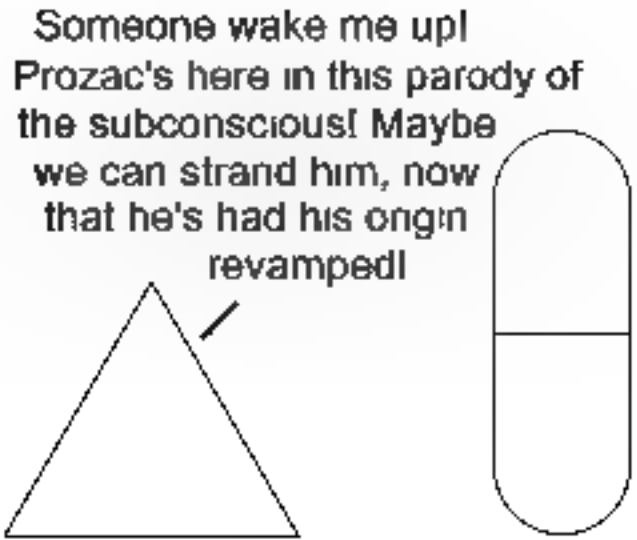


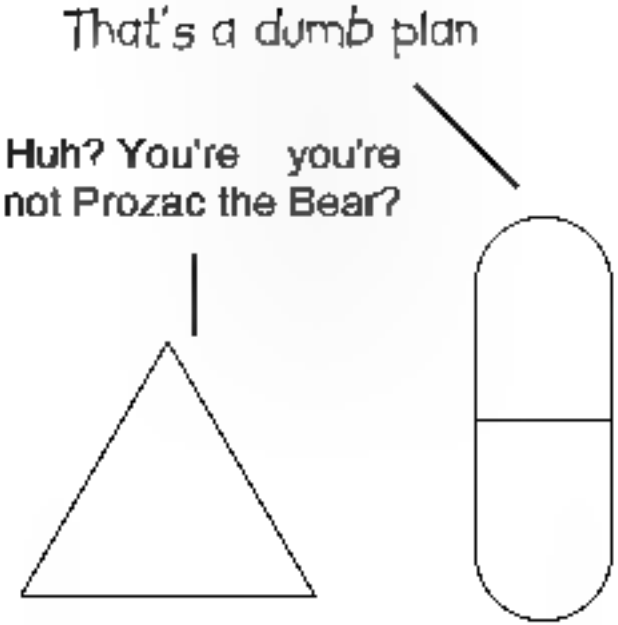


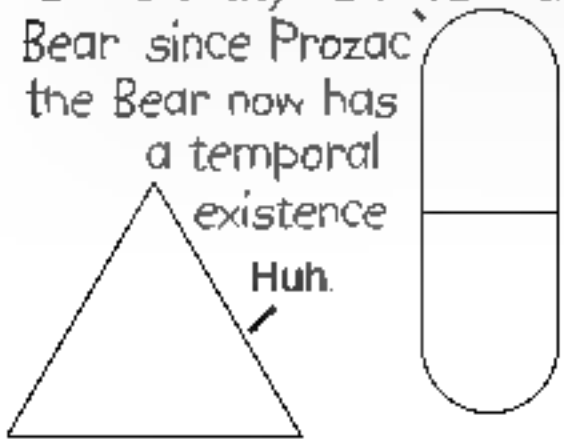




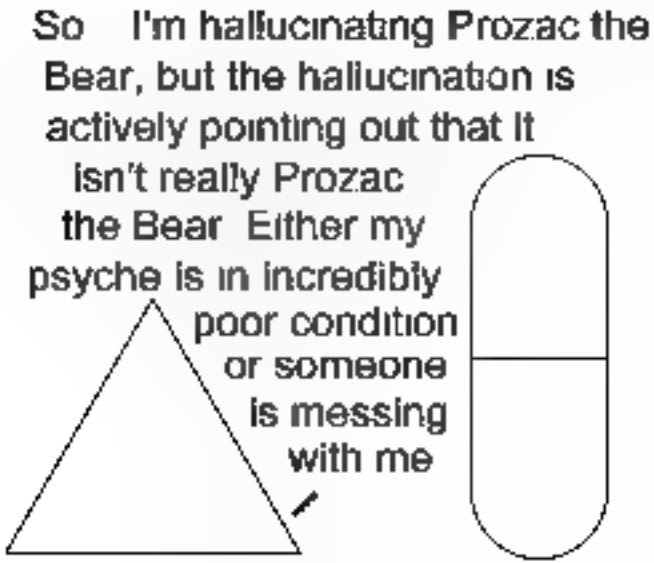
Triangle and Robert

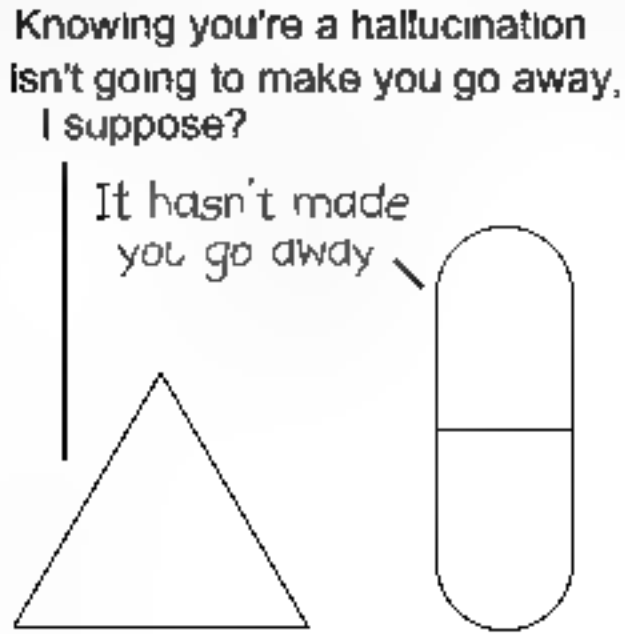


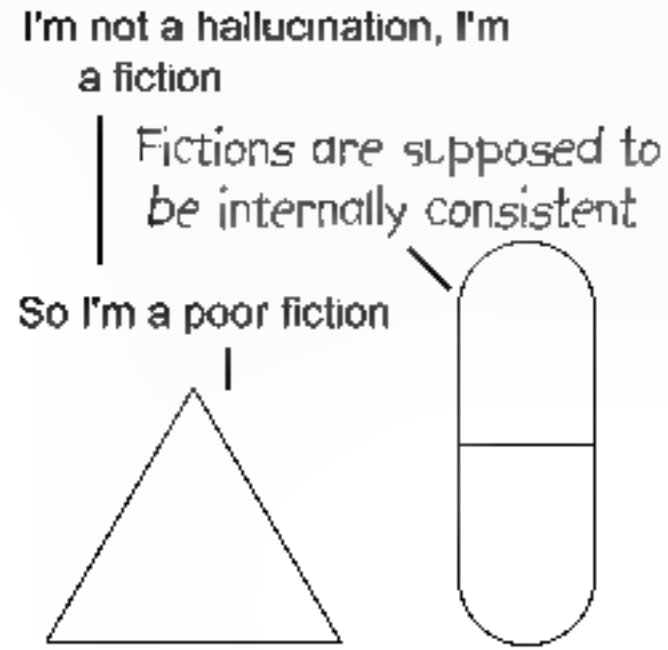




Triangle and Robert



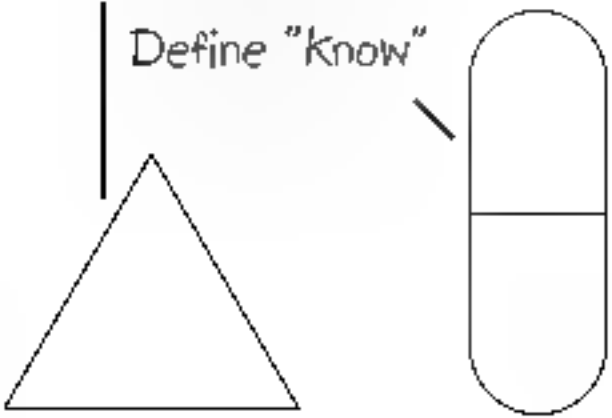




Triangle and Robert

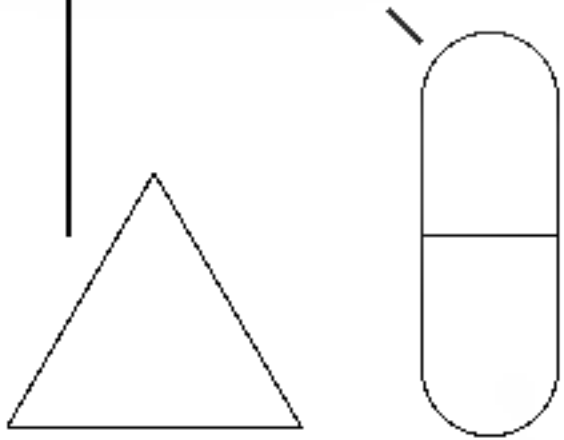
So if you're just a hallucination, you can't tell me anything I don't already know

Define "Know"

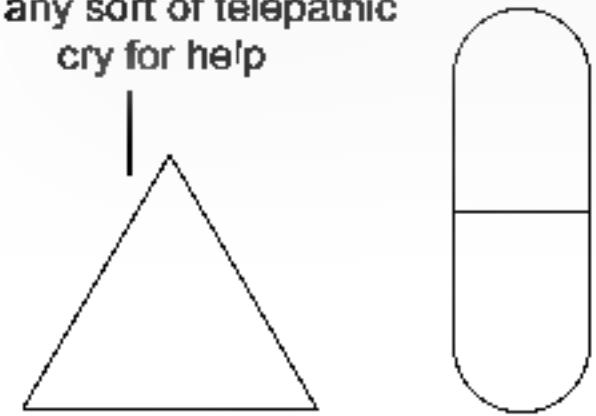


So where am I?

Probably passed out in your living room.



And if I'm talking to a strangely rational alternative to Prozac the Bear, I clearly don't have the mental clarity it'd take to send any sort of telepathic cry for help



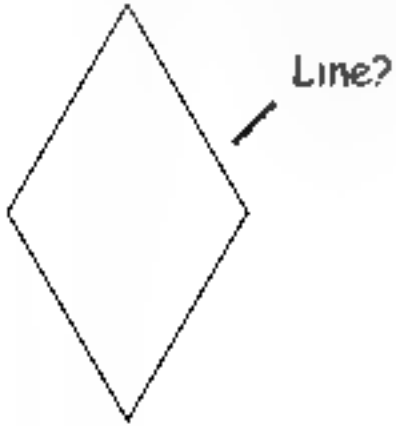
Triangle and Robert

Hallucinations are usually more exciting and varied than this, aren't they?

Don't ask me, this is my first time being hallucinated

Oh good. Unconsciousness.

Meanwhile, in a location I haven't yet decided on:



Triangle and Robert

That's not my...

That s not my squirrel, Susan! That's your squirrel, and Tom's squirrel, and your childrens' squirrel! So don't point that squirrel at me, Susan. Not at me.

Cut!

Not enough emotion?

The line is not "squirrel".

Really? I thought I nailed it

Look at the prop. Does it LOOK like a squirrel?

no?

It is a dormouse, you prima donna HACK.

Triangle and Robert

Of course not, Tom.
If you want to throw oranges, throw oranges The world won't stop spinning if you take some time.

for..

your..

Tom. Tom!

We forgot the PEEEEEEEEAAAACHEEEESSS

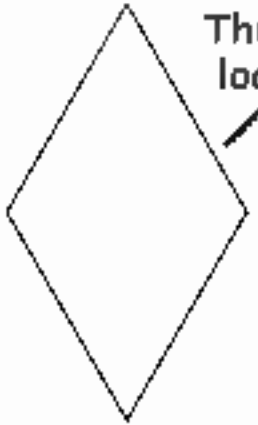
Cut! Robert...

I know. Still not enough emotion.

We'll take it again.

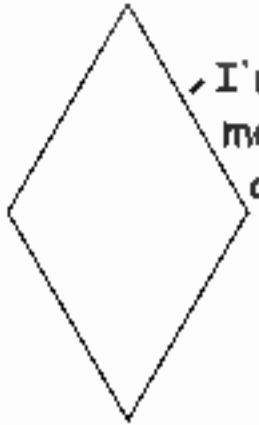
Triangle and Robert

Mind if I interject?



This isn't what it looks like! Really!

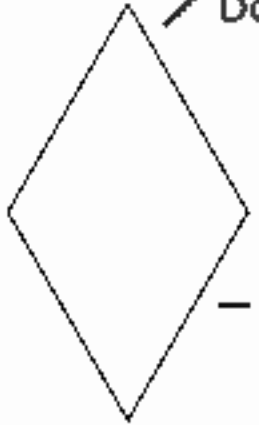
It looks like a pastiche of vaguely Tennessee Williams esque dramatic theater.



Tennewho? I'm not planning to make stage acting a thing, I'm just experimenting

Experimenting?

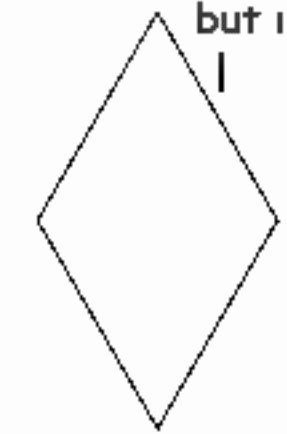
The strip takes priority. Don't worry

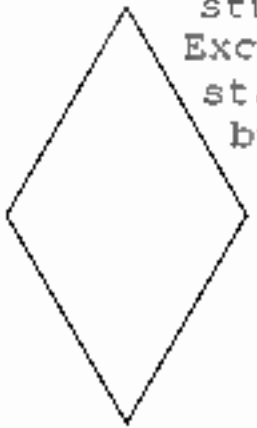


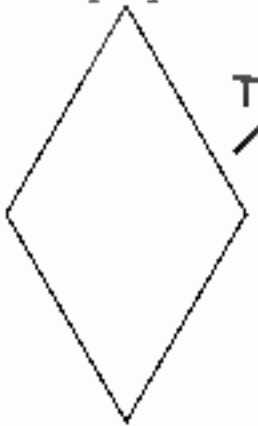
You perceive a conflict of interest?

— You don't?

Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

I'm doing boring things, yet am in the active comic. Triangle was doing potentially exciting things and is not. Therefore, you either can't write or draw what he's doing or he is incapacitated and I'm about to be dragged back into the story for the rescue.

Isn't ruling out inability to draw always wrong?

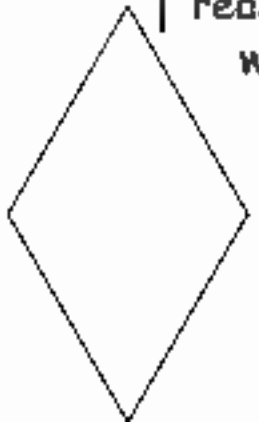
— Yes! However, any time you can't draw someone's situation, that too indicates trouble. One way or another, it's rescue time!

Would you like to wait for the actual plot event that drags you into it?

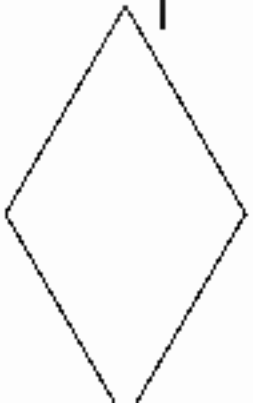
I choose that this is that event

Triangle and Robert

And the delays? There are people counting on you! Two, three... maybe as many as TEN! Every day you don't produce, they're more and more likely to forget they ever cared about what you did!



You started this job for a reason. Maybe you think that reason no longer applies, but let me ask you this. Is the job done? Do you really want to just walk away now?

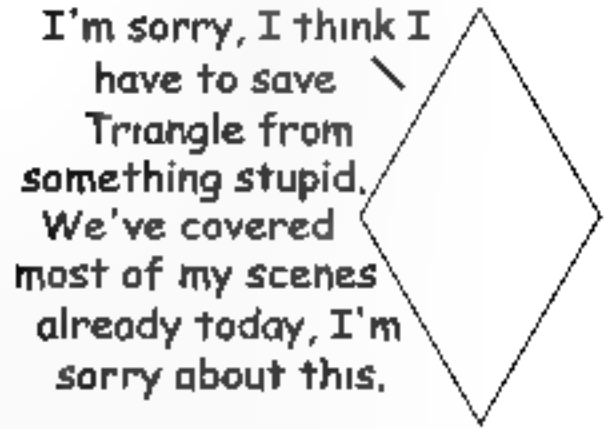


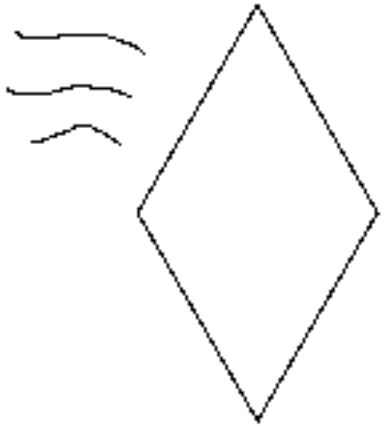
Pick up that dormouse, Tom. Pick up that dormouse and give it everything you've got The world still needs a specialist.

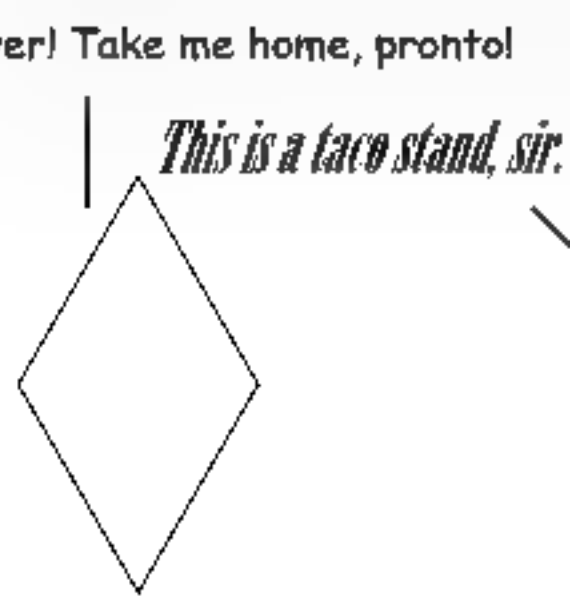
Scene. — You went a bit off-script, but I like that "job done" line, we'll keep that in.

Triangle and Robert

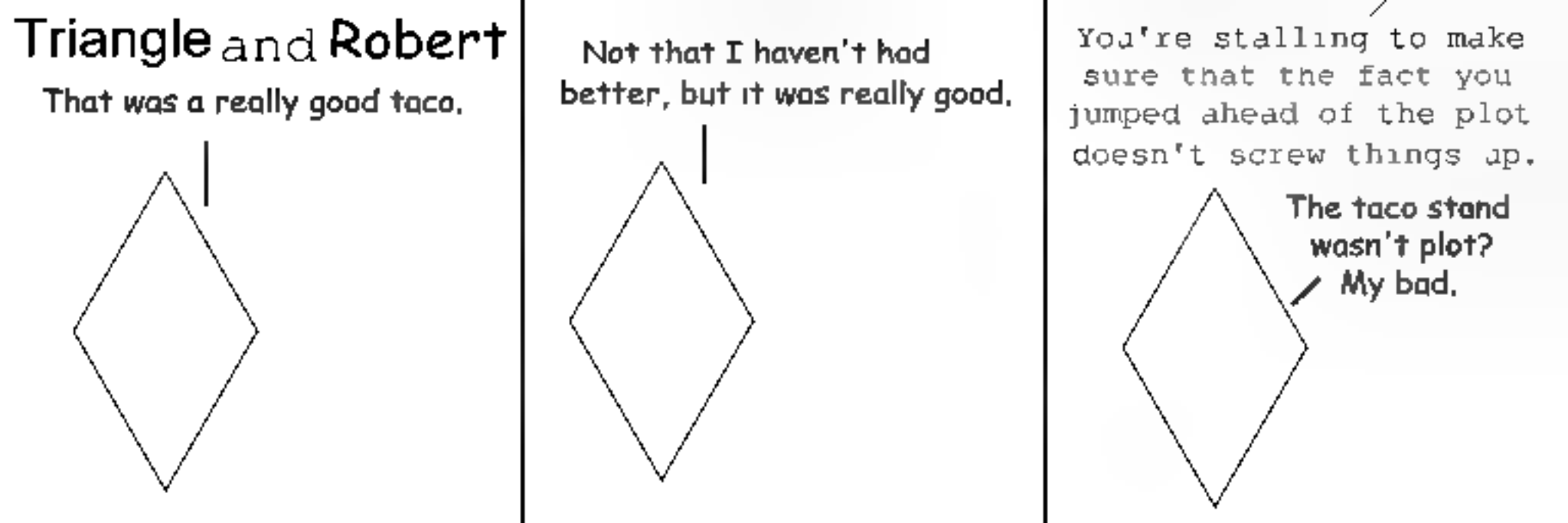
Soon, Robert takes his leave of rehearsal. .



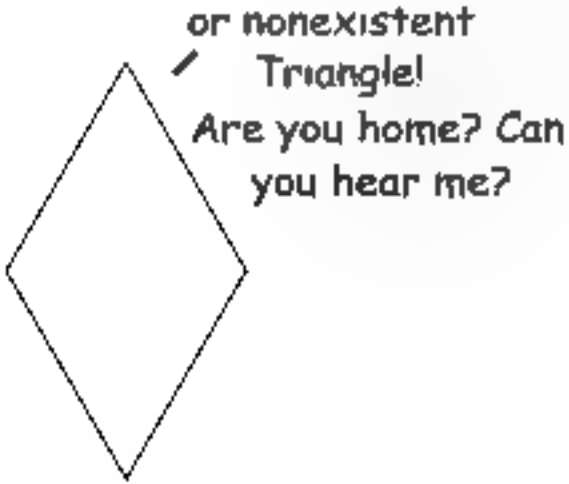


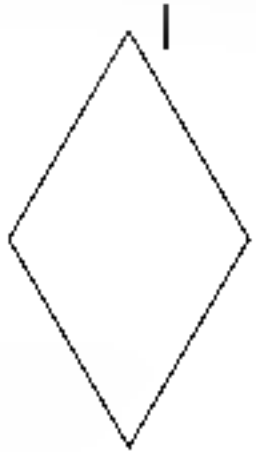


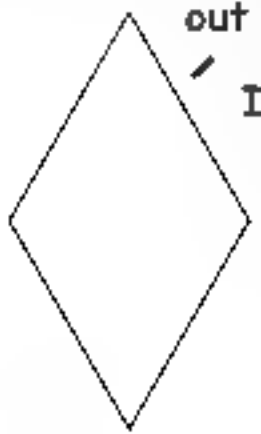
Triangle and Robert

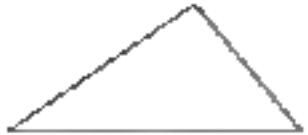


Triangle and Robert

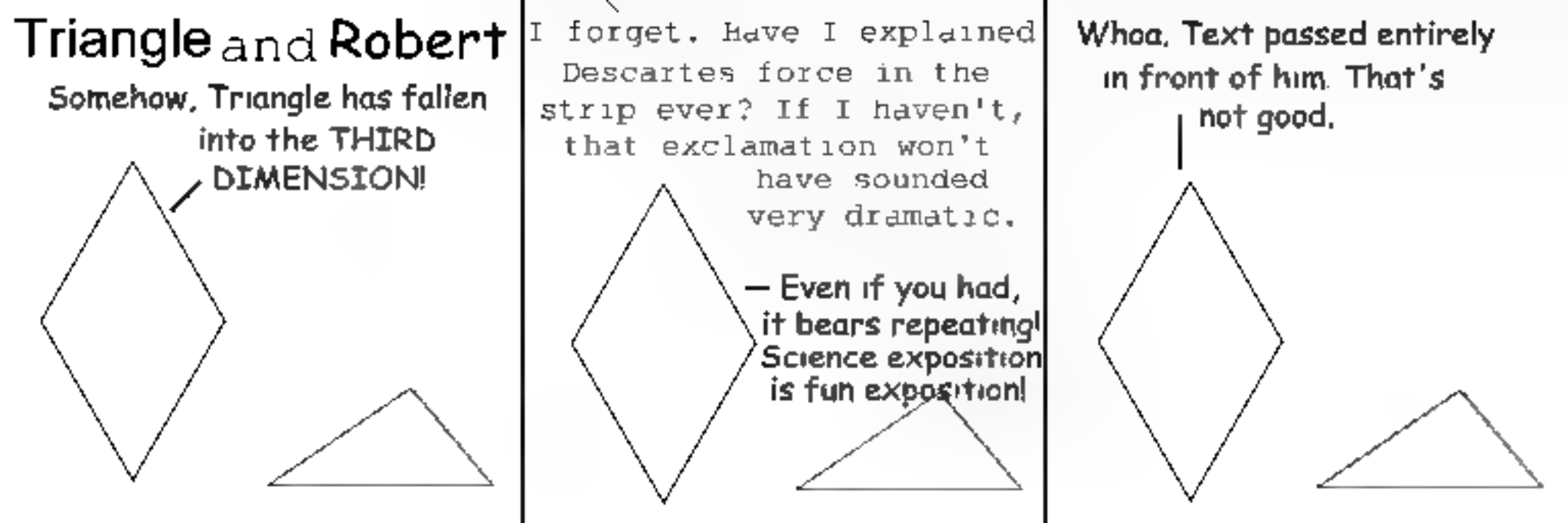








Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

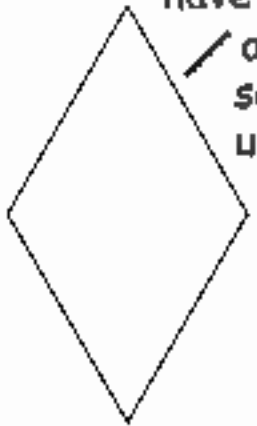
Over the course of this comic series, you may have noticed that polygons are very rarely shown facing in different directions. In fact, polygonal objects, both sentient and not, are subject to what is termed "Descartes force".

Descartes force is a fundamental mechanism whereby a polygon exerts a torque on nearby noncoplanar polygons. In the absence of other forces, the stable equilibria of Descartes force are generally states in which polygons are as close to mutual coplanarity as possible.

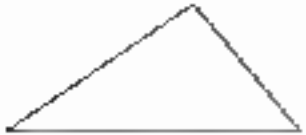
Without going into the mathematics, a simple consideration of the directions of torque should be sufficient to suggest that, when coplanarity is prevented, a second equilibrium exists in which polygons lie in planes at right angles. Without some frictional or anchoring force, this is unstable.

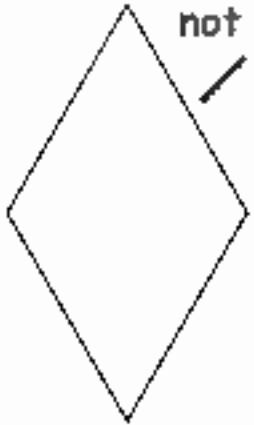
Triangle and Robert

Metaphysicists differ on the likely origins of Descartes force. Some hold it fundamental to the universe, citing as evidence the hypertaco shape of many planets. Descartes force would provide an explanation for their non sphericity, although the specific hypertaco shape would not automatically follow.

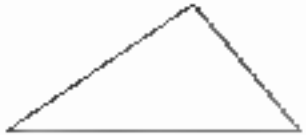


You can stop now That's more detail than anyone needs. The point is, for Triangle to have fallen over at such a skewed angle, something almost unbelievably weird must be happening

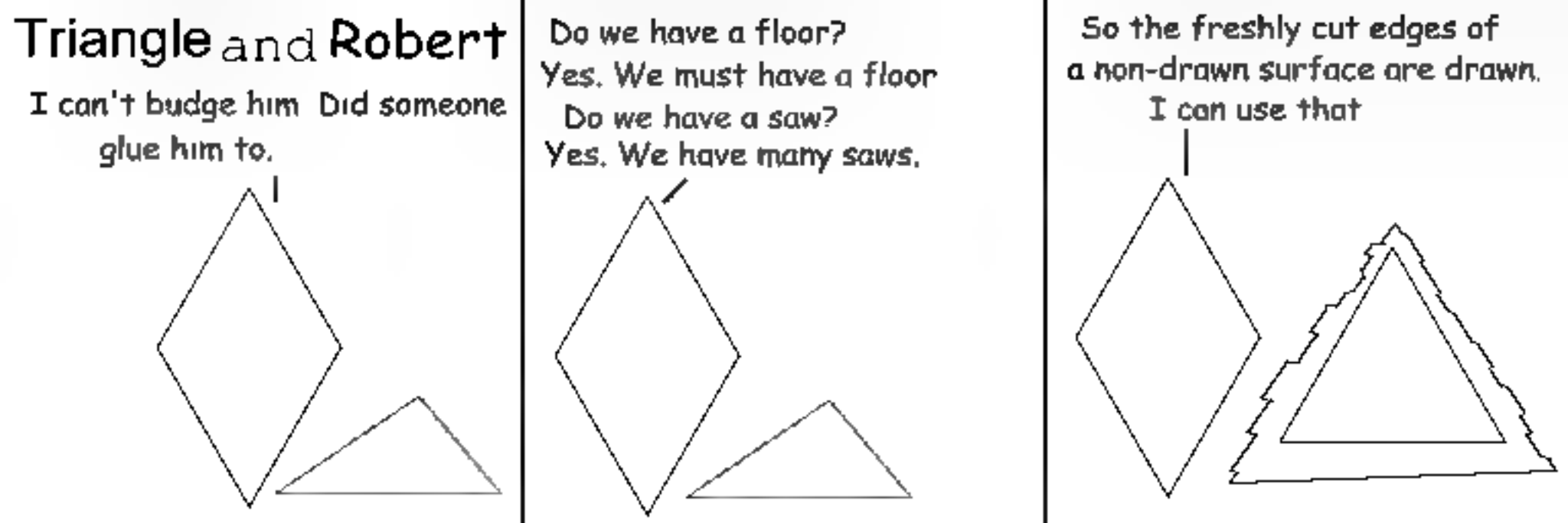




My usual followup to that statement would be that I'm going to do something unrelated, but the situation may be too dire not to do whatever it is I'm going to eventually do as immediately as possible.

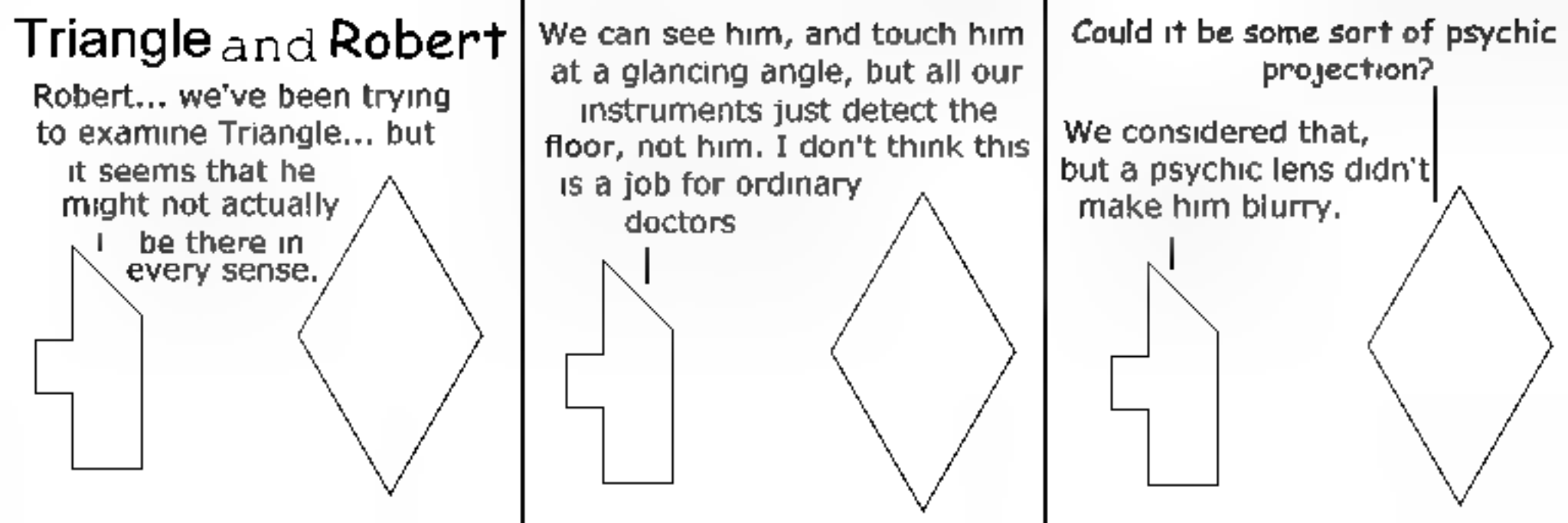


Triangle and Robert

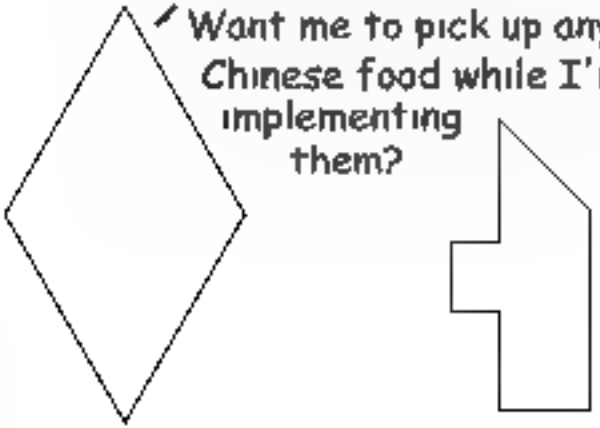


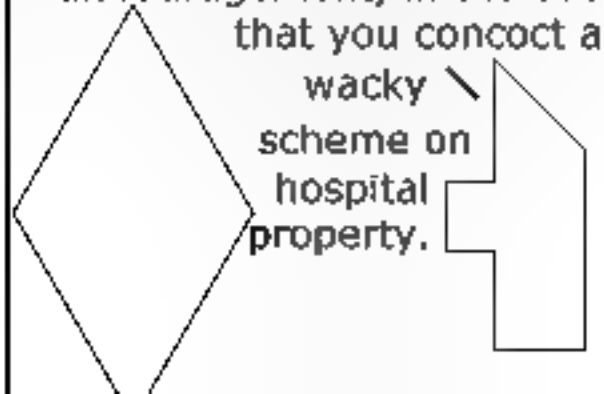
Triangle and Robert

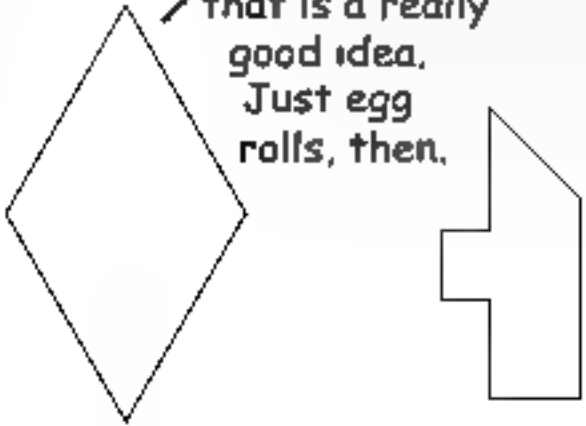
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







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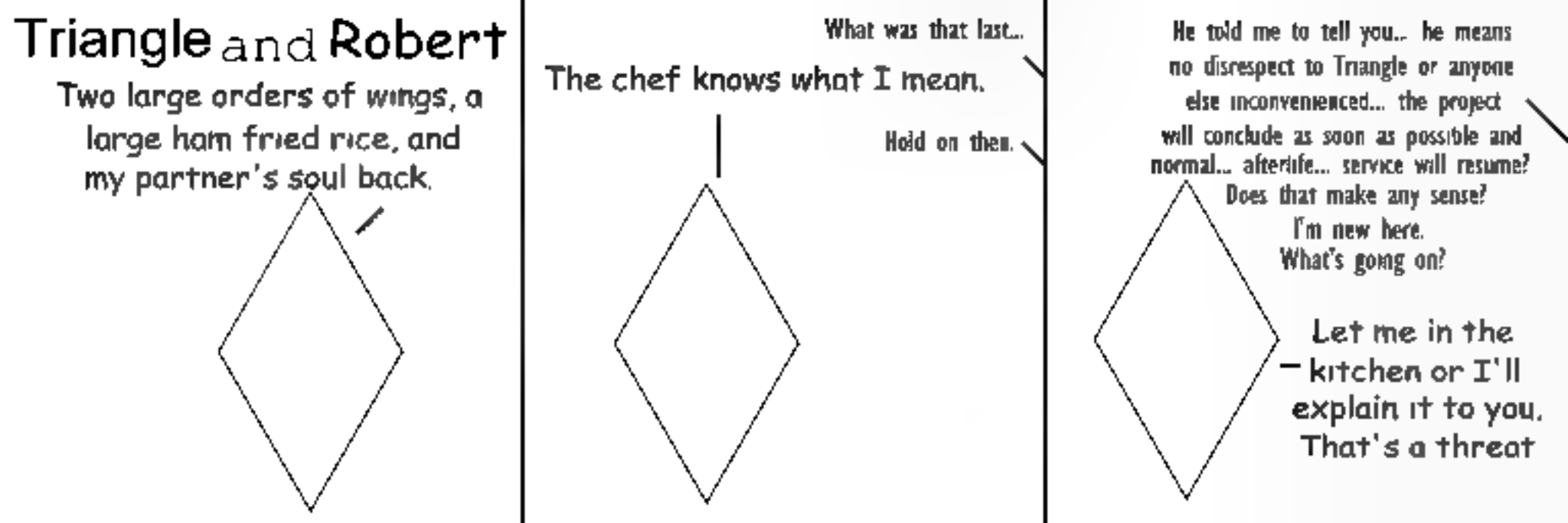

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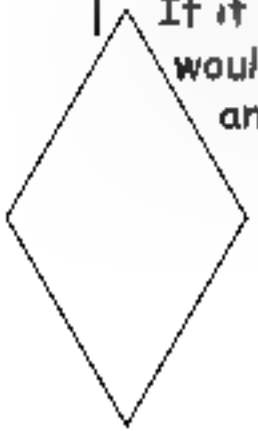
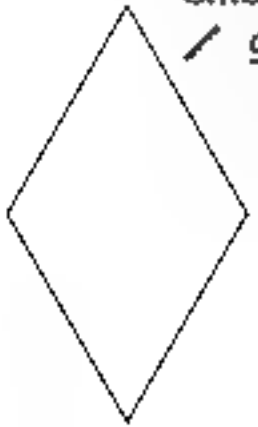
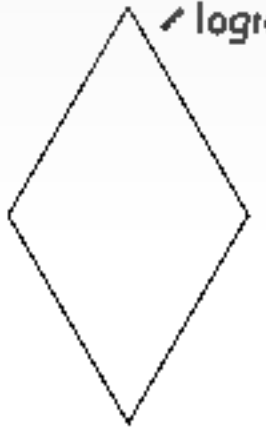
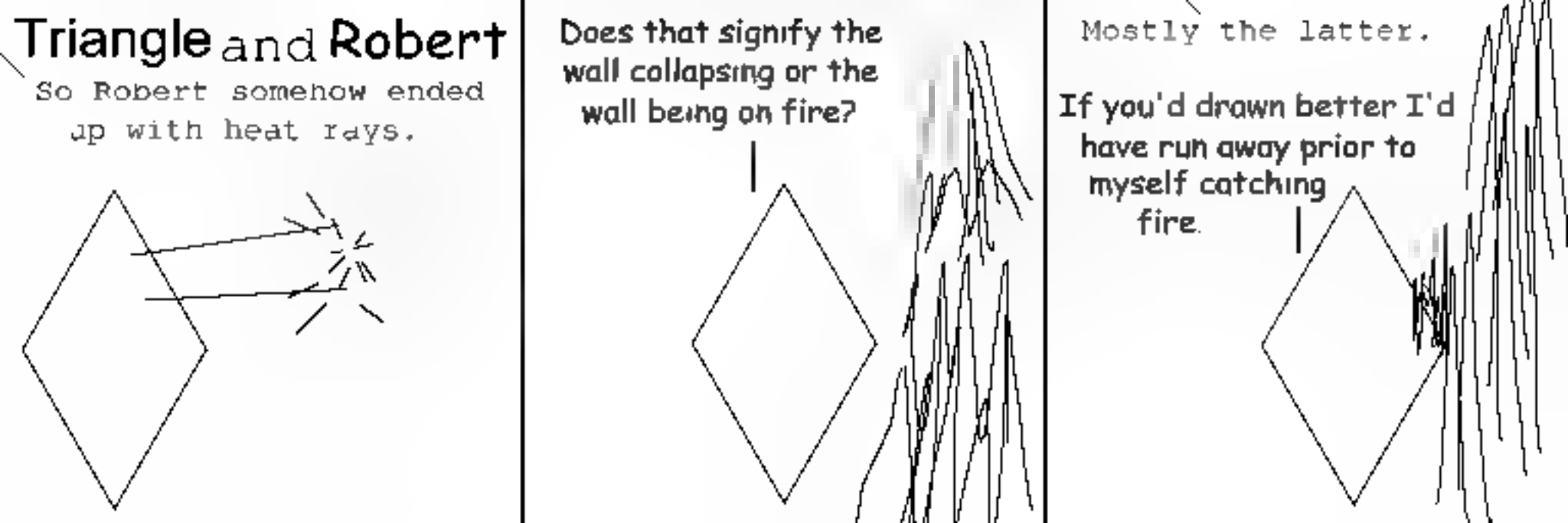






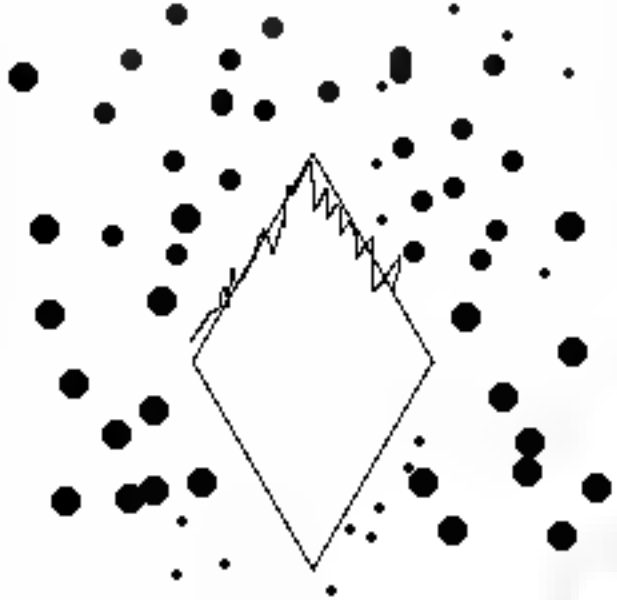
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Fortunately, the infinite hallway was constructed to the same building code as the rest of the restaurant. That includes sprinklers.

BLEEF BLEEF BLEEF



Of course, it also includes infinitely many beeping alarms.

BLEEF BLEEF

BLEEF BLEEF

What?

BLEEF BLEEF

BLEEF BLEEF

BLEEF BLEEF

BLEEF BLEEF BLEEF

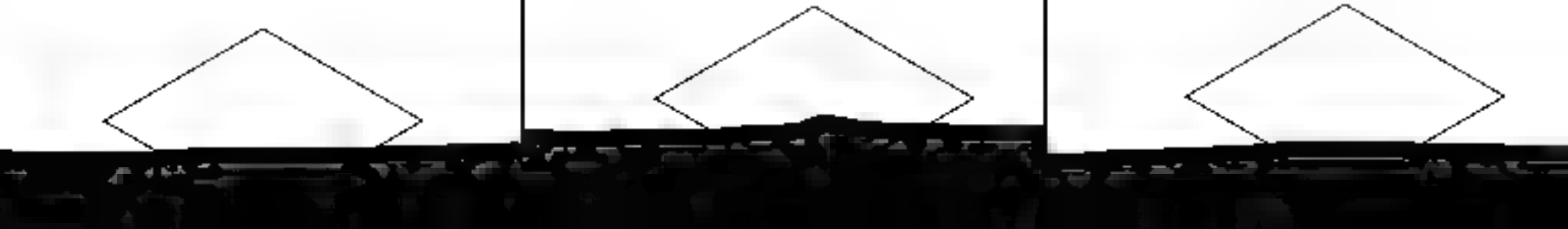
BLEEF BLEEF

Triangle and Robert

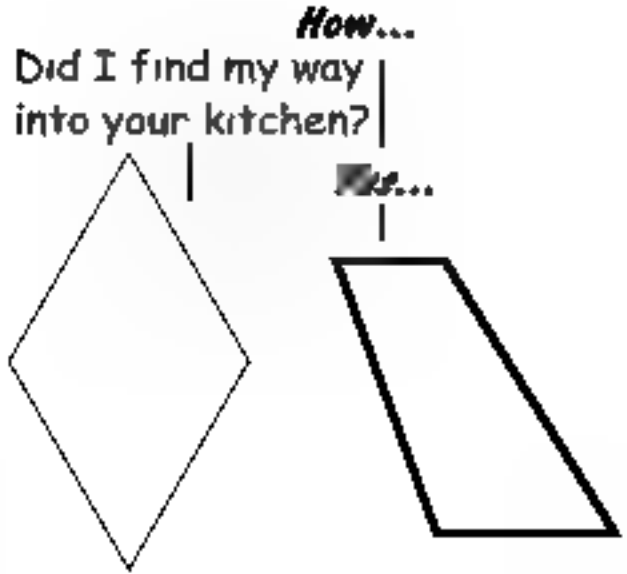
The water's black because it went through an infinite length of pipe to reach the sprinklers.

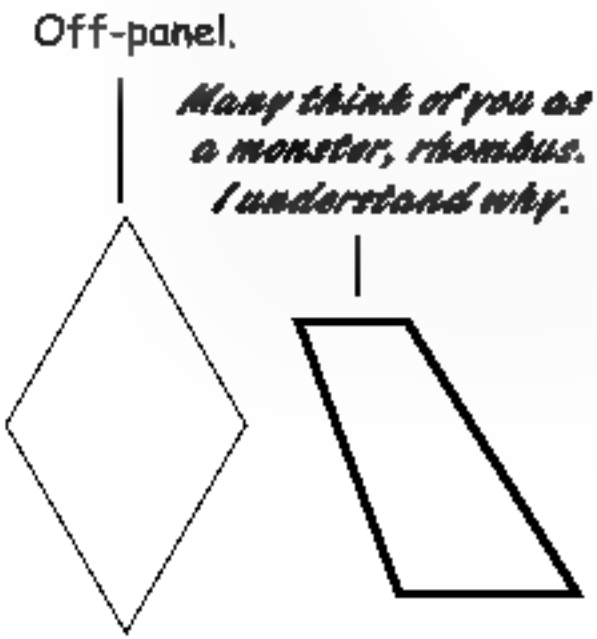
Actually, that makes no sense, forget I brought it up. Anyway, the sound of the alarms managed to knock Robert unconscious.

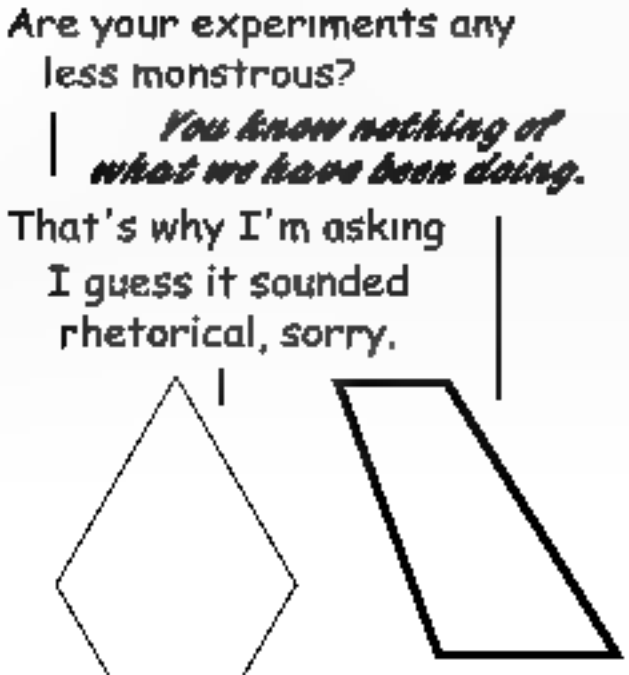
He's probably having an imagery laden dream fraught with apparent meaning, but it's not paranormally hooked up to anything so I don't need it in the comic.



Triangle and Robert





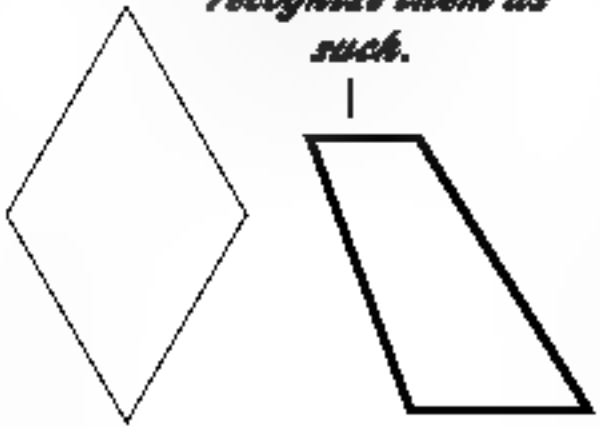


Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert

So you felt Mr Disease's move to artificial seasonings was a betrayal of the warrior-chef way.

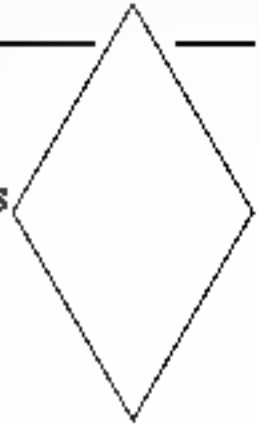
He is too great a chef for us to let him discard his honor. We will purify him of the marks of his shame, even though he does not recognize them as such.



You know that Triangle would oppose you in this, if he were here and if doing so would not violate the sanctity of the restaurant

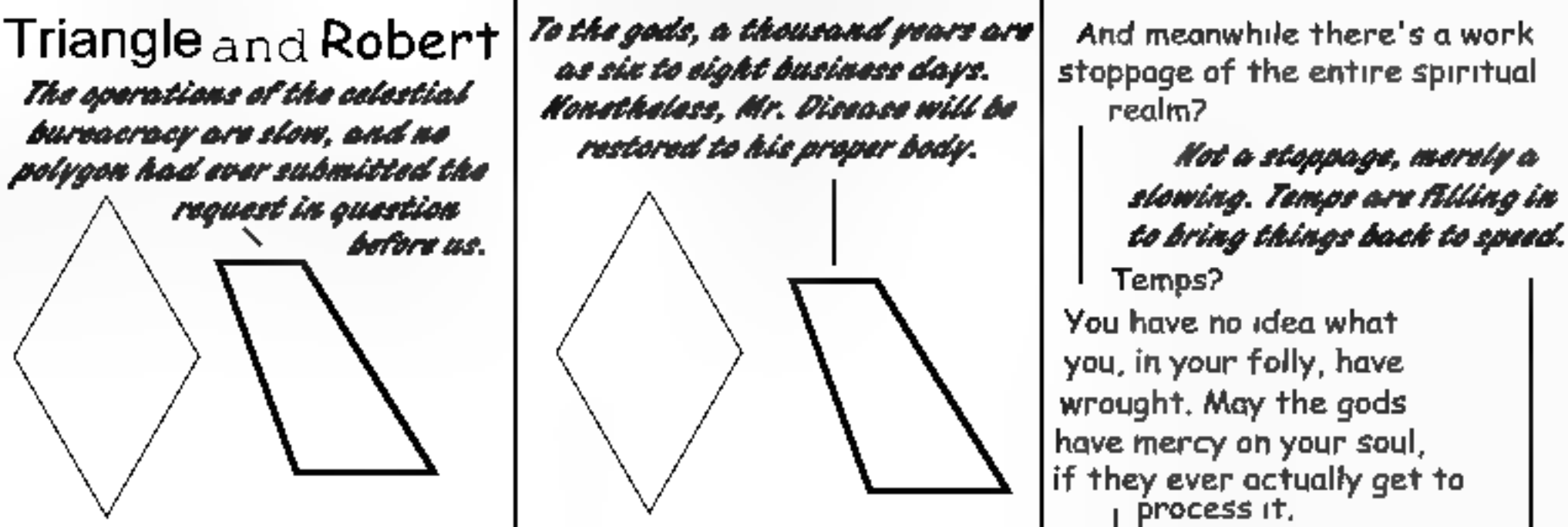
Perhaps.

I, however, hold no place sacred, no matter how delicious its appetizers

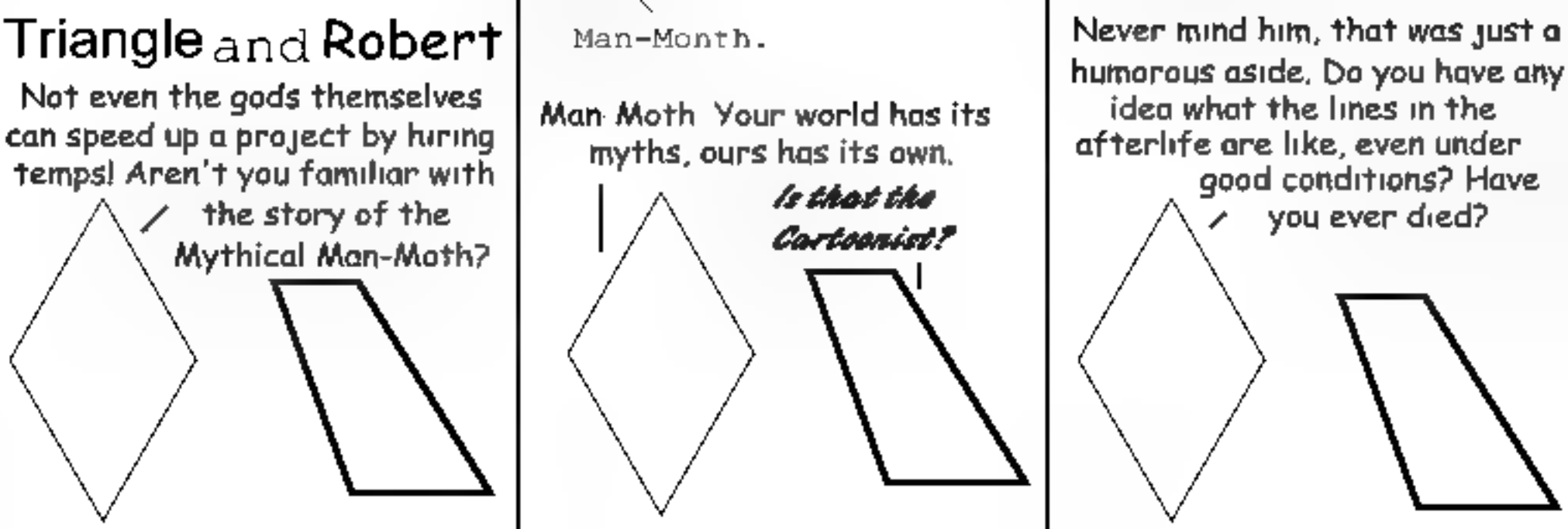


Triangle and Robert

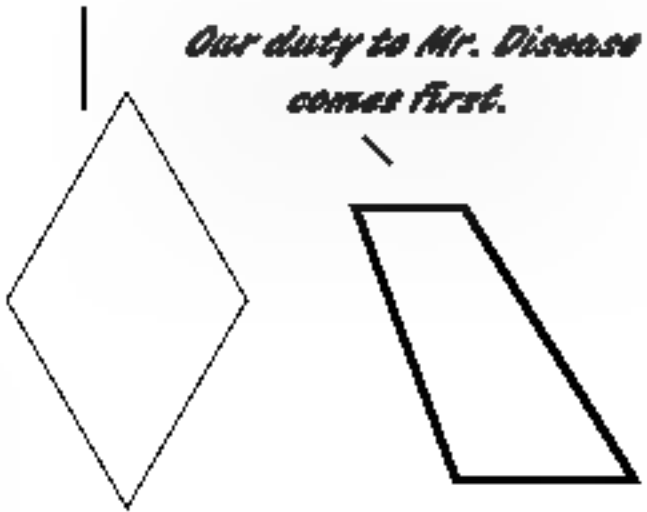
Triangle and Robert

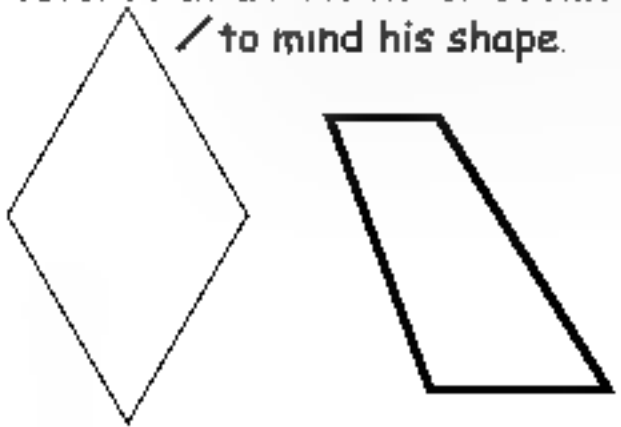


Triangle and Robert

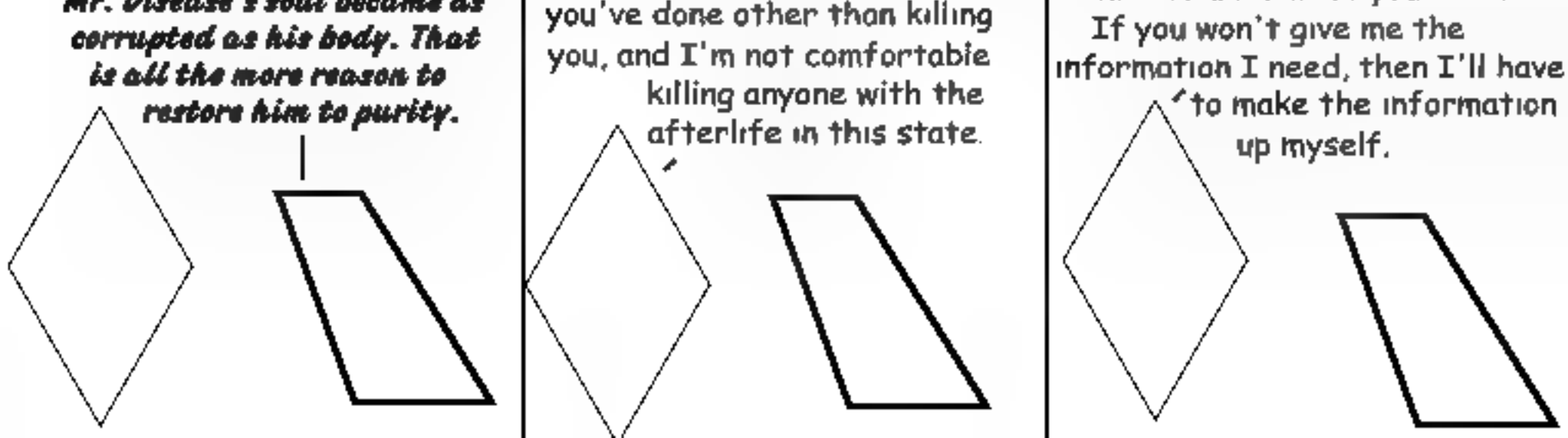


Triangle and Robert

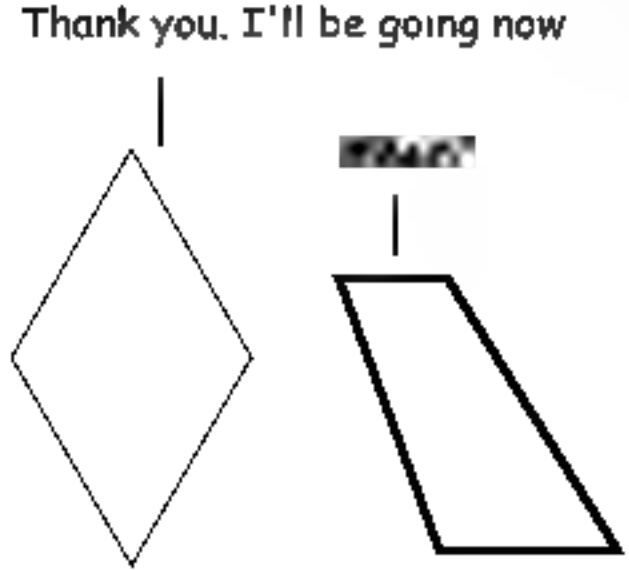


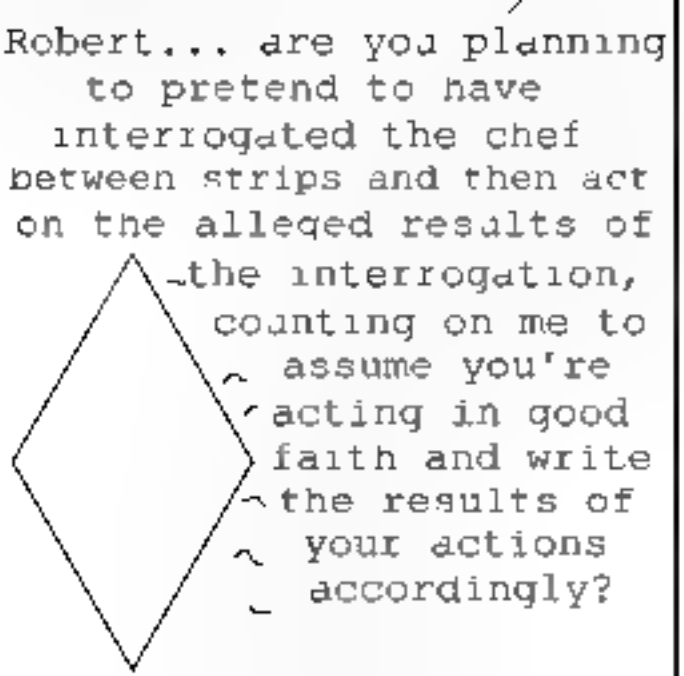


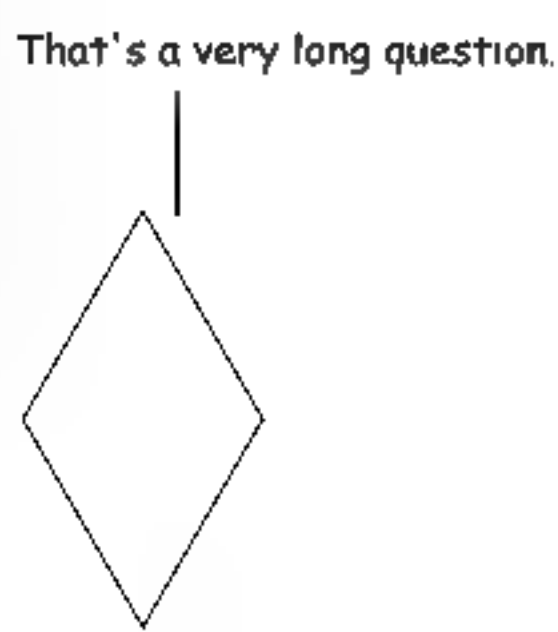
Triangle and Robert



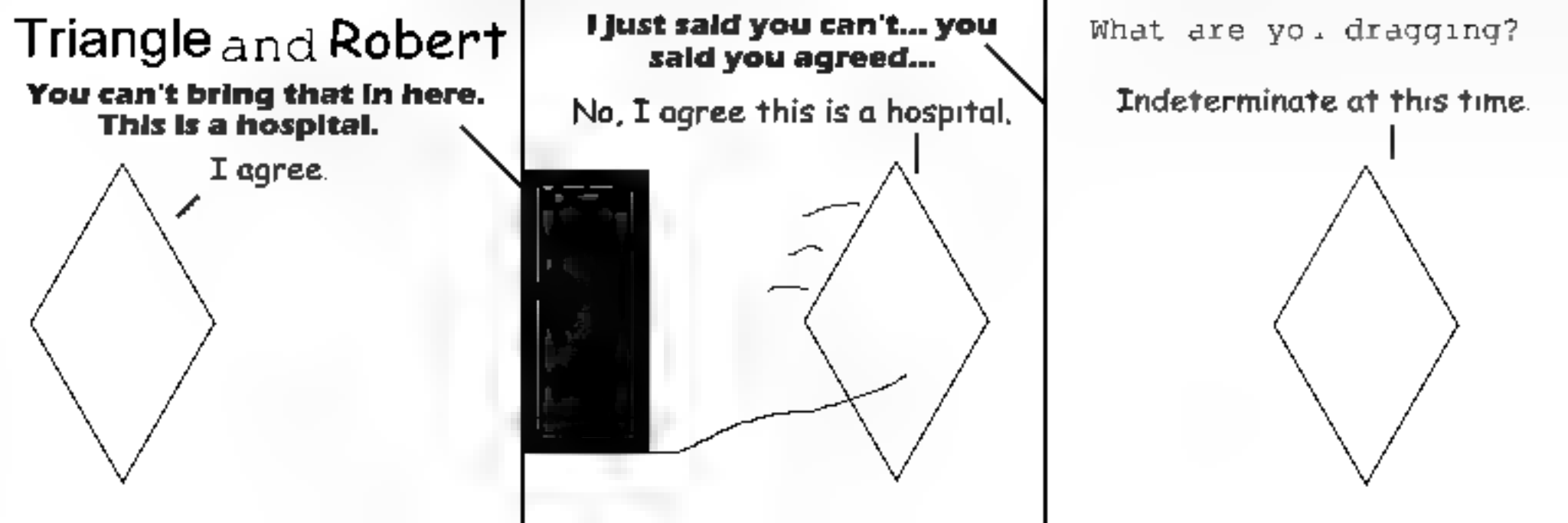
Triangle and Robert



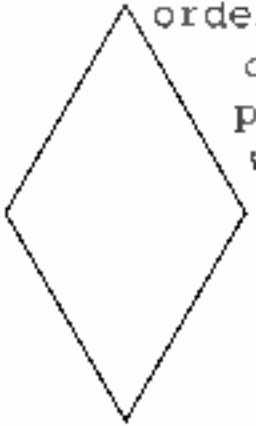


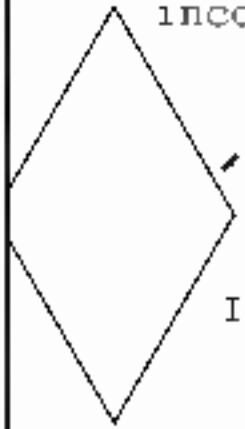


Triangle and Robert

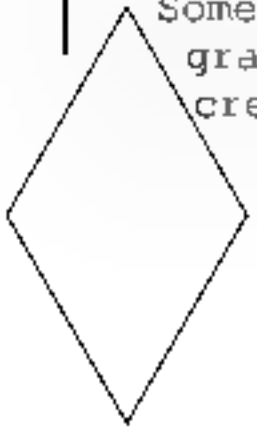


Triangle and Robert

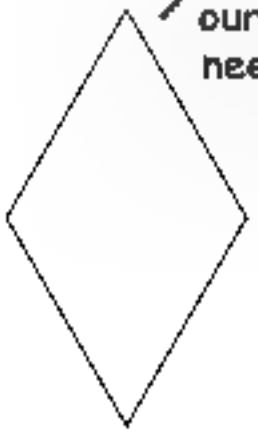




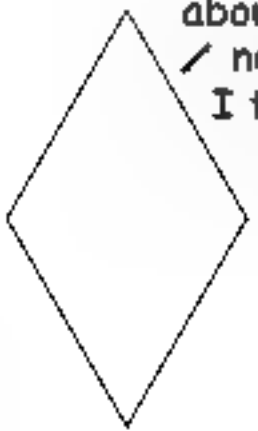
Triangle and Robert

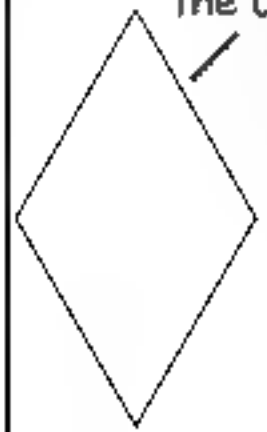


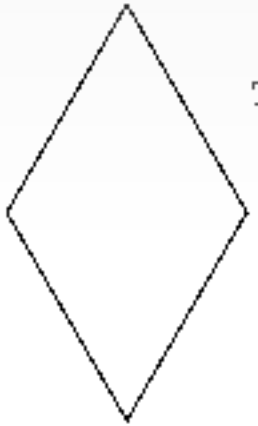
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

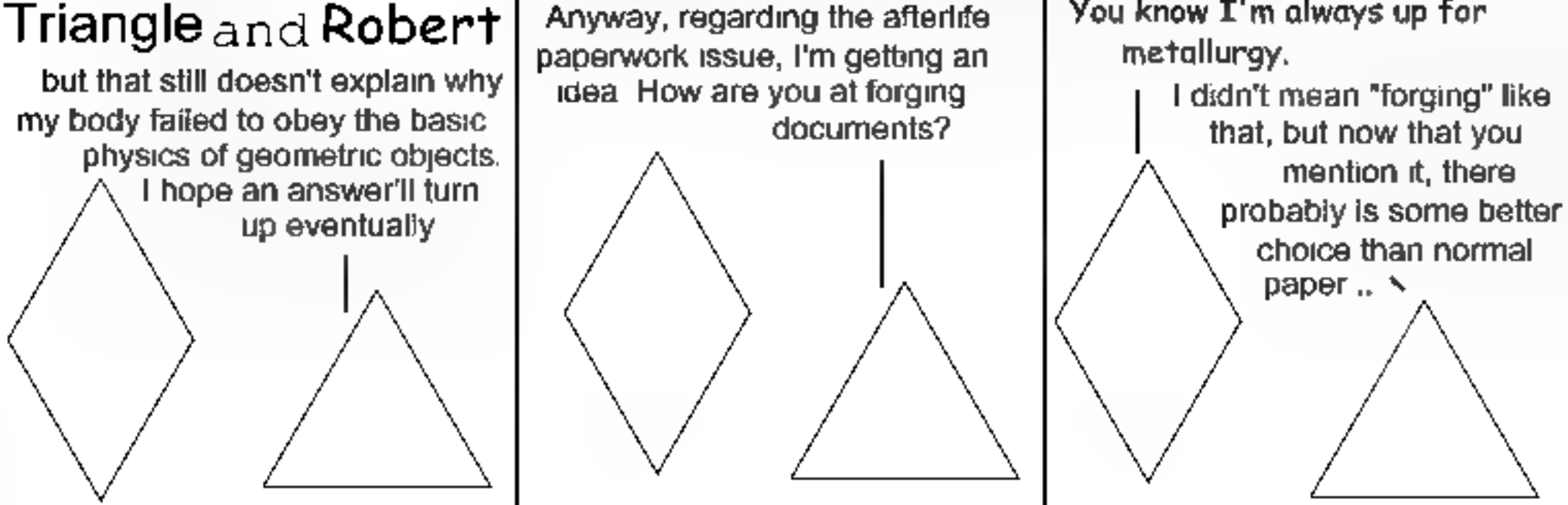
So, now that you have a way to leave, take it!

You sound like Triangle.

Don't change the subjectyou're absolutely right. I should have noticed that. If Triangle's been lost in a non-specific metasubconscious and I

This is going to work! Standard soul transfer procedure. Steve Martin impersonator, bowl of water, done in under two hours

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

A rectangular sheet of dried blood

Yes.

With text printed on it

Yes.

Signed in liquid paper

That's a trademarked term Capitalize it

And your thinking is that this will cancel out a piece of paper signed in blood

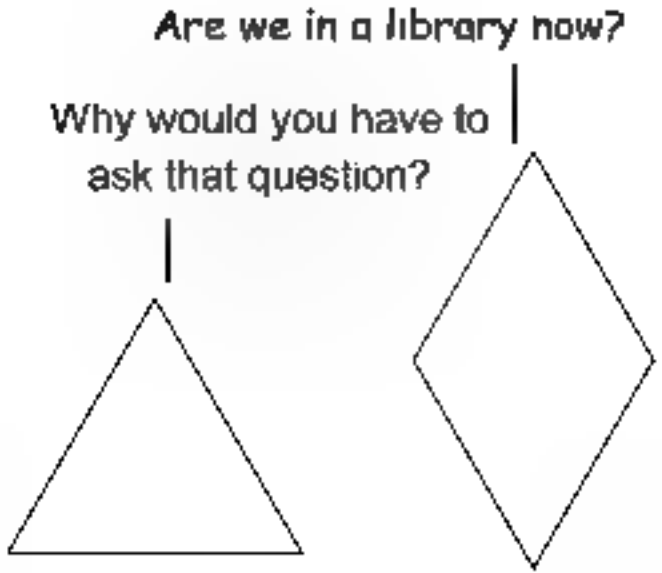
I agree that it would work, because the situation is that irrevocably stupid I'd rather outsmart the situation than stoop to its level, though

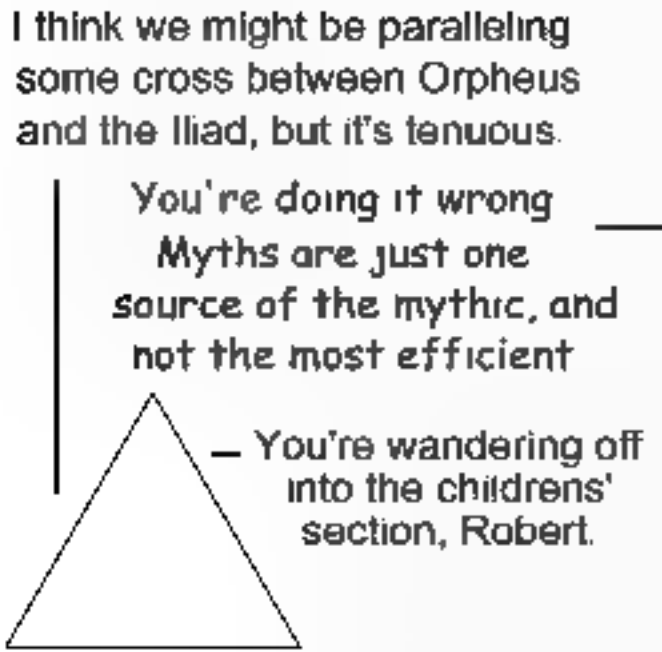
A message which, once sent, must be intercepted and unsent before it causes untold damage by being acted on That's got to be in some myth somewhere

We can outsmart it by outmythicizing it

Out. myth... ici Yes

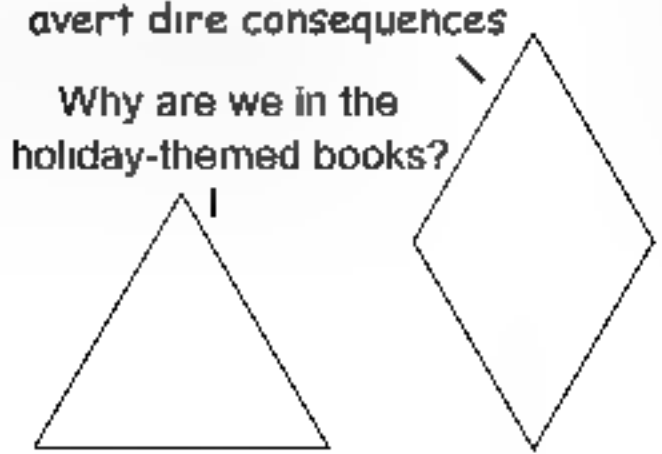
Triangle and Robert

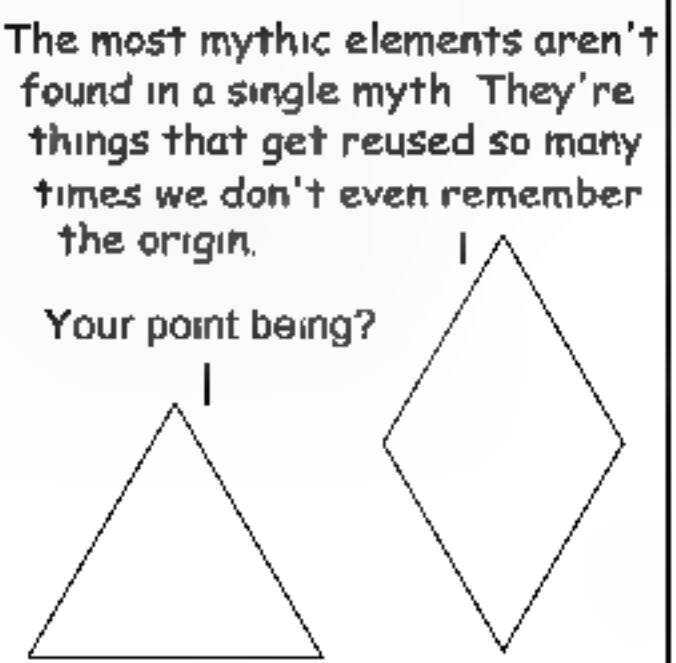




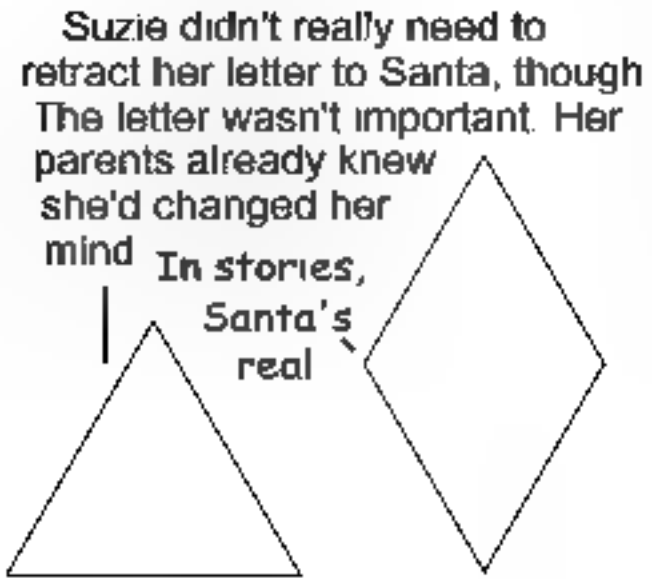
Triangle and Robert

A request, made in haste of the divine, which must be unmade to avert dire consequences





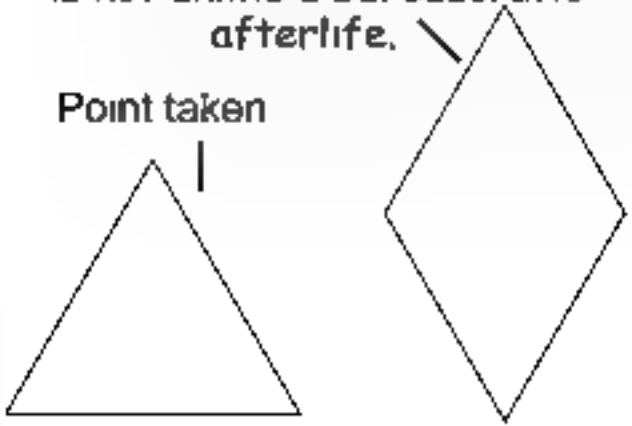
Triangle and Robert



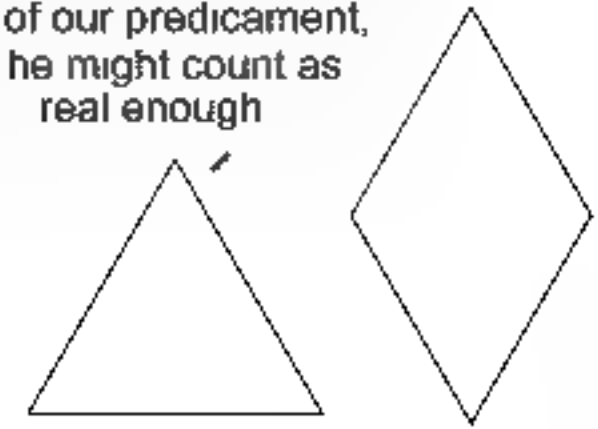
Triangle and Robert

Enumeration. Application of binary moral judgement. Santa is not unlike a bureaucratic afterlife.

Point taken

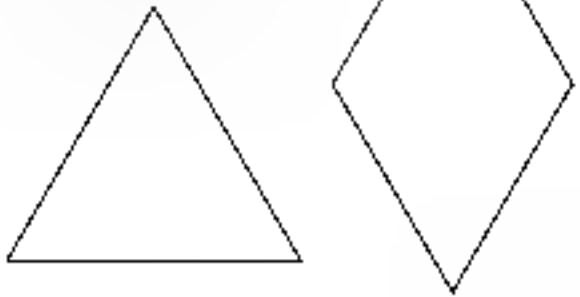


If he were real, he could perhaps help the afterlife solve their paperwork problems, maybe with elves. I will also concede that, given the supernatural nature of our predicament, he might count as real enough

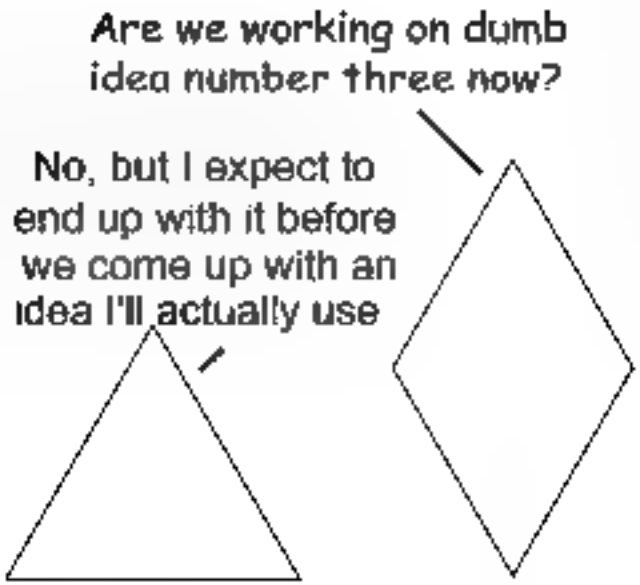


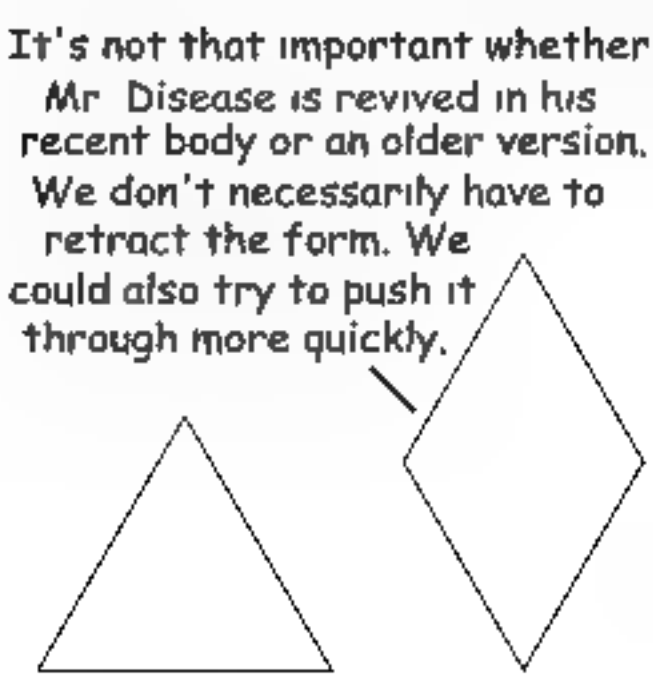
So that gives us a valid plan.

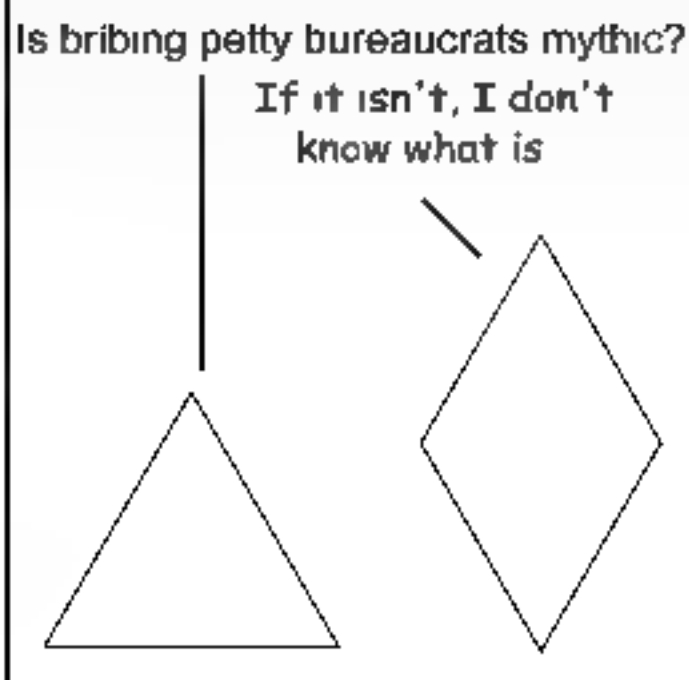
Yes. Let us label it as "Dumb Idea #2" for future reference before setting it aside



Triangle and Robert

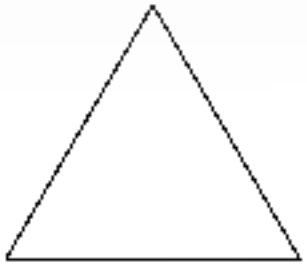


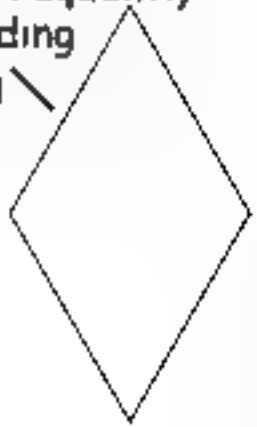




Triangle and Robert

Folk heroes often engage in bribery en route to their exploits. Gods are frequently depicted as demanding tribute and being swayed by gifts.





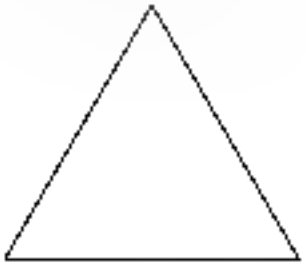
With what should one bribe a bureaucratic god?

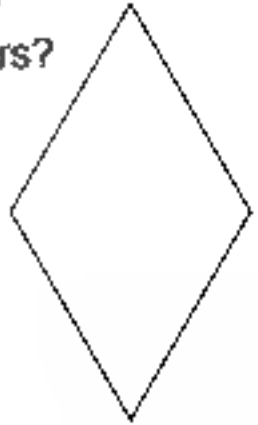
A kid goat, paper clipped to a hundred-dollar bill, paper-clipped to the form one wants stamped.

There's only one stationery store that sells paper clips that big, and you burned it not only to the ground but fourteen feet below that

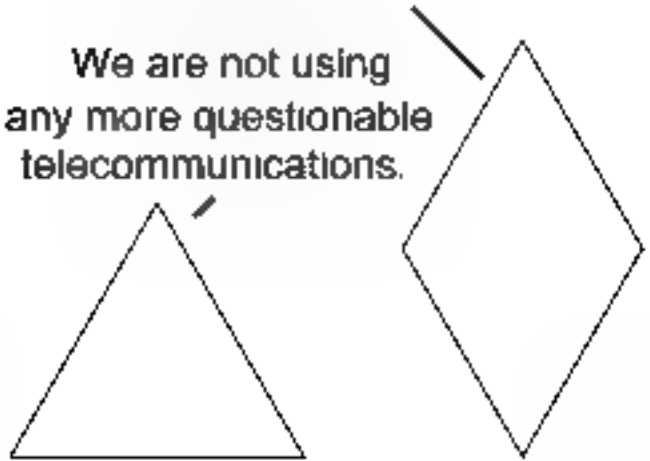
I was artistically justified in doing so! The judge agreed!

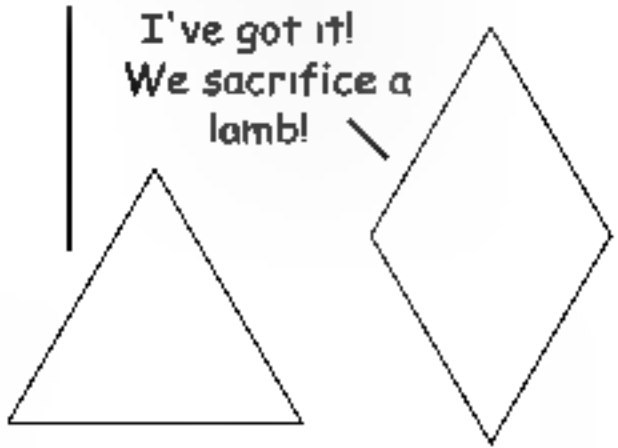
Maybe, but where now can we get overly specialized fasteners?

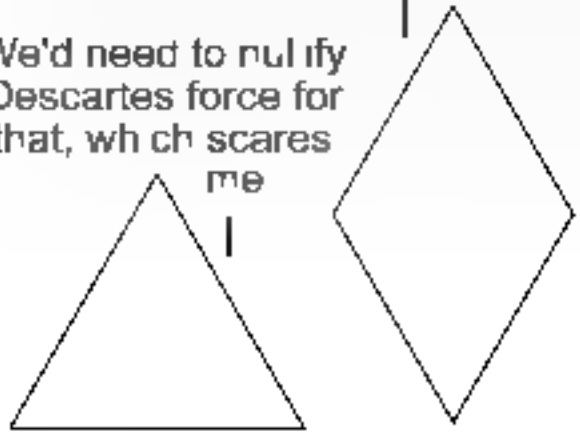




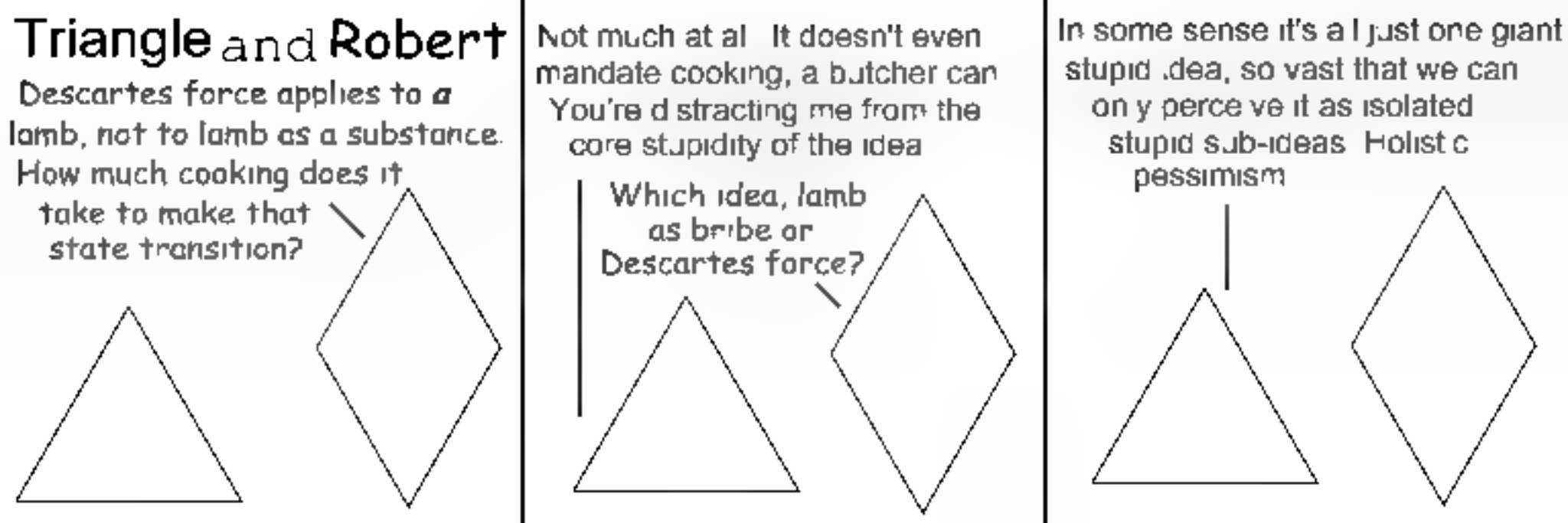
Triangle and Robert



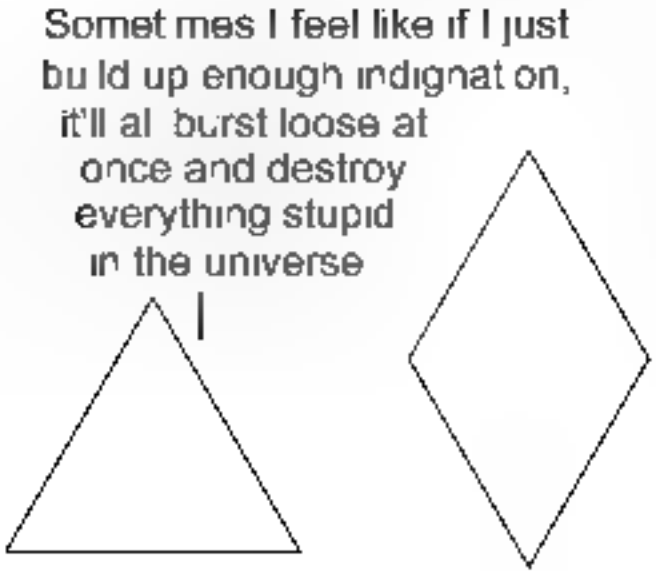


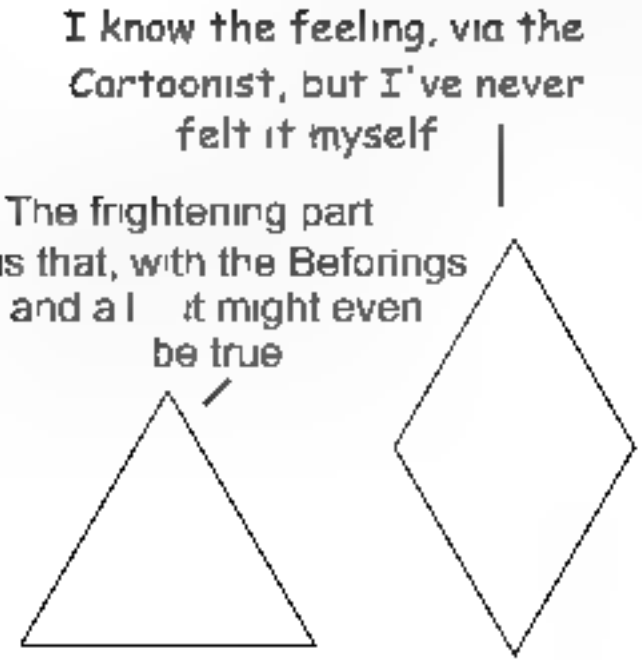


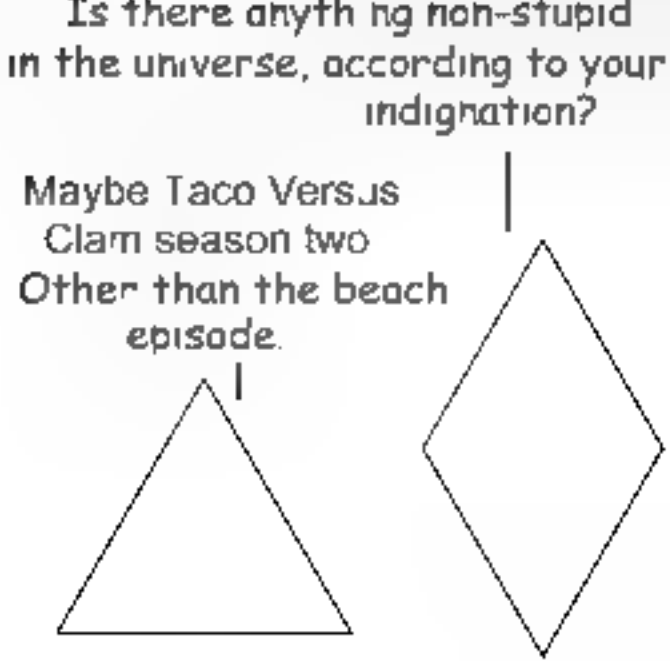
Triangle and Robert



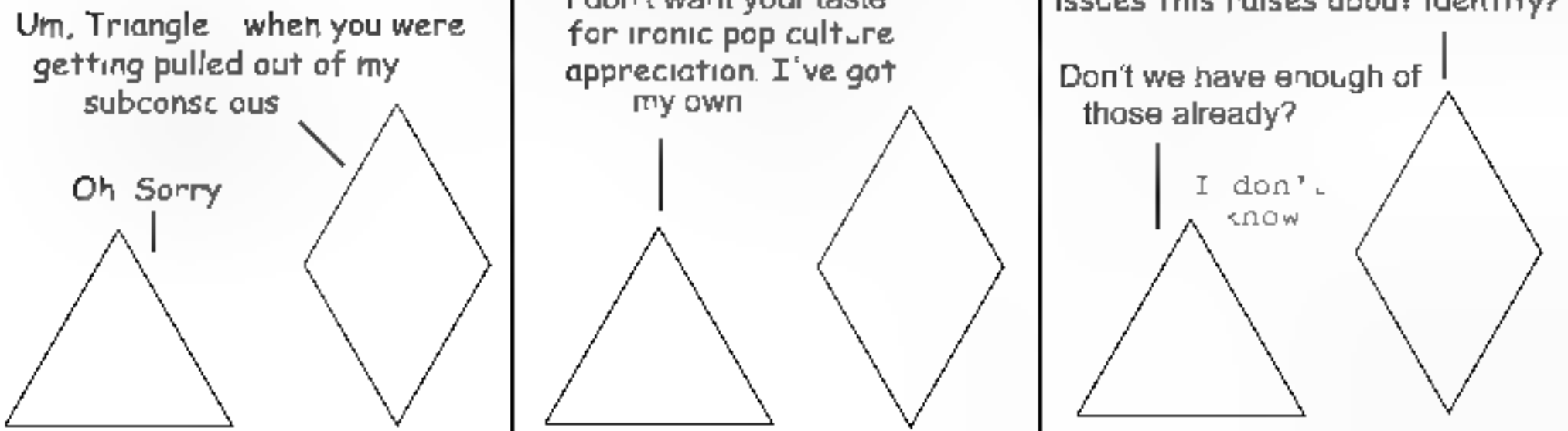
Triangle and Robert



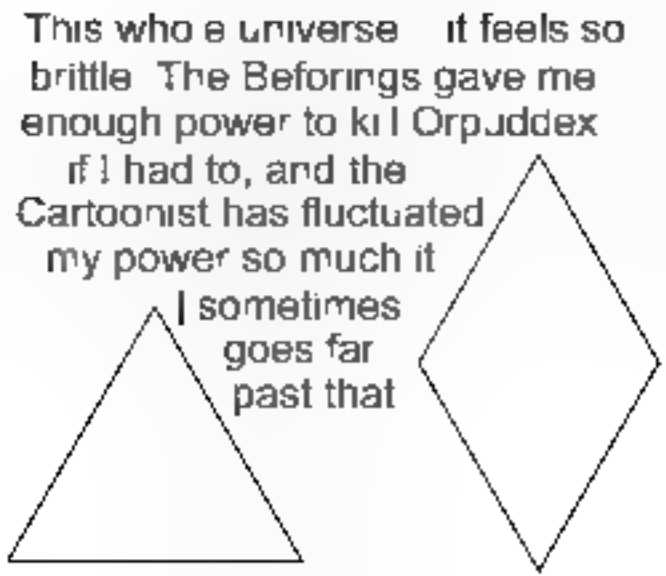


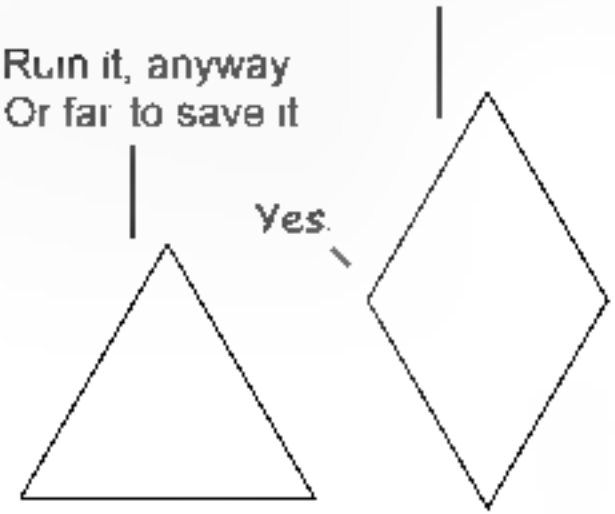


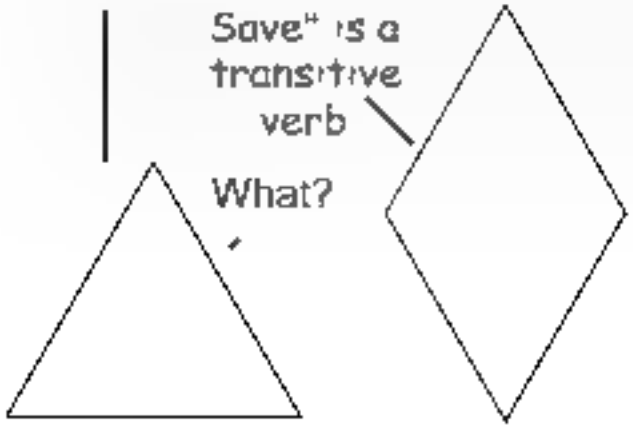
Triangle and Robert



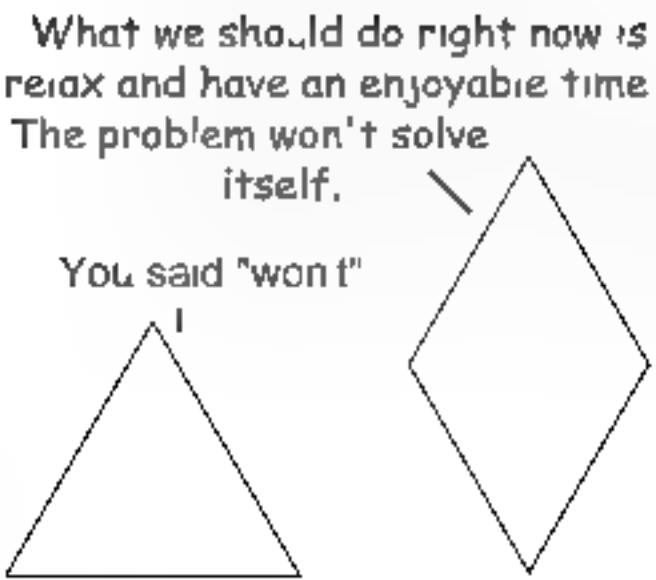
Triangle and Robert

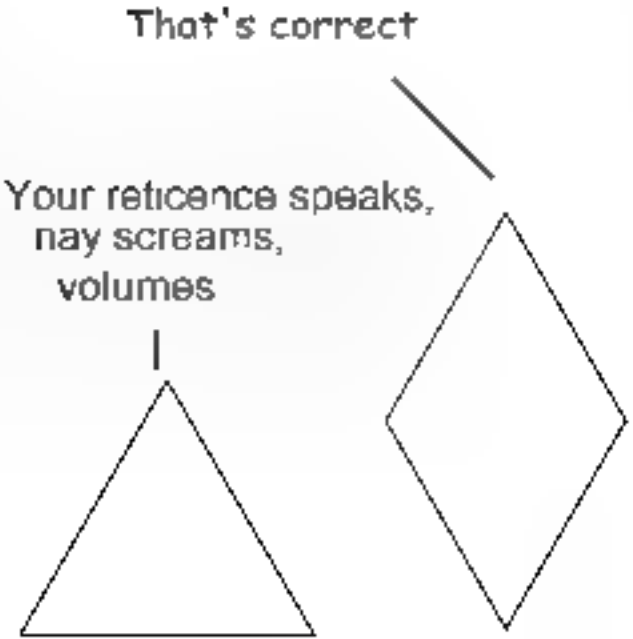


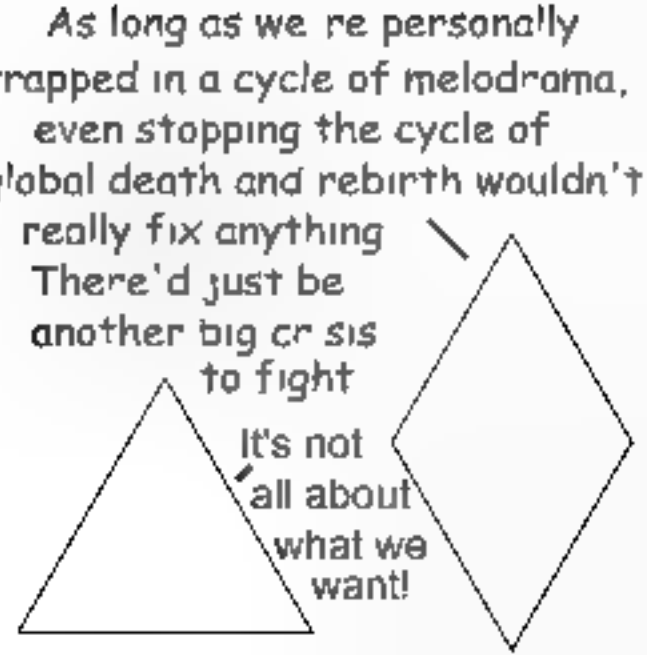




Triangle and Robert

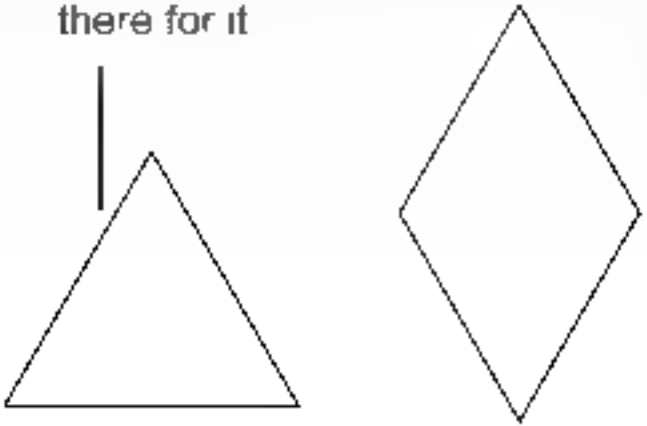






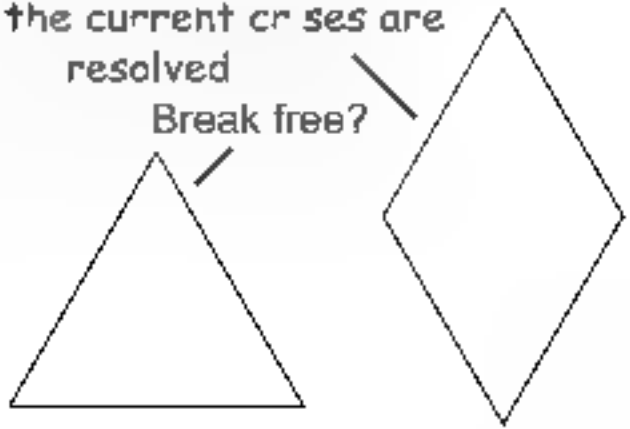
Triangle and Robert

We can't let the universe fall apart just for our personal fulfilment. If it needs us, we should be there for it



As long as we're here there will be more universe-threatening crises. We need to break free of the comic at the same time the current crises are resolved

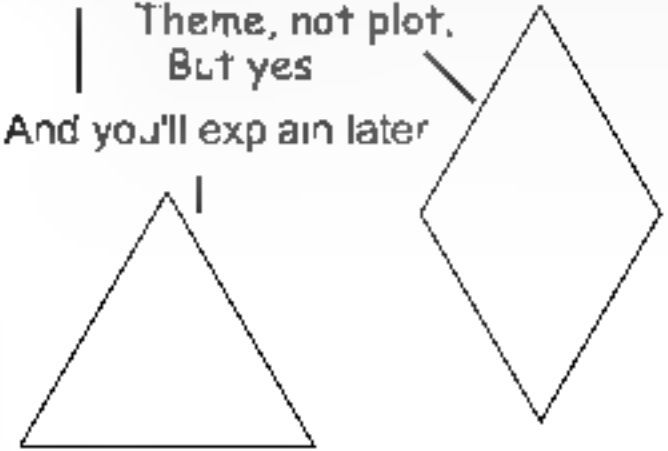
Break free?



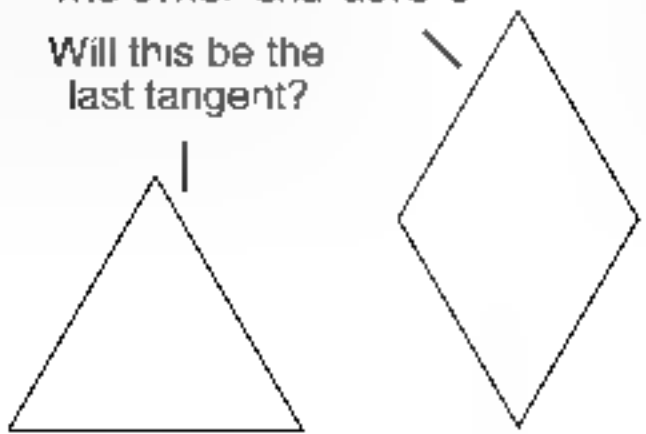
You're saying that we can make all the plot threads end at once to end the comic by actively *not* working on some of them?

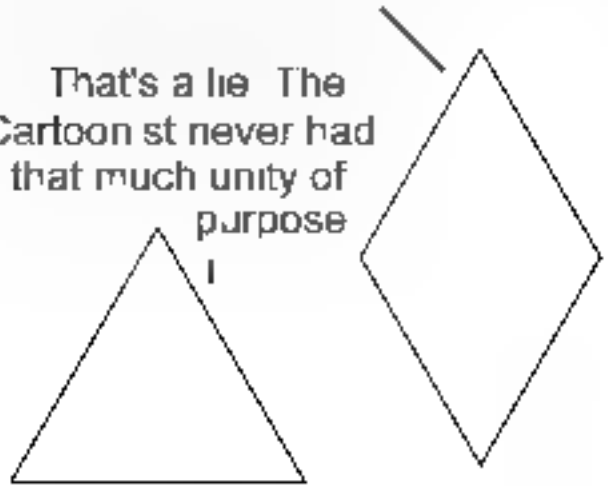
Theme, not plot. But yes

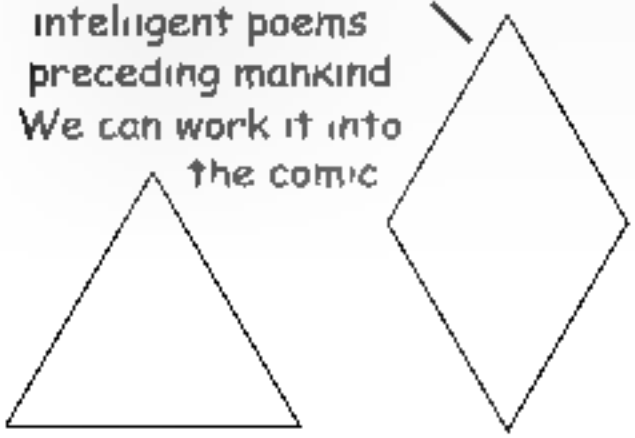
And you'll explain later



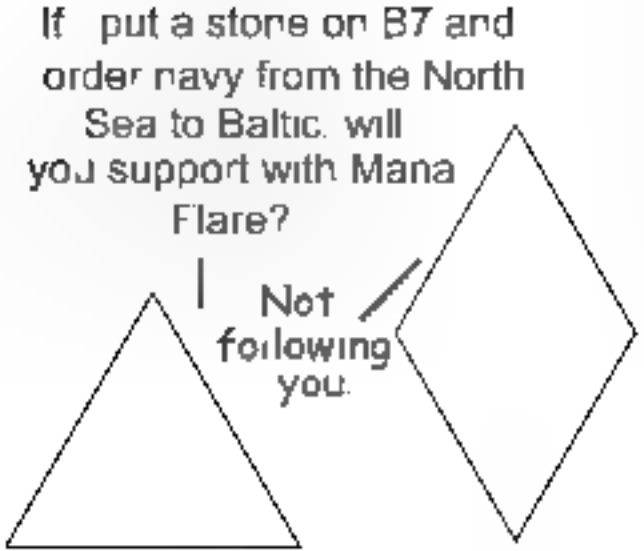
Triangle and Robert

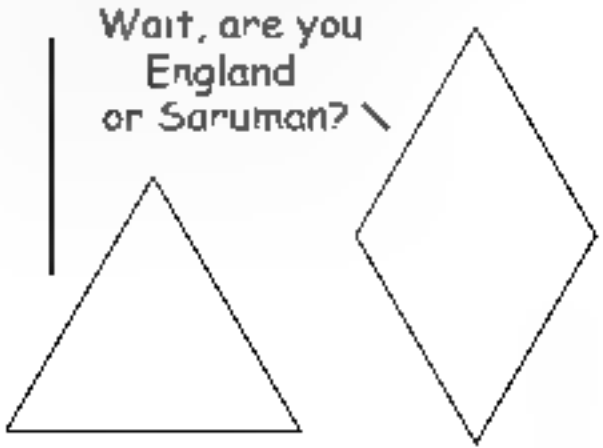


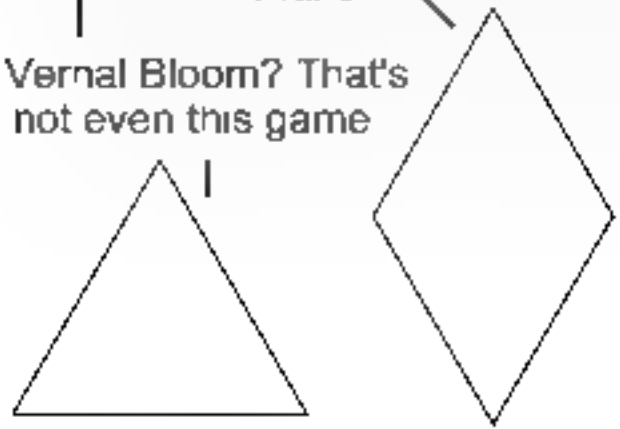




Triangle and Robert





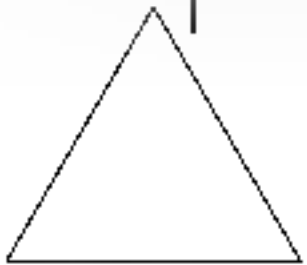


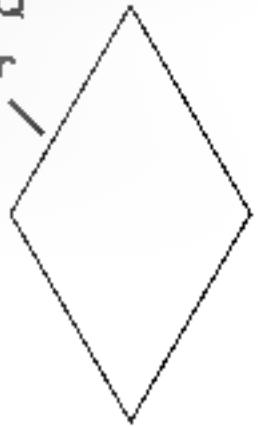
Triangle and Robert

So you spend seven metatextuality points to bring in rules that let me trade you wood for Q

The letter

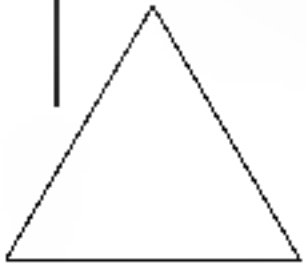
Right. the letter Q

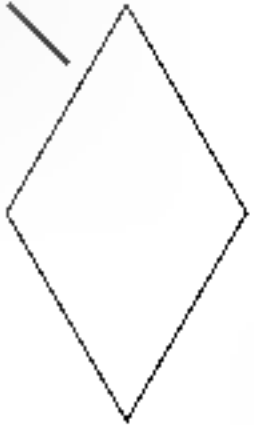




What's in it for you?

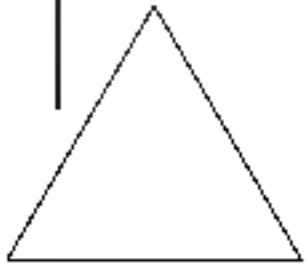
It'll make the total of my area scores a Mersenne prime, in conjunction with my other actions this turn.

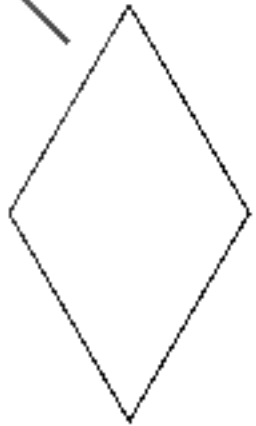




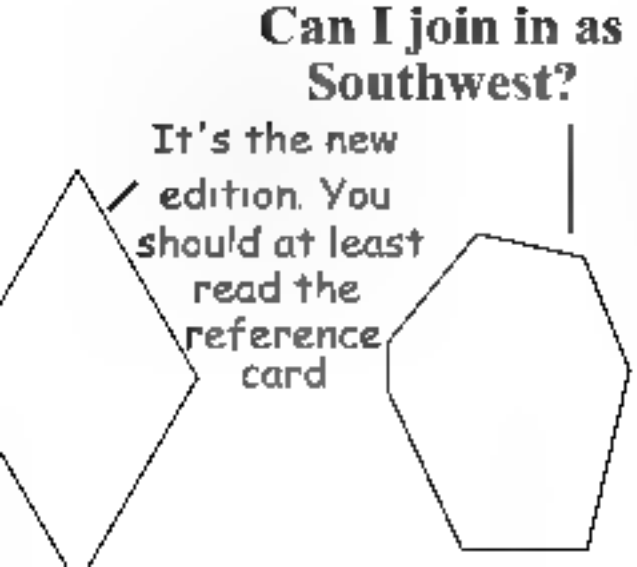
then your person has a beard

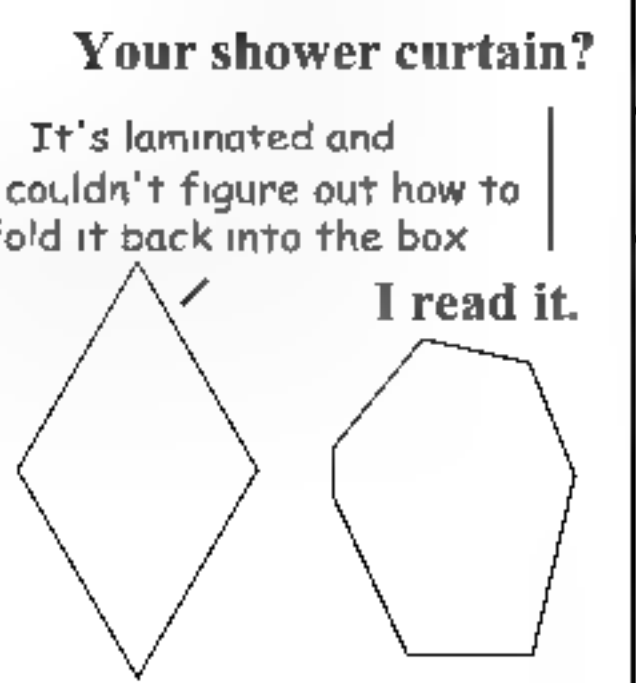
I have no idea what you're talking about

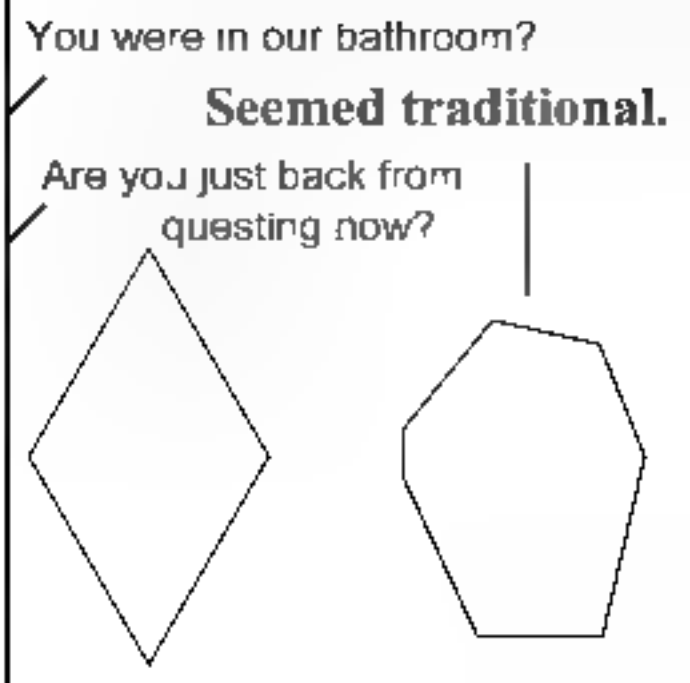




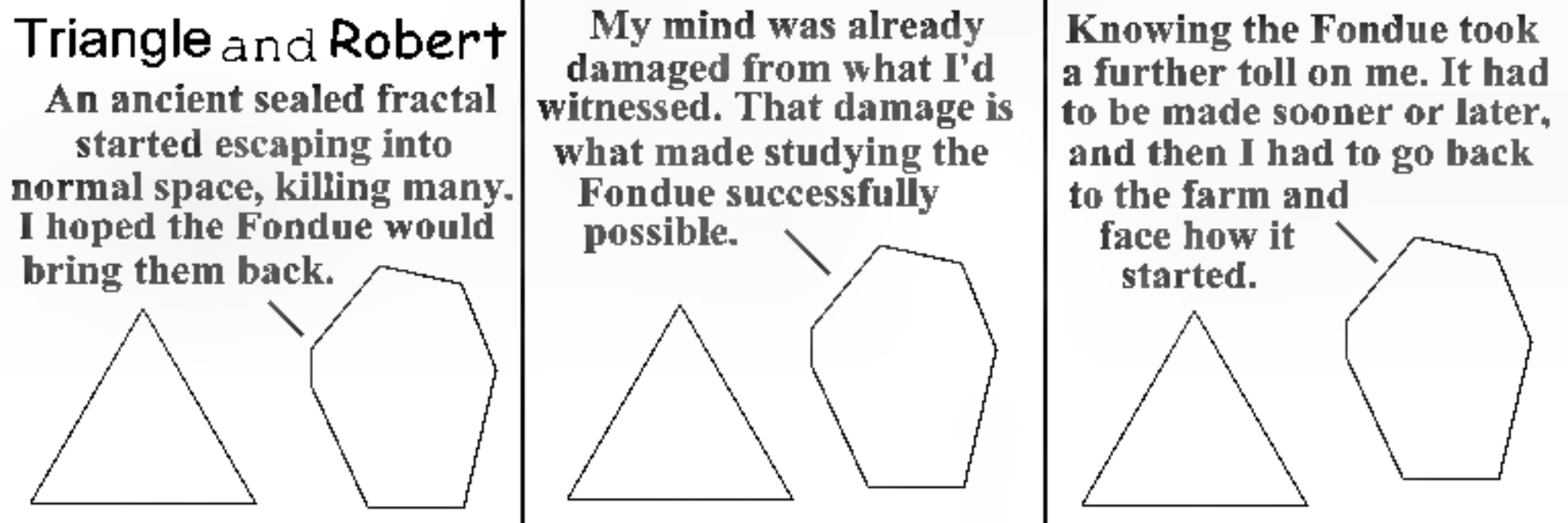
Triangle and Robert



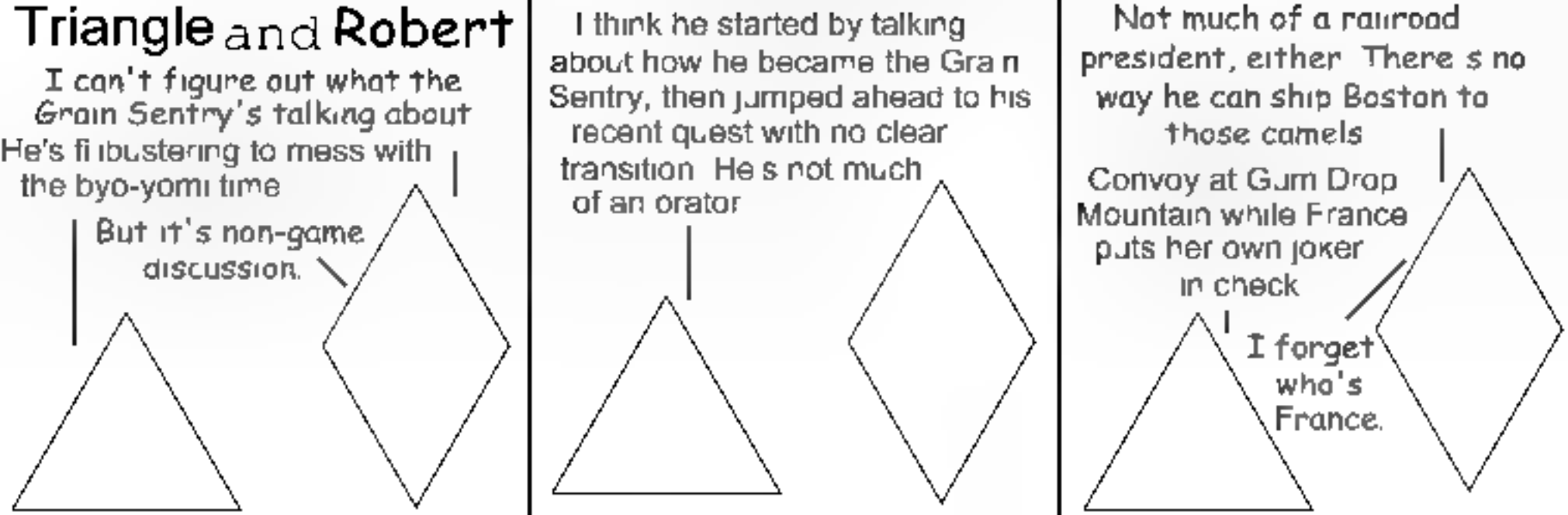




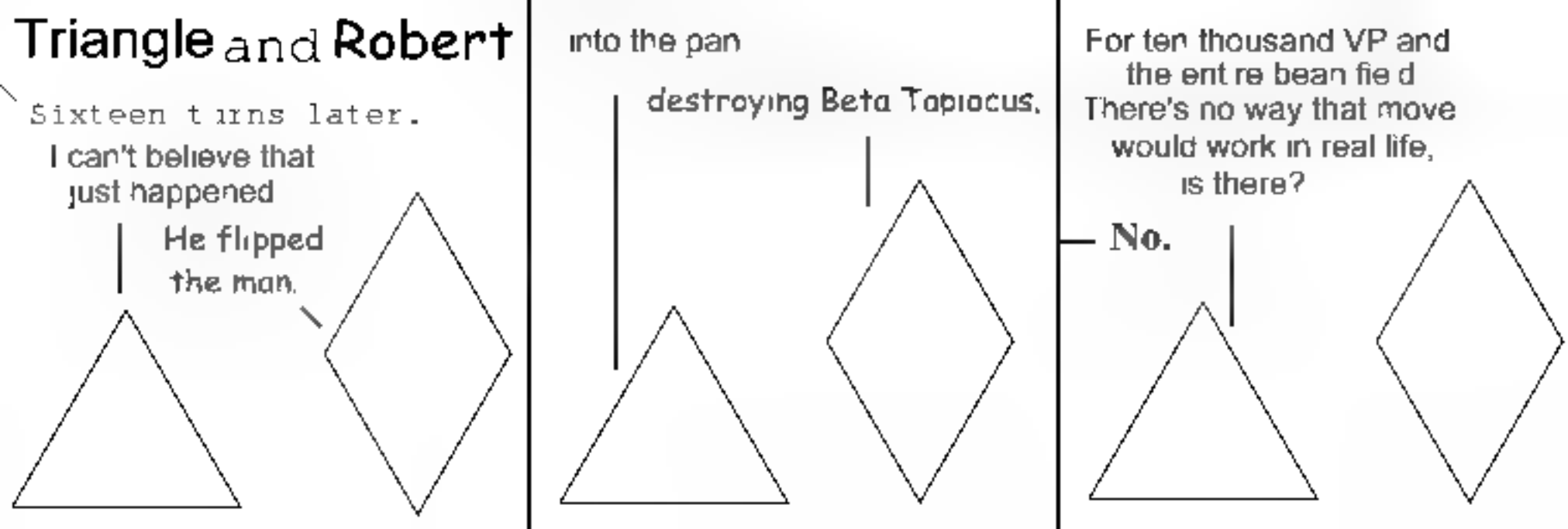
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

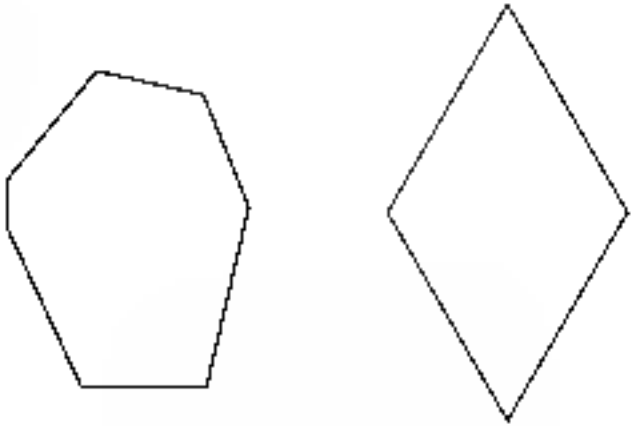


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

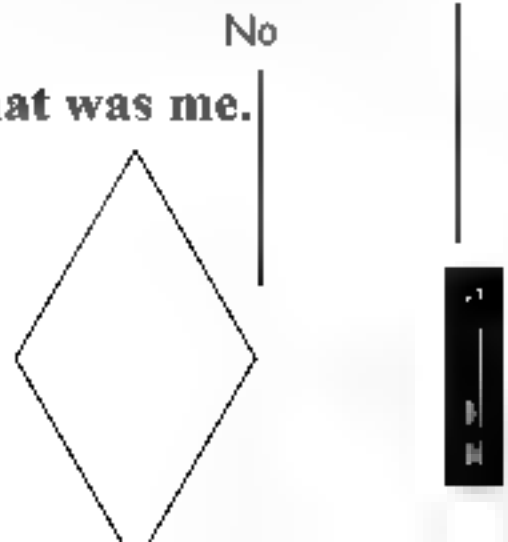
Hi. Am I interrupting...
Oh. You're playing H^3.



Did someone spill pudding on the board?

No

That was me.



Oh. I knew there were rules for that now, but... So unless the red hippo has a miai I'm not seeing, the game's basically over. Can I pull you away for a Sentry meeting after?

Triangle and Robert

Do we have a ca endar?

It melted around turn 8

I don't mean in the game

I know I th nk when my hippo ate the Wild Draw 4 marbie while you were in the k tchen brewing the second batch of tea, there was a time coilapse.

I think that might be g bberish

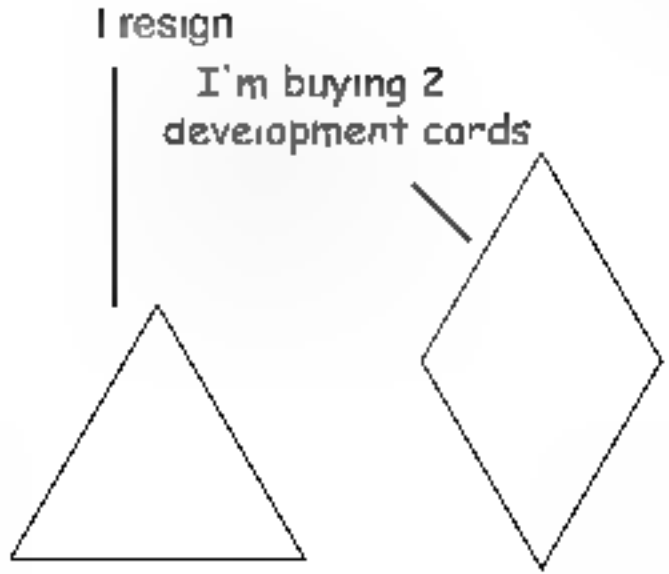
What's a "time col apse" supposed to be exact y?

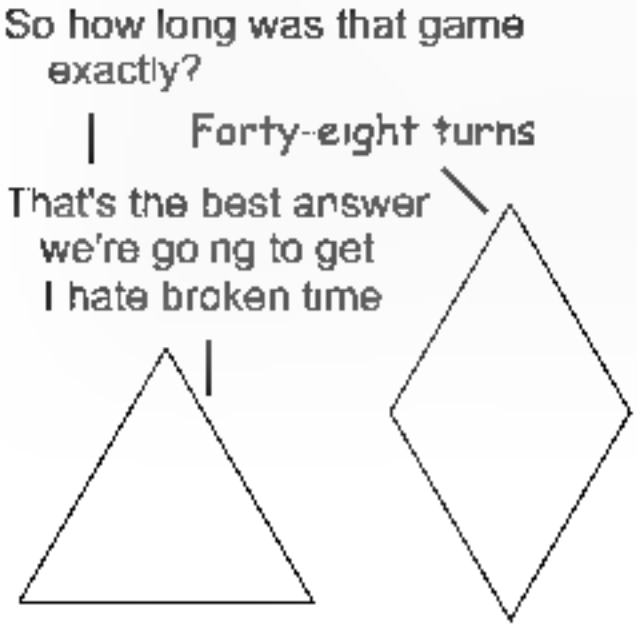
When time forms sort of a souffié instead of a pudding, and then it falls?

You're say ng we beat egg whites .nto time

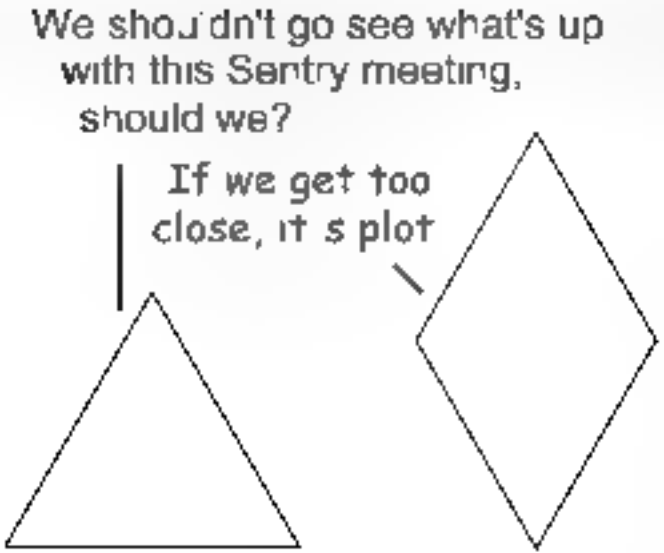
It was a – metaphor

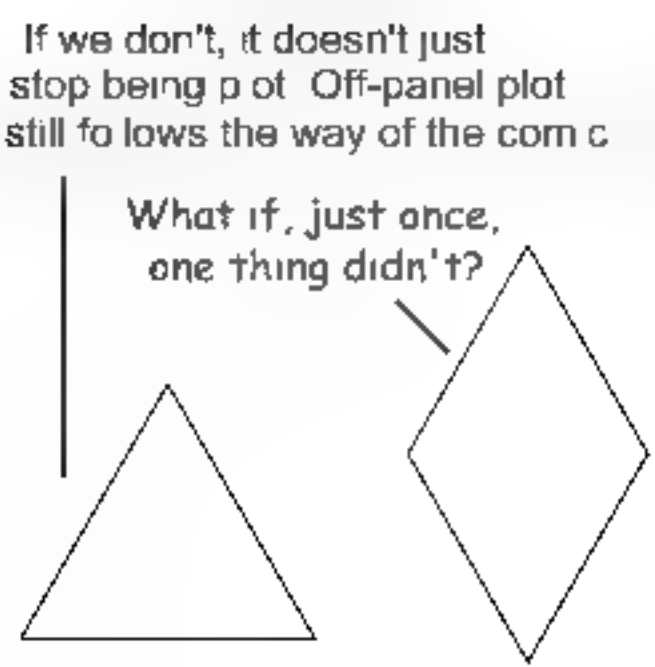
Triangle and Robert

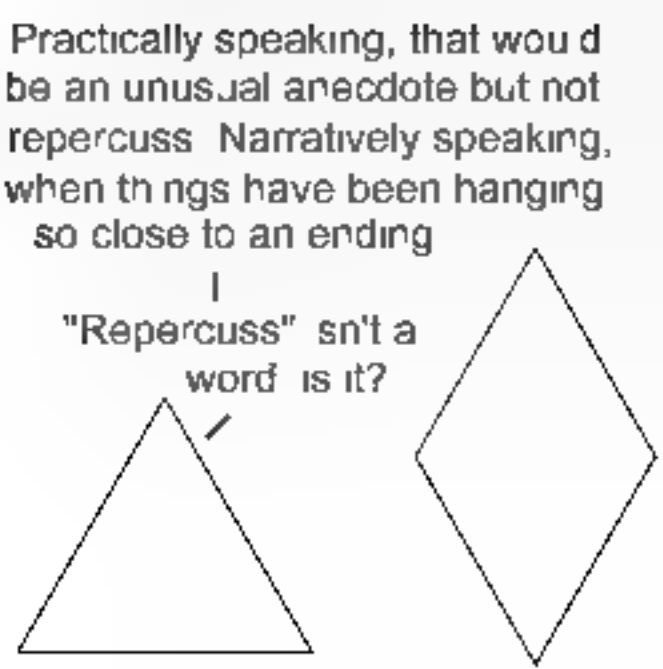




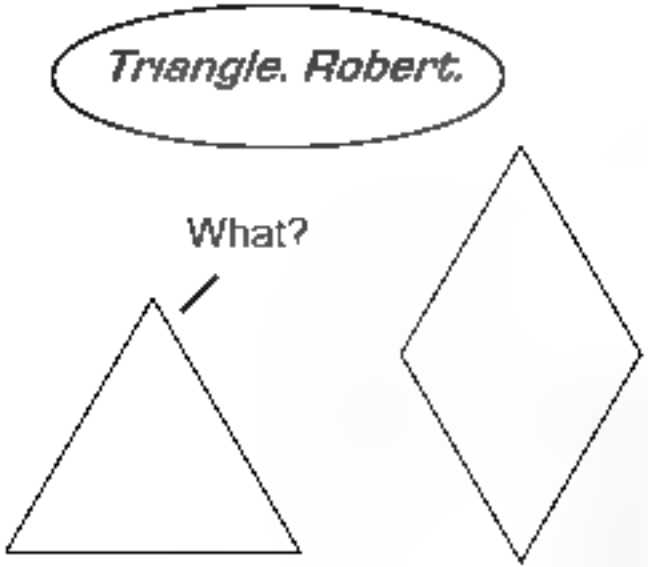
Triangle and Robert

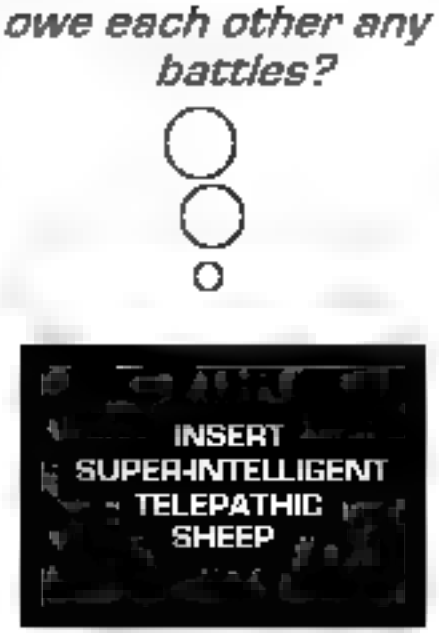




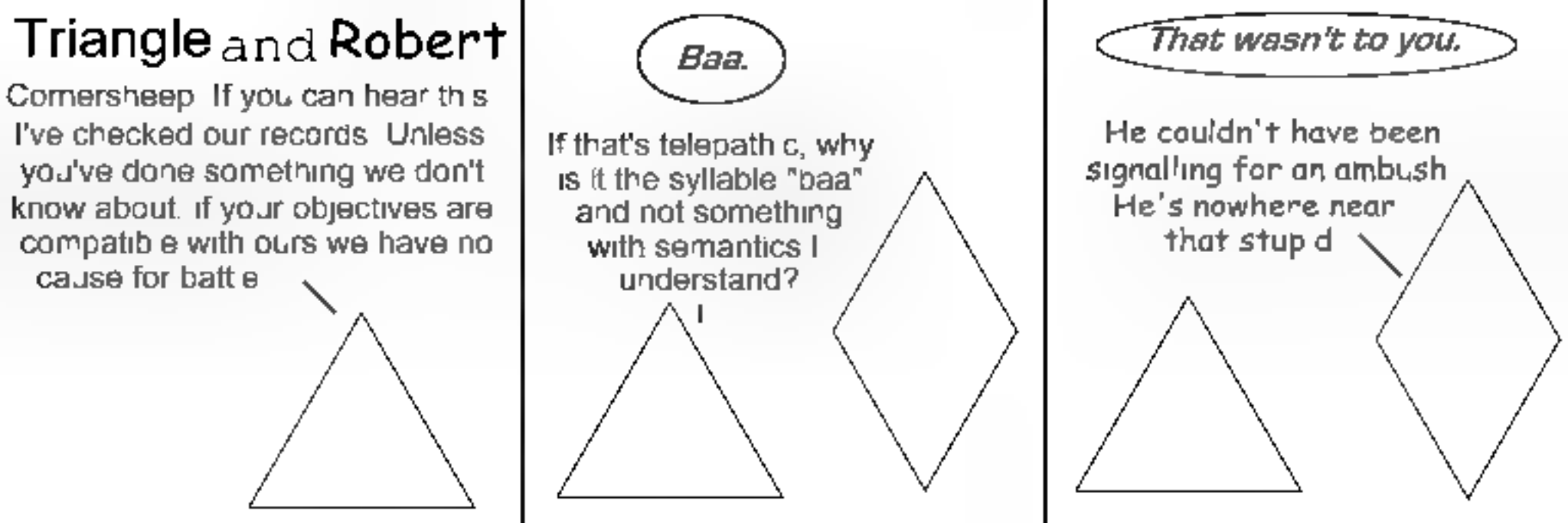


Triangle and Robert



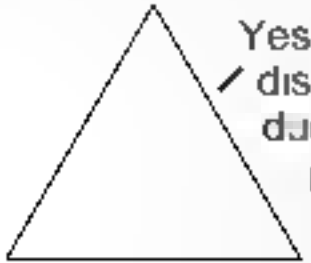


Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Get away from that! That is not technically grass and may electrocute you! Am I still sending to Triangle?



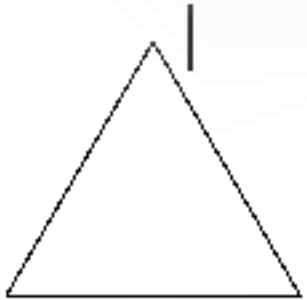
Yes I take it your long distance telepathy is due to some sort of machine with too many buttons

Too few buttons. If it had more, it could use a flat non-modal interface instead of needing me to go in and out of menus.

The menus aren't even actual menus though, it's mor

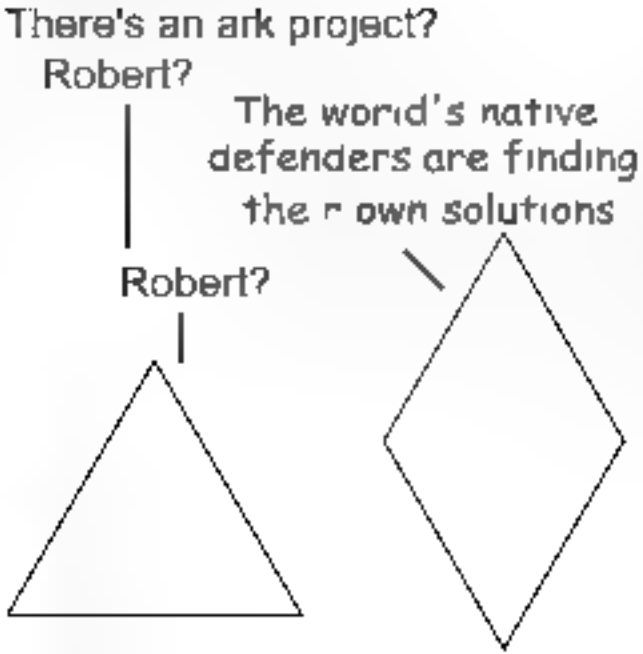
Hel o!

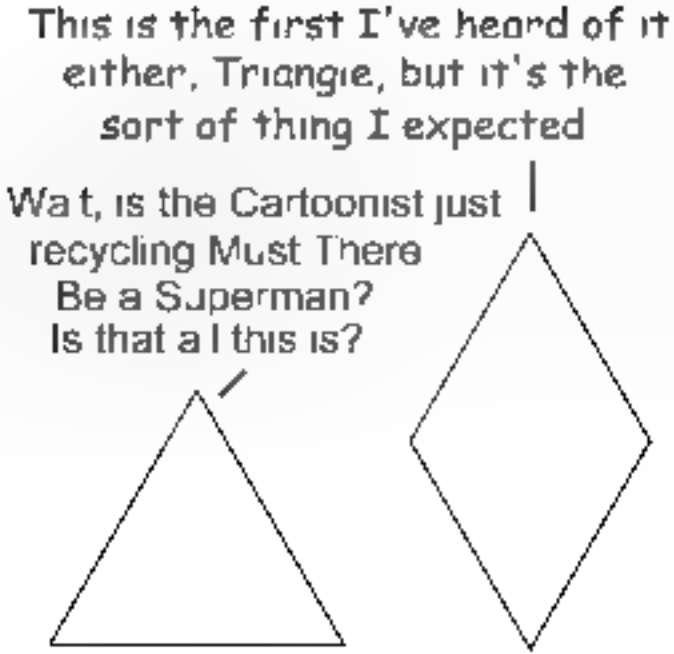
Can you hear me?



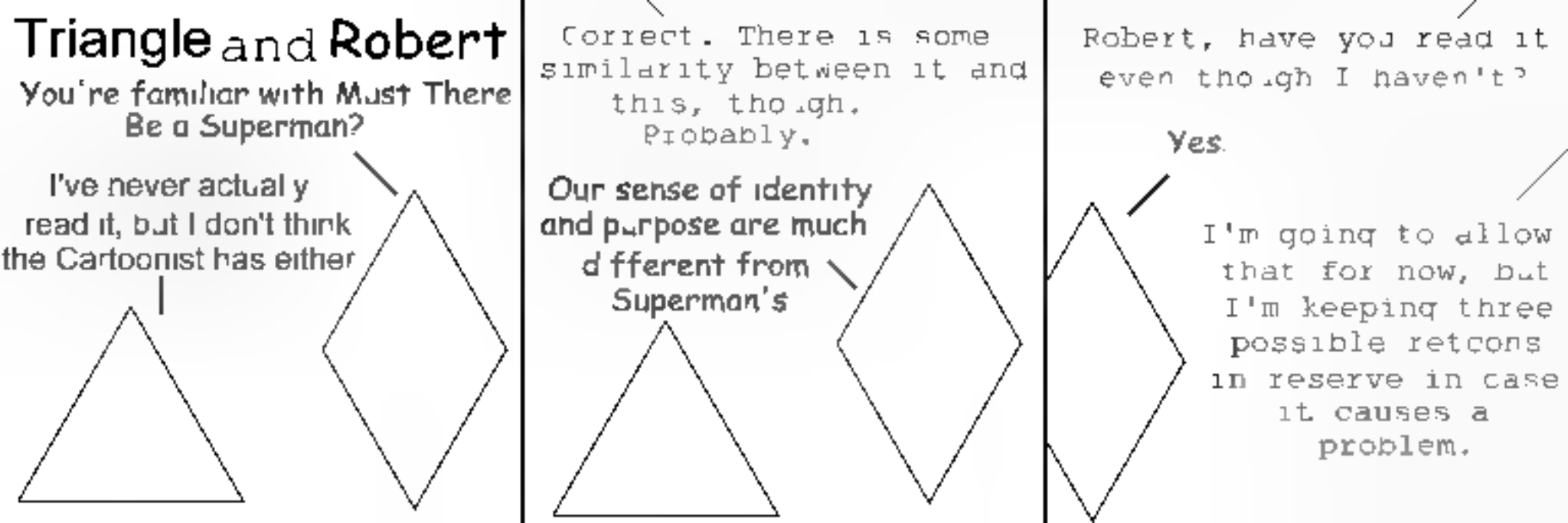
Triangle and Robert

I'll be meeting with the Sentries to help with the ark project. I wanted to be sure you wouldn't have a problem.

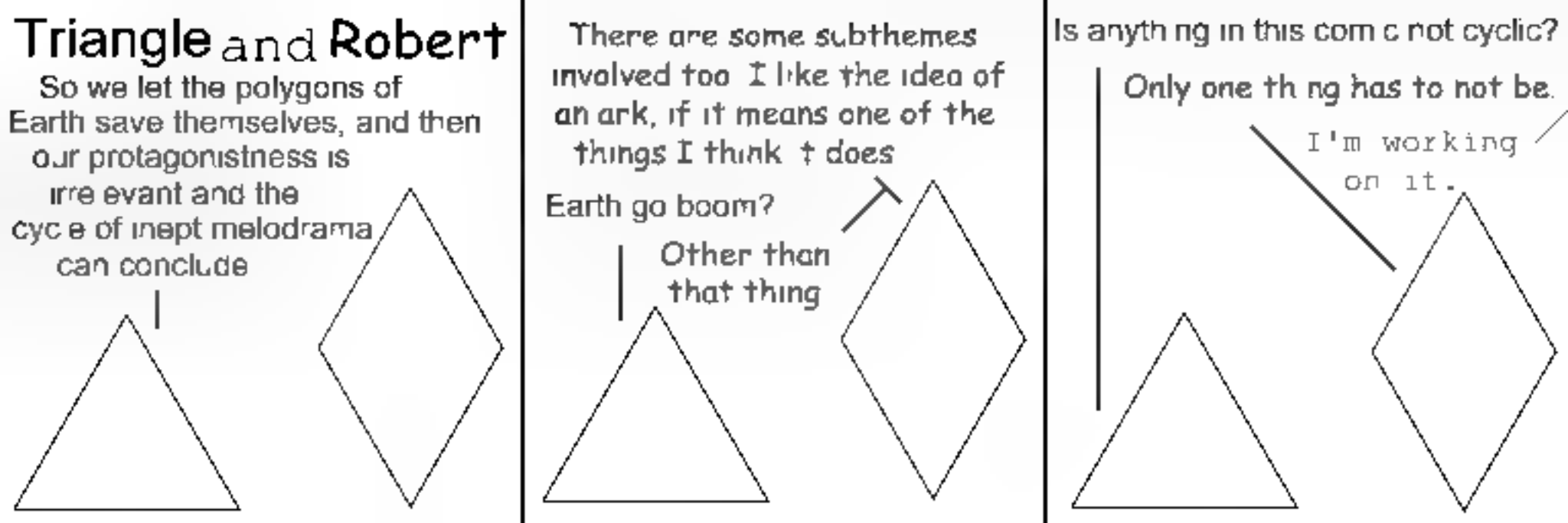




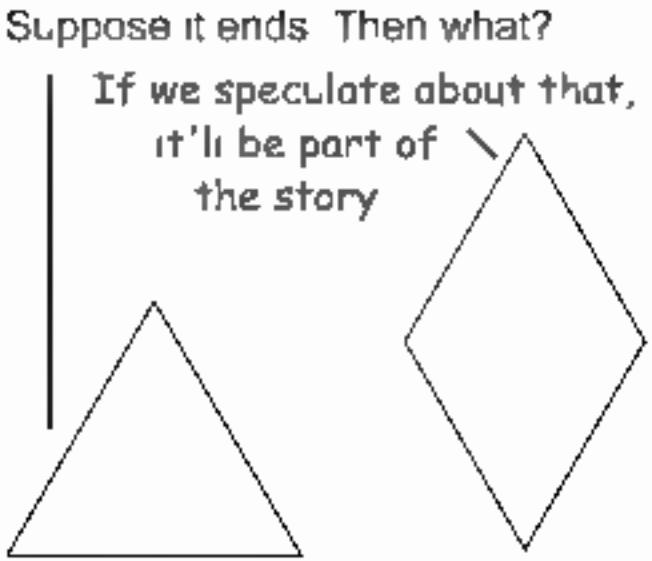
Triangle and Robert

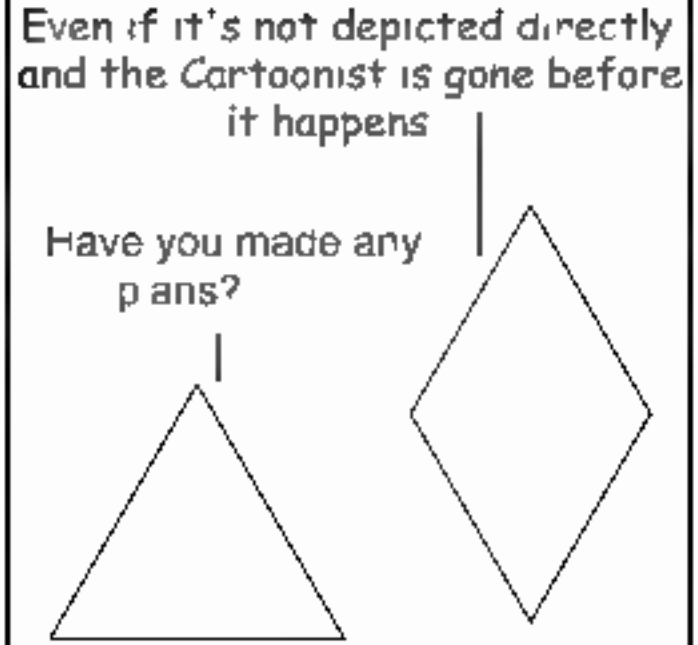


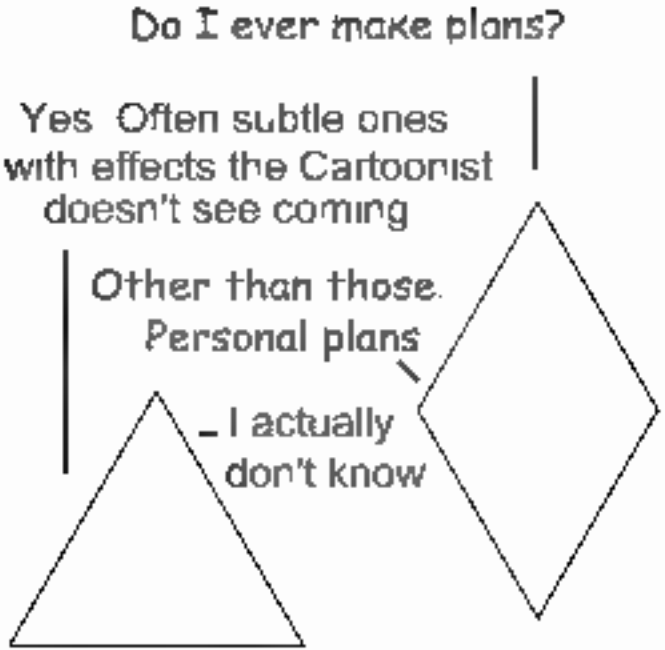
Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert







Triangle and Robert

Stay away from the construction area!

I don't see a construction area

Yes. You're far enough away.

You don't even want me passive y observ ng the ark?

Who told you it was an ark?

The Comersheep

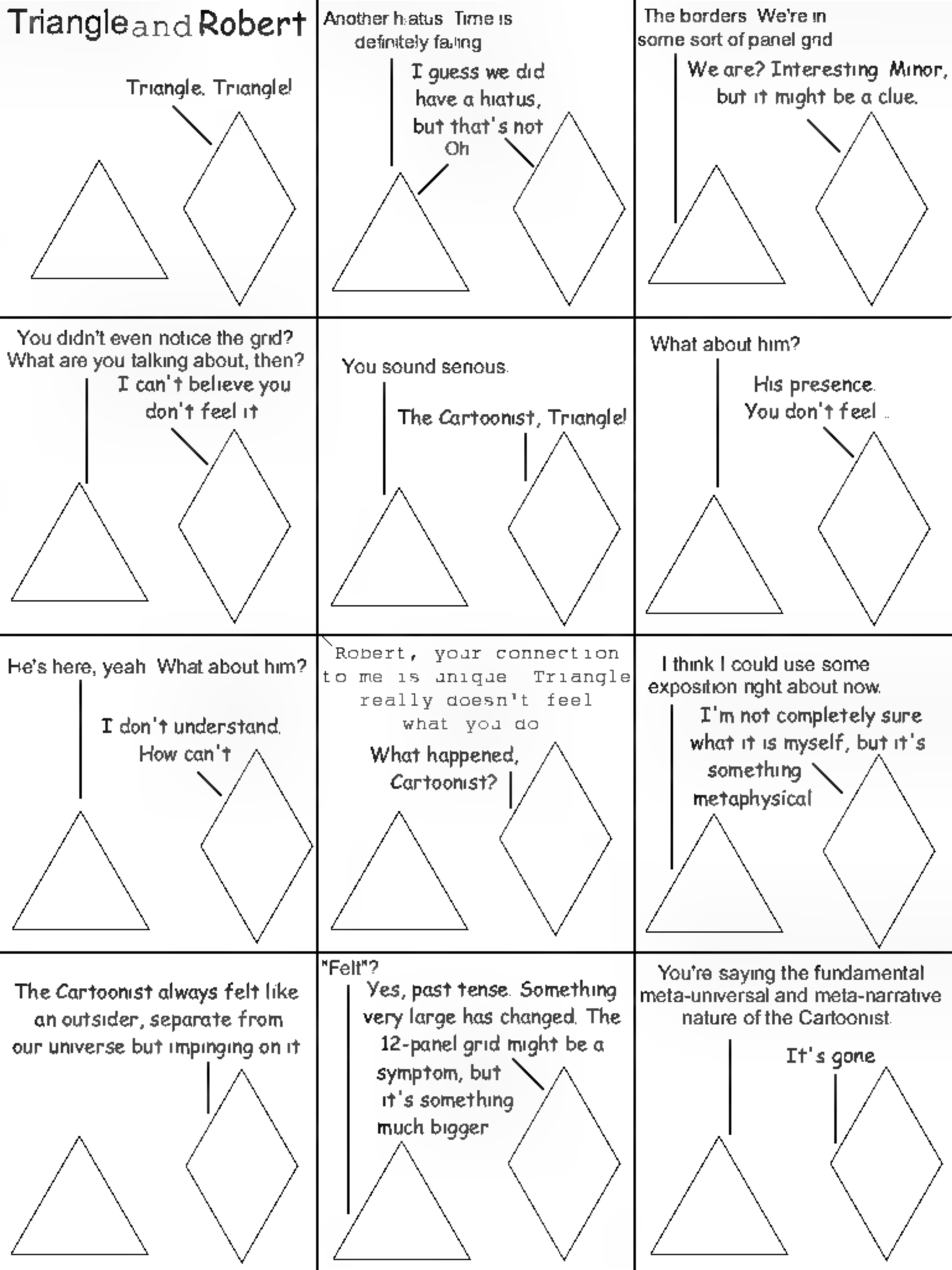
Should I not know that?

Did he say anything specific about the semiotics of the term?

No S nce when do you say "semiotics"?

We need to be careful about melodrama leaks.

Triangle and Robert



Triangle and Robert

Robert, stop staring at me

I'm scared too. Cartoonist, what HAPPENED?

I don't know, exactly. I'm a character in this comic strip, not the author.

Huh?

Then who's the author?

Until that last hiatus, I was identical with the author. I haven't always synced up in every fact, but my identity and emotional state were his in a thematically meaningful way.

And now you've changed.

No, he did. I'm a fundamentally static character.

So you're

The Cartoonist. My characterization as that being stands. I'm just no longer the actual being creating the comic.

I was hoping this would happen. I wrote a plotline contingent on it. I have no way of knowing if that plotline is still going to be carried out, but it would be a good one.

I think we need more exposition

What exactly changed?

I don't know. I'm not privy to the thoughts of the writer. I remember things up to the change, and I can deduce from my own existence that he continues to exist.

Has there been a change of authorship?

I don't believe so. I wasn't planning one, anyway. As far as I know, the writer now is the same person I was. He just outgrew the persona he wrote himself as.

What kind of change was it?

I don't think he can answer that, Triangle. We should focus on the plotline.

It was some action, sustained thought, or experience I could never have, in my own mindset.

I remember everything from when I was identical with the writer. Well, not everything, human memory is tricky. I remember as much as he would.

And you had a plotline in mind for when this happened.

A pretty good one, I think.

Here's the key to it: You weren't real to me before. I had no ethical obligations towards you, only artistic ones.

I did horrible things, and while they were morally permitted when I did them, they no longer are for my current existence. I need to make reparations.

Triangle and Robert

You were just writing a comic strip, Cartoonist, You have nothing to atone

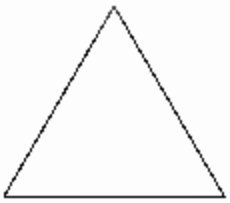
Maybe not to atone, but I do have an obligation to help my fellow beings, and that means fixing things where possible.

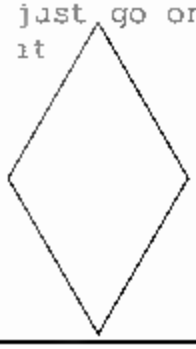
I can't wave a deus ex machina and make everything better. I'm still bound by the characterization I'm written to, and that includes the attempt at making a meaningful narrative.

And incompetence at same.

Yes.

I can't be the one who writes what's going to come, you see. If I did somehow manage to get it right, I'd just go on to undermine it somehow.



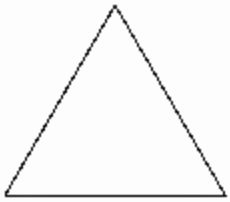


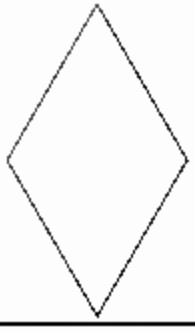
This universe... I don't know what it was like before I came, but I'm sure it was better than I wrote it.

You believe it had a before?

Yes, it's written to have had one. Why wouldn't I?

Just the comic's own state, the lack of visual quality... that was already an unforgivable crime against your reality.





That's before getting into the actual content of the strip. For no particular reason, I've had you two, and others, lay so much waste. I never even bothered drawing the waste you laid.

And above all the individual crises and disasters and pointless body count raising, there's the cycle of Races, the wiping out and restarting of life on this world. It's the Beforings' fault, within the narrative, but I did write it into being.

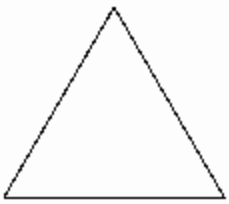
But you're going to fix it all, right? That's the plan now! No?

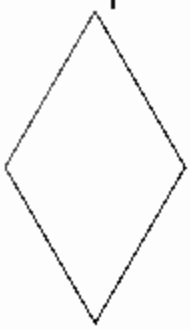
I can't fix it all. My omnincompetence is inherent and absolute. I can do all I can, and that's not really so much.

When I am judged, and I know I will be, I hope that this fact will be considered: the Time of the Oval, if I had not come, would have done its own damage, perhaps even as much as I have. It does not excuse me, but perhaps it allows for some sort of...

You sound like you're going off to die, Cartoonist

We'll meet again.

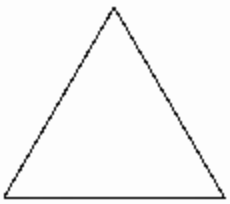


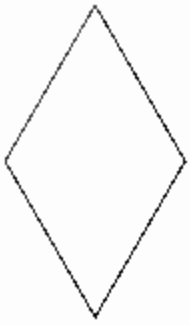


"We'll meet again"?

That's not some trick statement to parse for an alternate meaning. I'm not talking about an afterlife or time loop or pantheistic metaconsciousness or pun or any other copout. I mean it in exactly the spirit it sounds like.

Triangle, Robert, you have my full assurance that we three will meet again.





Triangle and Robert

The Cartoonist.

Yes.

So you're here to kill me.

No.

To humiliate me.

No.

Then to intimidate me. This is a threat: I've only been outside the strip at your whim. When you want me in it, I can't stop you.

What you say is true, but I'm not here as a threat

You want me to ask what you're here for.

Or just to stop guessing and let me tell you.

Go on.

I'm here to surrender.

I shouldn't believe you.

I agree. I don't expect any trust from you, Justice Pants. I've earned the opposite.

I know who you are and you know who you are, but I have to announce it anyway. Trying to keep the strip followable is written into my nature.

I'm not sure I know what you mean by "written into".

I'll try to explain that after the exposition.

You were always the noblest of the anti Cartoonist leaders, Justice Pants

That's not true.

It is true. I know that your motives are not of the purity you wish they were, but they are purer than those of any other who stands against me.

You know that?

I know it was true when I wrote it, and I don't believe anything has changed. You resent the world's new balance of melodrama. You want to be a superhero of your own again.

There's nothing noble about that.

But that's only a sliver of your motivation. You've always fought evil, Justice Pants. That's never changed for a moment.

Triangle and Robert

If all you wanted was to be a superhero again, you'd have undermined the Sentries.

I couldn't do that. Cuisine magic has done great things.

But if you really wanted the spotlight, you'd have tried to steal it from them. Your attempts to loosen my control of your world aren't just about your own glory.

You said I was "the noblest of the anti-Cartoonist leaders"...

I guess if you only mean the top ones it could be true.

And so, it is to you that I offer my surrender.

Why are you surrendering? There's no reason for me to believe anything like that. I can't even believe you capable of it.

I'm surrendering because I finally can. Until only moments ago, I had no one to surrender to.

You're not making any sense.

You weren't even ants to me. You were just ideas in my head that I put words to because I felt like it.

I was a being from outside your universe, writing a comic strip that incorporated it and twisted it.

That's always been your claim for moral justification: that we don't count. Some polygons even started to believe it.

You didn't count. Now you do. I no longer have an external metaphysical nature. I am no realer than you.

This is a trick.

You should continue to believe that, just in case I'm mistaken. I don't know everything that's happening. There could be a twist I never wrote.

My surrender comes with terms, of course. It would be out of character for me to do something unconditional.

What if I don't accept them?

Then I will take my surrender elsewhere. There are good reasons for you to be my first choice, but there are other representatives of anti Cartoonist forces Someone will accept, if only for his or her own immediate glory.

I'll hear your terms. I might even accept them. But I won't forgive you and I won't let my guard down for a moment.

You have my thanks for that, Justice Pants.

Triangle and Robert

Listen carefully, Justice Pants. These are the seven terms of my surrender to you and to the polygons you represent.

One: The comic strip will continue until Beta Tapiocus, the dual space time padding lump that induces your civilization's cyclic destruction and rebirth, is destroyed. I will retain my powers to that point, as my omnipresent narration is required for the comic strip.

Two: All plot threads established prior to my surrender will continue to progress up until Beta Tapiocus's destruction. The plans to destroy Beta Tapiocus are themselves one such plot thread. It will progress at its own pace; I will not simply destroy Beta Tapiocus myself.

Three: I will not actively use my powers to do harm. I believe your existing concept of "harm" from your time as a superhero is sufficient here, but if you want a more precise formulation we can agree to one.

Four: I will revive and restore to health any polygon or other being I have harmed, at your request or the request of anyone you delegate. I suggest that these resurrections and healings occur off strip to avoid needless melodrama.

Any being?

Any being harmed by my actions, powers, incompetence, or decisions. This includes, but is not limited to, collateral damage from wacky schemes.

Any being harmed? So the Pentagon? The Ovalnaut?

I really doubt you want the Ovalnaut back, but yes.

If you made the request for some reason, I would.

Five: I will not choose the nature of post Beta Tapiocus cosmology, nor will I delegate another to make such a choice.

Six: If the Seventh Race's planned mission to destroy Beta Tapiocus fails, then I will immediately cease all use of my powers, save for silent observation and empathic contact with Robert.

If the mission fails, then this is not the plotline I wrote, and the writer now has something else in mind. If that proves the case, then my only concern is to avoid causing future harm.

Seven: Between one day and one year after the destruction of Beta Tapiocus, the comic strip will have a coda. I will communicate with Triangle and Robert during this coda. At the conclusion of the coda, the comic strip will wholly end.

I will not make any statement in the coda that would risk predestining your universe's future, nor interact with any being other than my two protagonists. The coda will be a single finite conversation.

If you require more information before you can accept my surrender, I can tell you more between strips. I don't believe it's for public consumption

Triangle and Robert

Speaking for myself, as well as on behalf of all those for whom I am authorized to speak, I accept your surrender, Cartoonist.

Thank you, Justice Pants

I will announce this to my own groups, their affiliates, and the general media immediately. And, of course, I expect it to appear in the comic.

You know the Tater Fizz stockpiling plan

It was a massive waste of resources based on a complicated misunderstanding.

At the time, it was It could work now, possibly

Tater Fizz is no longer unreal to me, and it does frighten me It's possible that enough of it could overwhelm my willpower

Of course, it's also real to me that my irrational fear of potatoes is its own being capable of thought and locomotion It might just end up detaching from me if you tried

In any case, you have some other contingencies as well

Some you only partially know about, I suspect. There are aspects of polygon existence you're unfamiliar with, and we've been keeping them in mind.

If I substantively or intentionally violate the terms or core spirit of my surrender, I expect all anti Cartoonist forces to bring their full resources to bear against me

I will be vulnerable to many things I previously was not

You should keep in mind that my mental state, if shattered, could result in Prozac the Bear going on a rampage

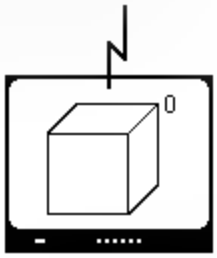
We can deal with him now. He was created in a lab, and we know roughly what makes him tick.

Yes He's no longer just a random mental glitch in the universe, he's a being with his own properties I doubt he'll cause any trouble

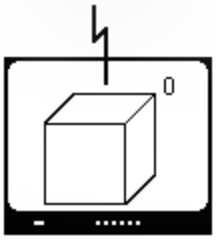
Justice Pants, I am grateful for your continued defiance Soon, it will no longer be necessary

Triangle and Robert

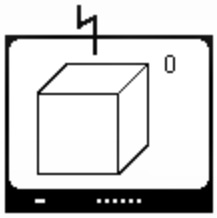
Hello, polygons of the press and of the world. I'm Cube and this is, of course, launch day for the ark.



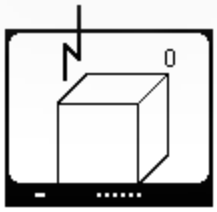
I'm sure you all understand what's happening, but in case there are any misconceptions I'll use this time to summarize the project.



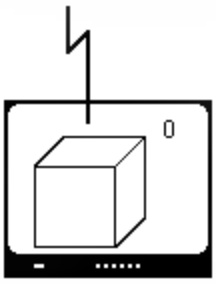
This ark represents the pinnacle in every field of engineering, both modern and ancient. It is capable of deploying a self-sustainable colony on any planet capable of sustaining polygonal life.



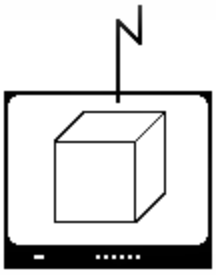
To be specific, this ark can ensure that polygons will survive as a species, given any spherical or hypertaco planet with an Earth-compatible butterscotch-to-tapioca ratio.



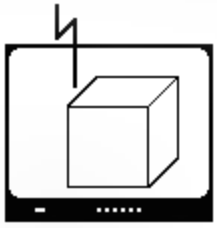
This is essential, as we do not know what will transpire on the mission. Earth itself may cease to exist, or we may be unable to return to it.



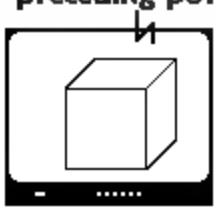
However, we do have strong reason to believe that we will return safely home on completion of the ark's primary mission:



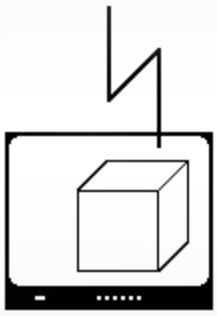
The destruction of the dual space-time pudding lump, Beta Tapiocus. A lump in the pudding of space and a lump in the pudding of time, collided and collapsed.



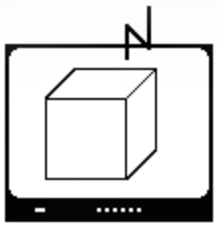
It is this lump, and the cyclic nature of time in its vicinity, which is responsible for the Time of the Oval and for the destruction of the six intelligent races preceding polygons.



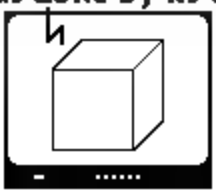
Where our predecessors failed or did not attempt, we will succeed. We will live on, if not on this world then on another.



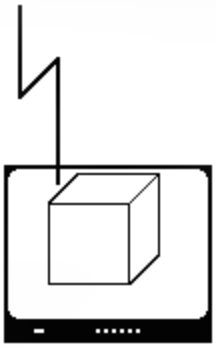
I am well aware that much of the technology in this ark is derived from sources and experiments no sane polygon can condone. Many key components were designed by a black project group I fought against myself.



The continued use of this technology, for the purpose of saving the world, is not unethical. There are no enslaved souls or genetic experiments. No moral harm is being done by the use of this knowledge, even though harm was done by its acquisition.

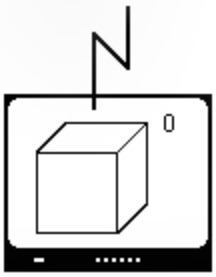


I sincerely apologize for the pain this causes the victims of those experiments and their loved ones.



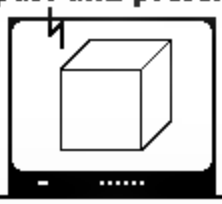
Triangle and Robert

Polygons, the Seventh Race, could not have constructed this ark alone.

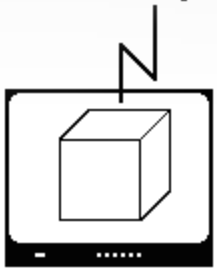


The technology of humans, the Fourth Race, is critical in many points. From their ruined geometric metropolis of Tetris, from their spacefaring Oval, and from many other artifacts and legacies, we have gained understanding of essential technologies.

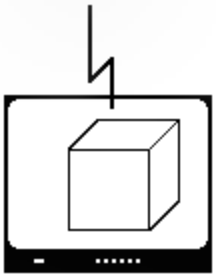
Each of the Races preceding us has played at least some role in this endeavor. The ark will be carrying the genetics of polygons, but it will be carrying the hopes of all Earth's cultures past and present.



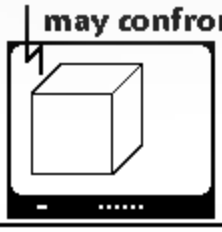
Colonists were selected partially for geometric diversity, in case a sustainable colony is needed.



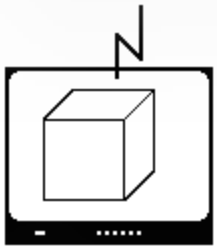
More importantly, however, they were chosen for diversity of skills.



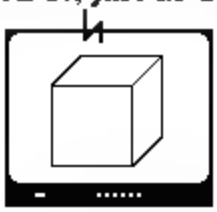
We do not expect the approach to Beta Tapiocus to be simple. As problems arise, we trust that from the best and brightest of the Seventh Race we will have taken aboard polygons able to face off against anything we may confront.



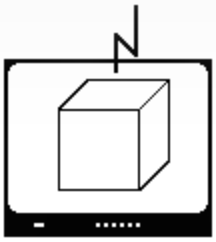
Even though we hope we will not need to found a colony, we believe the colonists will be as valuable as the core crew.



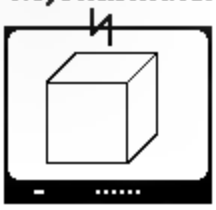
A full list of colonists should be available in your local newspaper. I have far too little time to list them all here, but I'll name a few you might have heard of, just as a sample.



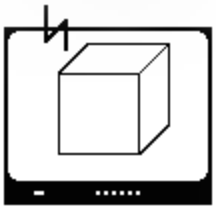
The six Food Sentries, including the latter-day Sentries of the Igneous and Metamorphic groups, will be aboard.



Justice Pants will be aboard.
Martin Five.*
Herman the Undisputed.*
Brian N. O'Cone.
Dr. Mysticismate.*



Jorge Luis Borges.
Gary the Shamed.*
Iaian.*
The Cornersheep.
Instructor Johnson.*
James Secantsby.*
The 88th k-Gon.*



...I have to cut this short. I've just received the final launch calculations from... can't place her name right now, sorry. It appears that the approach to Beta Tapiocus is likely to induce a space-time pair of ducks, but we had already prepared for this contingency and will have no problems. I now have to get on board myself.

*character with no comic strip references

Triangle and Robert

What do you think you're doing?

By the terms of the Cartoonist's surrender, we are requesting to board

The Cartoonist must document the destruction of Beta Tapiocus in the strip. We are essential to this task

That's utter nonsense.

I know, but Robert wanted to try it

Please go away. This isn't your fight. This is everyone BUT your fight. You already understand, Triangle.

Yes. If the Chosen One of the Beforings is who ends up saving you, then you're not saved

We won't try to save you. We want to be there, though. We want to

We just want to watch

That sounds horrible, Robert

We want to stand witness at the moment when the world proves it no longer needs protagonists to save it

No deal.

I'll vouch for them.

Justice Pants?

Stay away from the vital systems. The Cartoonist will not protect you from me if you cause trouble.

Huh?

You didn't read the surrender, Triangle?

Justice Pants?

...

...

Am I going to need to get some exposition before we board the ark? Sorry

Triangle and Robert

In a hallway aboard the ark:

NOW we're lost.

No, we're. yes, now we're lost

This thing is huge. Do you have any idea how long it would have taken them to build it?

If time were working

Would have?

There exists no truthful assertion of the amount of time it actually took to build

I have nothing against a good timeline kink, but they're getting commonplace. That makes them not fun

I hope this timeline conversation isn't foreshadowing.

I can't tell. The Cartoonist isn't writing it, so I have nothing empathic to go on.

Did you just baa?

Oh

Oh.

Baa.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

The Oval technology on board That's all stuff you

Baa.

You still have a chance of founding the Eighth Race — yourself, don't you?

Baa.

INSERT SUPER-INTELLIGENT TELEPATHIC SHEEP

I don't understand what he meant by that

He meant two things.

He doesn't want the Seventh Race to die out, or even to be reduced to slaves.

More than that, though, he doesn't want the Befonngs to have the credit. If he does ever found a Second Fifth Race, he doesn't want it to be by jumping through a pre-existing cosmic hoop

He has too much ego for that.

Triangle and Robert

Eight STUs until launch.

That's "Ship Time Units". Depending on which plane you're aligned to, one STU is currently equal to two to four subjective minutes.

I guess Cube is in charge of this whole thing

He might as well be. If nothing else, he has his rear vertex mark.

He still has that? Yeah. The Cartoonist's promise not to harm Cube is still in effect, and it might hold him back even if he breaks the surrender

Lieutenant Carter to Cube, requesting security clearance for green blast doors.

Huh?

Code granted, check your pager. Let's not use the shipwide PA for the little things. We should discuss new events over it, but not routine.

Acknowledged

That's an interesting command decision

He understands how to maintain trust

Mr Disease How'd you come back to life, anyway?

Not all the warrior-chefs of my clan were opposed to my methods. There was a sort of schism over whether to revive me.

My Fondue quest was completely futile as an actual quest, but I believe the Fondue's intent was for my clan to prove its honor after my death

I am unclear how this helps me as a Sentry directly, but it is good to know I am supported in my choices after all

I believe you should be in the rearward cabins, by the way Follow the orange arrows, once they're visible.

Triangle and Robert

Triangle and Robert are comfortable in their cabin.

So, we're nearly at Beta Tapiocus. I wish I could add an "already" or "at last" to that.

The mind's necessarily imperfect understanding of Time.

Has a history of filing nuisance lawsuits and being immediately thrown out of court. I know

That's not what I was going to say

Attention, crew and colonists. This is Cube. The predicted space-time pair of ducks is manifesting now. Meat Sentry, please prepare your extravehicular combat suit.

These ducks... we may have made a miscalculation of scale. Dairy, Grain, Vegetable, Metamorphic Sentries, please prepare your extravehicular combat suits.

Orpuddex? You should be ready for extravehicular too. This could be bad.

Cube's getting ready to scramble all six Sentries.

Is there a good reason they're even following his orders?

Meat Sentry here. "Miscalculation" doesn't begin to cover this. We're going to need tactics.

I think it's because he's the one that got the facts straight. Information is sort of the key to overcoming the Time of the Oval. I hate that name, you know —

This is the Vegetable Sentry. I suggest the Igneous Sentry take the lead, this is his terrain.

Yeah, the Oval was pretty tangential to the actual Time

Dairy. Seconded. Igneous?

Triangle, the Sentries aren't arguing with each other. This must be serious.

It is, Robert.

This is not my first pair of ducks. I know what to do. The Meat Sentry will provide the main force.

Suited up and ready to move out.

The space-time pudding lump is guarded. That pair of ducks isn't a random anomaly, the Beforings have it there as a defense

Grain Sentry here. Mr. Dis-- the Metamorphic Sentry and I are ready.

There's power in the names of the food groups.

Triangle and Robert

The Sentries can handle this, Robert

It just feels odd. Usually we find out about this sort of battle later in a flashback. We could actually jump in this time.

We shouldn't. The Sentries know what they're doing. Orpuddex can handle time and space, Linda can handle ducks.

Who handles pairs?

I don't think that's important

The Vegetable Sentry would handle pears, right?

Meat Sentry to ark. It's a standoff at the moment, but with Igneous out of action...

What?

He went into his battle form. It was incredible... he took a big gash out of the space duck. It was power on a metagod scale, while it lasted.

What happened?

He just couldn't hold his shape together. I'd blame it on his tapioca ratio.

This is the Vegetable Sentry. I've just spotted those two circles... those "eye" things... heading back to the ark. Meat Sentry, I think that leaves you in command.

You think I'm fit for command? What if I berserk?

Are we supposed to be able to follow this fight scene?

I'm already preparing a three-dimensional Border of Lettuce. If you can't be trusted, I'll just cordon off you and the ducks until one of you falls.

You will not berserk. Trust your full instincts, not merely those of a warrior

Who's doing the supposing?

We're going to need flanking here. Someone give me a reason not to ask the Chosen One.

No. Linda. If you ask, I might end up saying yes.

There's something mythic going on here, right?

Yes. This is their fight to win. Not just the Sentries', but not mine

Obeying your command, Meat Sentry. Vegetable Sentry to ark. If I'm not on shipwide comm, put me on it.

Who made the fruit salad in galley H yesterday afternoon? Get your vegetable peeler and head for my cabin immediately.

Triangle and Robert

Vegetable Sentry to ark! Am I in touch with the chef responsible for yesterday's fruit salad?

I'm not a chef, just a

Get your peeler.

It's not my

Get it.

You're going to bring that to my cabin and touch it to the door. Unless I'm grossly mistaken, the door will open at its touch.

There's a painting of a feast hanging in there. Rip the bowl of fruit from it, and half the tomatoes. Hang the pieces in your own cabin.

Robert, I think he's

I get what he's doing.

Someone get an EV suit ready for that chef.

He's delegating a Fruit Sentry, as has been the implicit right of his position from the start

If you think this'll help somehow, I'll try it.

My peeler... it is my peeler, isn't it? It's the kitchen's in name, but... yes. I can do this. Those maraschinos when I was four were no accident.

I'm ready.

I can taste it, Robert. This isn't some temporary loan of powers. There are seven Sentries now, and there will continue to be until some massive change in the fabric of cuisine

In any less desperate situation, that would have been a foolhardy waste, but everything is on the line. I wouldn't have thought to do it, but I think the Vegetable Sentry's decision there just saved the universe

What can a Fruit Sentry do that the Igneous Sentry couldn't?

I don't know. With any luck, neither do the ducks.

Fruit Sentry to Cube! When I finish this orange sauce, you'd better have my EV suit ready! Meat Sentry, do you read?

Not as often as I should... sorry.

Yes, I read you loud and clear.

What concentration of orange sauce would be ideal for those ducks?

Ideal would be the density of a neutron star, but practically speaking, I'd say try for...

Neutron star's good. Will a half teaspoon be enough to make a dent?

Triangle, is the new guy bluffing?

I don't think so. It'd take more oranges than exist on all of Earth, but I don't think it's a bluff

Make that three quarters of a teaspoon. I remembered I had sherry.

Triangle and Robert

You can keep hitting and hitting and hitting the space duck, but the time duck just undoes everything! How can you hurt the time duck?

It's a fair question. With Orpuddex out, there's not much time in any of the cuisine.

Herbal puns notwithstanding.

Metamorphic Sentry to ark. No, disregard that.

Metamorphic Sentry to Cube, personally. You know what to do.

What are you talking about?

You know what you're capable of, Cube. You've unearthed layers of history and ruin beyond any other mortal's achievements.

What good is an archaeologist against those things? There's no record of anything like this.

You understand the gradual accumulation over cycles of time. You also have had some training with desserts, in your cover as an ice cream man.

If you're getting at something, spit it out.

You've acclimatized to many strange magics. If you laid claim to it, the mantle of Sedimentary Sentry would become yours.

No. I must refuse this. I have my part to play, and it is in science, not magic.

Why is he distinguishing between science and magic?

Wishful thinking.

We require one who can touch time. Who, of all mortals, has come closer to that than yourself?

I'm no chef. I know my way around a soft-serve dispenser, but...

Sedimentary. That's basically fat, right?

It's food that accumulates. Mostly fats and sugars, but also layered dips and some complex casseroles.

When the Chosen One first came to our world, who was the first polygon to offer him food? If you will take it, it is your destiny.

They were pretty good cakes, too.

So this is true? Cube's been the Sedimentary Sentry the whole time?

No, he hasn't been. He isn't. He just might become.

Each iteration of each cycle defines, in some way, its own magical points of reference. I will take on the post of Sedimentary Sentry, but solely to lay down a precedent in it.

The position of Sedimentary Sentry shall be passed on to a successor not at the moment of death, but rather at the peak of the Sentry's powers. Thus, there will be no waxing and waning of the food group's prominence.

Sedimentary cuisine will grow incrementally. Each generation will add a new layer, not forgetting what came before but enhancing it.

So speak I, the first Sedimentary Sentry of the Seventh Race. I will now, as my first and final act of high cuisine-magic, seek out and contact a successor to inherit my power and surpass me.

Clever. Maybe too clever to work, but it might pass off as mythic if no one thinks about it too hard.

Triangle and Robert

On Earth, an unassuming pentagon receives an urgent telepathic message

Keven West! Kevin West, pentagon, age twenty as of last time desync. This is the Sedimentary Sentry. I must communicate with you.

What? Sedimentary?

Make your nachos, Kevin.

Is there going to be a party? I only make them for parties

Not the ones you make for parties. The nachos you dream of.

I can't make those! They're just this weird sort of... thing They wouldn't even be edible

You are mistaken. They would only be unfit for mortal consumption.

You're saying there's some sort of non-mortal who'd actually eat them?

They are supremely suited, above all other foods known to mortals, as a sacred offering.

Offering to whom?

Any god that wants some, and will grant at least some boon in exchange. This is not a time to be choosey.

I don't know if I can make them, for real In my dreams, the oven timer..

Do not fear if they burn. A burnt offering is no less precious for it.

This is to save the ark, right? You're Cube?

Yes. Accept your place as the Sedimentary Sentry, Kevin West. Petition gods known and unknown, current and dead, for their aid.

Shortly afterward, on the ark:

I have no idea what three quarters of those gods are even supposed to represent.

Does it matter? They're creating the best diversion ever

Meat Sentry to ark! The time duck is overflowing with legends! I can't look directly at it, but I think it's immobilized for now. We can win this!

This isn't adding up Gods aren't supposed to actually accomplish anything useful, not even if you get a swarm of them. If anything, a swarm should be even less effective than one god

It's only a delaying tactic. There's another step here. Probably another Sentry I hope it's not me, that would make a really lousy allegory

Triangle and Robert

Robert. Robert!

What?

Taste it

Taste what?

We each have our own unique talents. I supposed this isn't in your field

I might be having a sensation, but it's not taste.

It's taste

There's cuisine-magic going on, of a kind completely outside everything we know, as far stranger than metamorphic food as metamorphic food is stranger than pudding.

And pudding's pretty strange in the first place. Who thinks "fundamental building block of cosmos? Oh, I know! PUDDING!"?

The Befonngs. And the Cartoonist.

I'm really not sure this is taste.

Meat Sentry to ark. What just happened? Did someone just restructure magic again?

See? Taste

Please don't be alarmed. I've been working on quaternions for years. I applied every combination of mathematical and logical operations I could think of... today, I tried cooking them.

Who are you and how are you on the intercom?

Dr. James Secantsby... but call me the Quaternion Sentry now. I need to requisition an EV suit, I'm going out.

Grain Sentry to ark. I don't know a lot about quaternions, but from what I understand they'll be very useful dealing with space-time issues. I'll endorse the requisition.

Welcome to the team, Quaternion Sentry. The Vegetable Sentry says you should bring coffee with you when you come out.

I wonder if the food group is actually just quaternions, or if it includes any other mathematical structures.

I've always wondered if octonions were edible.

Oh, you have not.

Triangle and Robert

Great hunch by the Vegetable Sentry about that coffee

Triangle. After all that... WHY ARE THE DUCKS STILL THERE?

I have no idea.

The first nutrient

Meat Sentry to Water Sentry! Please take over command for the duration of the battle!

I second.

I third.

I also second.

I fifth

Can he fifth if Fruit seconded instead of fourthing?

What's going on?

Water's... a food group, Robert. It's nearly on a level with pudding itself.

A Water Sentry would necessarily be capable of something approaching omnipresence. Tactically, the implications for this battle

Omnipresence? Could...

I'm not sure how to put this, exactly. It would be insane, but ..

Not me.

Oh. Wait, though. If it's not you, could it still be the...

No. He has no presence at all, within this universe.

A Befonng?

No. I think the omnipresence is new to being the Water Sentry, not a prerequisite for it. I doubt it's anyone you know at all.

Triangle and Robert

Meat Sentry to ark. All non-vegetarian passengers with no allergies, prepare for the best meal you've ever had. The space-time pair of ducks is no longer a threat.

Is it safe to eat them?

Not if you're allergic to anything that's ever existed in all of time.

All ten Sentries are accounted for. Igneous will recover with enough butterscotch, the rest of us are unharmed.

Hold on. Correction?

All *eleven* Sentries are accounted for. As previously stated, Igneous will recover.

Eleven Sentries. There's Meat, Dairy, Vegetable, and Grain

Igneous, Metamorphic, Sedimentary

Quaternion, Water

Fruit

Should I count Sedimentary twice, for Cube and his successor?

No. Each group has one Sentry at a given moment. The succession rule for Sedimentary doesn't change that.

That's ten. There's a Sentry I'm missing. What did I miss?

Cartoonist? I know you can hear me. Little help here?

I have no idea.

I know.

Triangle and Robert

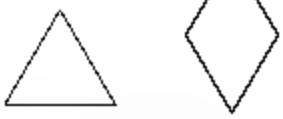
ition for Beta Tapiocus breakup.

Orpuddex is still disintegrated, isn't he?

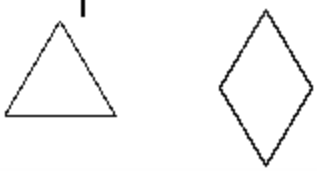
We will begin in ship time units.

To the best of my knowledge

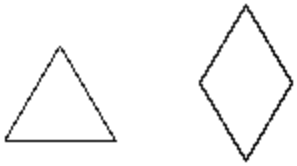
Then who's going to stir the lump?



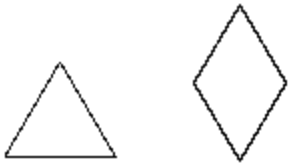
I don't know what the ark's equipped to do. There must be a plan



This is the Meat Sentry. Galley officers, please perform a manual inspection of dry storage.

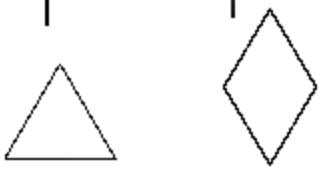


Find the most non-magical ham this ship has and manually heave it out an airlock directly at the time lump.



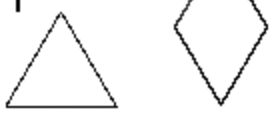
So the Ovalnaut created the first Starham!

Should I just take that as a non sequitur?



Meats don't cure in space. There's not some strange miracle that can cure them. The Starham was already cured before it went into space

What does that have to do with the Ovalnaut?

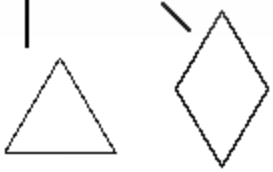


That's how a ham got into space in the first place. I'd guess it got jettisoned from the Oval for some unimportant or random reason

And the time lump?

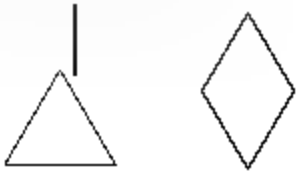
It'll reinforce the cuning, making the ham effectively eternal. Absence of pre-existing magic is key to this.

Is this just a technical cuisine magic point or is there a moral?



Dairy Sentry to colonists and crew. Stay away from the high-pressure cheese storage.

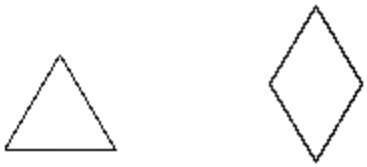
I've been magically a little numb since the pair of ducks. Is he



There's no guarantee the Fondue'll come out right.

The Sentries who have them are preparing Godfoods.

This is the Metamorphic Sentry. There is MSG aboard this vessel, against clear instructions. I will not ask who brought it, but it must be surrendered into my custody immediately



Triangle and Robert

It is not safe for monosodium glutamate to be aboard this vessel other than in my possession. Whoever is in possession of it, relinquish it now! My lab kitchen has a mailslot

Don't look at me, Triangle. I didn't smuggle anything this time.

I made sure of that before we tried to board.

Thank you for your cooperation. I was not expecting to require MSG, but it may be fortuitous that some was aboard after all.

Is the MSG entity the Godfood of the metamorphic group?

That's correct. It sounds like Mr Disease hadn't expected to need its help

This is the Vegetable Sentry.

Which other groups have Godfoods?

I'd have to guess all of them, in theory Wait, no, if igneous...

I'm working on the Book of Salads Past and need a culinary linguist.

Triangle?

Thinking the ramifications of an Igneous Godfood through

If anyone can make sense of "yellow kale" or "fetal spinach", please contact me.

Orpuddex must be both the Sentry of pudding and its Godfood. The others must be calling their Godfoods to compensate for him.

—But the lump is made of pudding. Can the other Godfoods affect it?

I don't know what the Sentries are planning, Robert. I trust their judgment.

...I regret that the Godfood of Vegetable cannot be invoked here or now.

Cube here. While we're apologizing for missing Godfoods, I might as well mention that the Sedimentary Godfood takes many generations of Sentries to summon, each contributing a small part of the ritual. I doubt you'll need it, though.

Yes, that makes sense

Triangle and Robert

The Godfood of Quaternions must be constructed from axioms, but I don't know the axioms to start from. I can't get anywhere with it.

Grain Sentry requesting a communication to Earth. My aunt and uncle will be watching the news, they don't need to be contacted personally.

His aunt and uncle. I didn't really think that thread would get called back to.

Notify them that I never learned the Godfood of Grain. If I had, it would have reduced their ability to defend themselves from the ICI. I ask them now to summon it on behalf of my food group and this ark.

I would direct all of my substance at Beta Tapiocus, but I would be destroyed. Quaternion Sentry, can you construct a mathematical space that intersects this one at only two time points?

Fairly easily.

Do so, connecting now and two years from now. Mr. Disease, place a small amount of MSG into that space. The remainder will go to the lump, but I will live again.

It said "two years" The MSG entity must be positive that time will stabilize

I don't really understand any of this It all seems to be important in ways I wasn't made to comprehend.

This is the forward wave battery We have an emergency

What s a wave battery?

Something that can be forward and have emergencies

State the emergency!

The resonators are supposed to be prime multiples of the carrier!

A wave battery has resonators, a carrier, and some sort of math.

That's correct.

Some of the frequencies are synchronized. We can't fire in this condition I think the software might have been sabotaged! It can be fired when in working order, but this one currently isn't

This is the Qu... no. Applied math situation. This is Dr. James Secantsby. Sorry I'm butting in, but are you running on an RBAD embedded controller?

This sounds like it's going to be a word problem

I believe the resonator alignments are on that platform, yes. Do you know something?

There's a bug in the prime test. It occasionally misses sevens and nearly cost me my thesis.

Missing sevens in a prime test Another plot detail callback! Interesting!

Triangle and Robert

Robert? Do you really remember number theory from a past story arc?

There's definitely a detail somewhere about prime numbers and sevens. I don't remember where.

Sevens... Lieutenant, or whatever your rank is! If we can't fire that battery we're doomed anyway. Try to get Prozac the Bear to show up.

Right, that was it

Prozac the Bear?

He stopped at prime numbered cells escaping from the lab that created him

For a spurious yet significant definition of "created"

Everything about Prozac the Bear is spurious. Don't let that get in your way. He also stopped at some multiples of seven.

Because he was created using defective hardware?

It doesn't have to make sense. It's Prozac the Bear

Prozac the Bear has arrived.

Keep him near the battery. Play a game or something. I'm guessing, but as I said we're doomed anyway if it won't fire.

So the idea is that Prozac tends to alter the rules of reality to suit his perceptions.

If he's near numbers that he thinks are prime, their factors might not physically matter

This is tenuous. We really were doomed anyway though, right?

How should I know?

You usually know how doomed we are, in a comically oblivious way

That was when the Cartoonist was writing things. I don't know what the real author is thinking

When Cube gambles, it's usually serious. What do you think the worst thing that could happen is?

An unbreakable cycle with no loopholes and no variation from recurrence to recurrence.

I was hoping you would say something reassuring

So was I, Triangle.

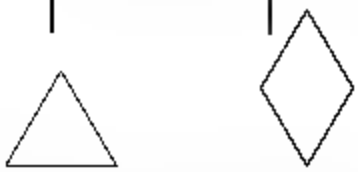
We're supposed to rest our hope on Prozac the Bear

And we have no real idea who supposes that

Triangle and Robert

It has to be downhill from here
Prozac the Bear ended up useful? What else can happen?

There are two readings of the word "downhill"



Fear me!

FEAR ME!

He's recovered from disintegration

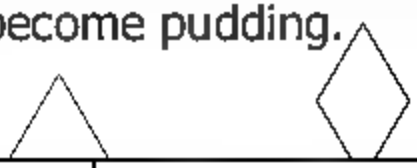
I am Orpuddex, guardian of the site you term Beta Tapiocus. I am the Pudding-Watcher, created by the Beforings to guard their intentions in this universe.

Something's wrong here.

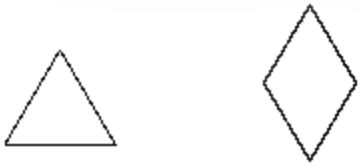
Fear me, mortals, and turn back. You will not disrupt this lump. You will not break the rules of this universe. You will not pass me without a fight, and you will not defeat me.

Cube to Pudding-Watcher. I believe I speak for every polygon on this ark, and every polygon back on Earth, and a few non-polygonal beings, when I say we have no intention whatsoever of turning back.

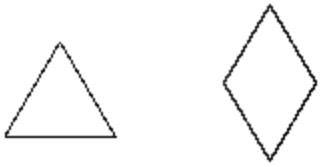
You stand no chance. All of your cuisine, all of your technology... All comes from pudding. All will again become pudding.



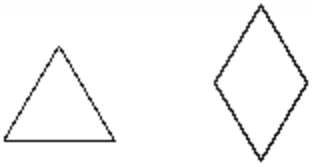
We will fight you, Orpuddex. Though we relied on you to stand as an ally, if you stand between us and Beta Tapiocus: we will fight you.



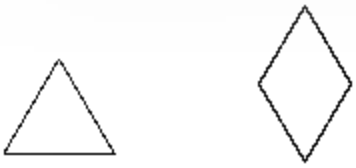
Though the fabric of space itself is yours to command, we will fight you. Though your food group may be more powerful than all those of Earth combined, we will fight you.



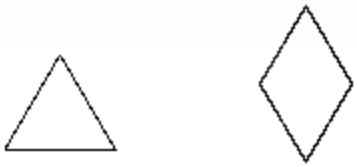
Though the civilizations before us perished by the power you now claim to guard, we will fight you, Orpuddex!



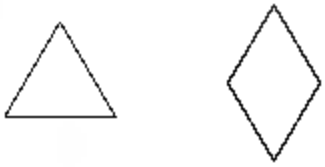
You may draw power from the shining pudding of the stars themselves. You may channel all the puddings of the universe, darkening the skies forever, and we will still fight if you force us.



Though this may be a battle the Seventh Race can never win, we will nonetheless fight! Though it rends this cosmos asunder, we will continue to fight! We will not submit to Beta Tapiocus.



Orpuddex:
We will not fear you.



Triangle and Robert

So this is it. The Beforings made their big mistake. They gave you the power to

Shut up

What?

This isn't a puzzle game. This isn't a situation where we pick out the right verb and noun to jump through the scripted hoop and see the next plot point.

I know I can kill Orpuddex. I know exactly how I'd do it, and I know the ark would proceed to Beta Tapiocus unhindered. Then what?

So this isn't just about a space-time anomaly

If we fight one destiny by invoking another, what are we really accomplishing? This is not a battle to be resolved by turning the Beforings' own will against them.

I think I understand, Triangle.

Maybe the lump would break and the Seventh Race would survive the Time of the Oval. That would be all. We'd escape from a specific cosmological cycle, but the pattern would be unbroken.

I do understand.

This is the Igneous Sentry.

What?

Do you read me, ark?

Triangle. I can't tell. Is that ?

This is Cube, speaking for the ark. We read you, Igneous Sentry.

I'm going to dispel the Godfood of Pudding. It'll all make sense when it's over.

I'm confused

Acknowledged, Igneous Sentry.

I look forward to finding out what this means.

Triangle and Robert

I've just gotten reports of something odd happening around the hull. I don't want to alarm anyone, but I suggest everyone secure their most important possessions and be prepared to move.

Maybe we should have brought some important possessions for this.

For what?

I still don't want to alarm anyone, but everyone below deck 14 should start heading upward now. This isn't a drill, but proceed calmly.

I don't know, I just don't want to miss out on it.

Are we below deck 14?

We're on deck J, I think.

We might as well head upward in case

Please do not crowd the elevators. Use the ramps or stairs.

I don't see anyone in the hallway

We're probably above deck 14 then.

Evacuate! This is not a drill! Everyone evacuate! The hull has lost stasis! Temporal decay will be reaching the interior in under 4 STUs!

I think I know where the life pods are supposed to be

The hull's based on the Oval. This shouldn't be happening.

There's a standing interaction wave self-intersecting in just the right spot to weaken the hull. It's an echo cascade between the port thrusters, the library electronic catalog, and one of the Hungry Hungry Hippos sets in the game room.

I only understood half of that, but thank you. I'm seeing failures all over the evac systems! All mages on board, and anyone else with teleportation capacity, prepare for emergency instructions!

I think I count.

Everyone with teleportation capacity or general magic, set up some sort of signal so you can be found easily. It looks like we're going to have a total hull failure soon. We need to get as many people back to Earth as possible.

That's a pretty good signal. Is it visible through walls?

Get as many passengers near you as possible. If you can't use teleportation yourself, try to link your powers to someone who can. Most of us aren't going to make it out alive. I intend to go down with the ship myself. I'm sorry about this, everyone.

Attention. This is Cube. The hull has just reassembled itself for no reason whatsoever.

An arbitrary deus ex machina

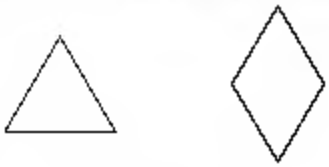
Please return to your cabins. I don't have a good explanation, but there is no longer an emergency.

They didn't have a contingency plan for that level of stasis failure. Someone had to do something, and no one else could.

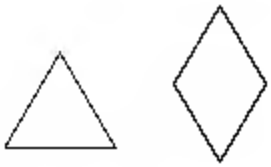
Sorry if I subverted a thematic point or something

Triangle and Robert

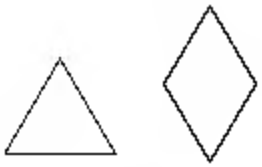
All pudding separation teams are in position to destroy Beta Tapiocus. This will be a moment of glory, but let's not think about ourselves.



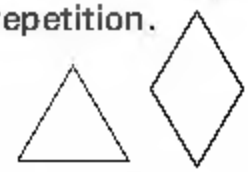
We're doing this for everyone on Earth. More than that, we're doing it for everyone this space-time pudding lump and its historical cycle have ever affected.



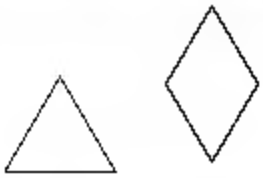
We're doing this to honor the First Race, who rose from pudding and fell before a power they had no hope of comprehending.



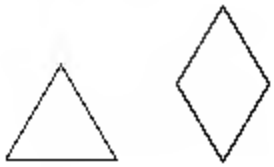
We do this to fulfill the promise of the Second Race, who rose above their predecessors ever so slightly before they died, proving that progress can happen even through repetition.



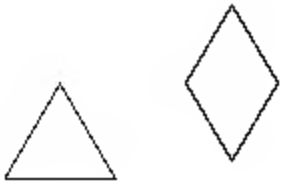
To carry forward the spirit of the Third Race, the weavers of magic and myth, whose contributions live on in ways more fundamental than we can consciously recognize.



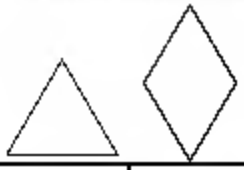
To correct the errors of the Fourth Race, who had the technology to break free of their bonds but not the wisdom.



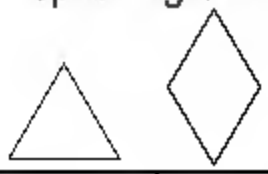
To justify the hopes of the Fifth Race, who accepted their demise with calm but left the seeds for a future greater than themselves.



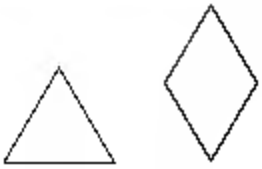
To remember the unremembered Sixth Race, whose lack of a record spurs both our curiousity and our desire to leave our own mark.



Also for fractals and monsters, demons and gods, beings not of a Race but still trapped, in their own ways, by the spiralling of time.

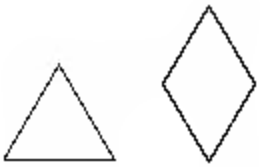


We're doing this for more than just Earth. It's for the Beforings, too, that they may learn humility.



And for the Cartoonist.

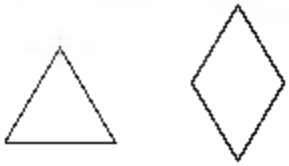
Justice Pants, no. You can't!



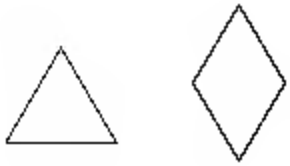
I'm not saying to forgive him! He is honoring the surrender, and he wants this to happen as much as we do. He belongs in this enumeration as much as anyone.

Triangle and Robert

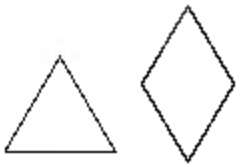
As we honor those before us, let us not forget the more recent past, and the history of the Seventh Race itself.



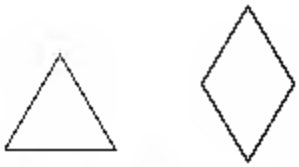
Let us remember the legacy of cuisine magic, carried by warrior-chefs since before our records began.



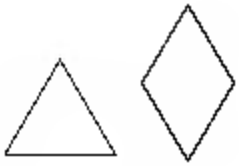
Let us remember past Sentries, both recent and ancient.



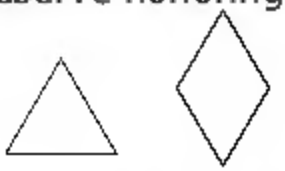
Let us remember Tetris, and those earliest polygons from whom we all derive our existence.



Let us remember those like the ICI and RDCLBA, who sought in their ways to shield us from the inevitable.



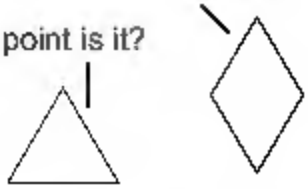
Let us remember all our heroes, not merely those of cuisine and magic and archeology. We cannot, in this limited time, honor even a fraction of those who deserve honoring.



They're about to separate the lump. I think I need to try for one last point of exposition while it's still there, although I won't get it right.

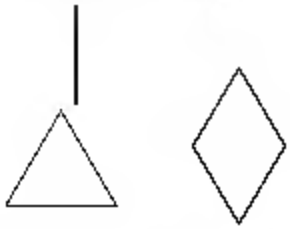
You might.

What point is it?



It's about tapioca and butterscotch.

No, you won't get it right. Go ahead though.



There's nothing evil about tapioca. There's nothing good about butterscotch that isn't also true of tapioca. They're not morally opposed, they're just incompatible in a fundamental way that has nothing to do with right or wrong.

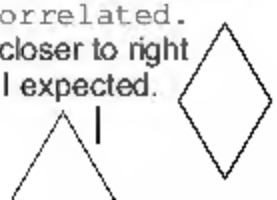
We're doing it!

Butterscotch is of a continuous nature. Tapioca is of a discrete nature. It happens that, in this particular universe, at this particular time, butterscotch was the primal state and tapioca was the anomalous one.

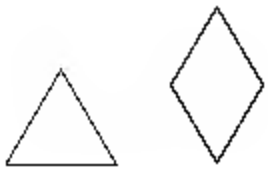
It also happens that, at this particular time, butterscotch was beneficial and tapioca detrimental.

Neither of those facts is fundamental, and the two facts are themselves uncorrelated.

That's closer to right than I expected.



Separation in six... five...



Triangle and Robert

Two months later...

I think that was the Cartoonist.

Hi.

Our wallpaper!

The past couple months...

It's beautiful. This universe... polygons often told us that before you came it was a beautiful place...

It was.

It is!

I really liked that wallpaper. Will it grow back?

That's not my place to say. Where will you go, anyway? You're no longer real to your former universe, and you're not going to be a part of this one.

I don't know for sure. I'm not the one writing this. But... if it's still the ending I had imagined during the hiatus... I'm not going to go anywhere.

By which you don't mean you're staying.

No. I'm not going to exist at all. The fact that I can exist is due solely to the existence of the comic.

And there's no afterlife waiting for you, just a total metaphysical void.

No personal afterlife. Everything meaningful about me is also a part of the real author. What matters will live on. All that's dying are a font choice, some diagonal lines, and a bit of surface characterization fluff.

We... Robert and I... came into being as elements of the comic strip.

We're still polygons, though. The laws of the universe allow for us to be. I think we'll continue.

Our extraordinary powers might not. With the Time of the Oval past, I might no longer be the Chosen One. With no comic strip, you might no longer be able to use wackiness with nigh-impunity.

Those are entirely reasonable maybes.

There are so many things that are best left unsaid, both for the universe's sake and for the comic's... Colin Mochrie.

Triangle and Robert

Robert, what did you just say?

Colin Mochrie.

I'm right, aren't I?

I'm wrong.

Colin Baker.

Who's Colin Baker?

What are you talking about?

If the cycles of your universe had been a little more consistent, a polygon named Colin Baker would have played the sixth Beaver.

The series skipped over the sixth Beaver.

And the identity of Colin Baker ended up going to the Sixth Race instead.

Please don't tell me that makes sense.

No, random cosmic glitch.

Are we going to have more random cosmic glitches, or will it all...

He can't tell us that. It'd risk predestining.

There are a lot of things he can't tell us.

There are a lot of things I never wrote, and don't want to write.

I want the strip to end over a distant horizon, with possibilities I can't enumerate.

So how does it end?

It's ending now, I think. Assuming it's all still the way I planned it. Not sure how many more pages it'll be.

What happens at the very end of it? Have you picked out some last words?

Triangle... Robert... When, in the entire course of my existence, have I ever written a decent set of last wrods?

Robert, did he just...?

No, Triangle. That's no typo.